Exploring the experiences and perceptions of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low
(an interpretative phenomenological study)

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Abstract

The literature relating to school absenteeism traditionally divides such behaviour into two categories, 'truancy' and 'school refusal'. 'Truancy' is seen as a behavioural issue and 'school refusal' is linked with anxiety and other emotional difficulties (Lauchlan, 2003; Berg et al., 1969). Both have been linked with psychiatric 'disorders' (e.g. Egger et al, 2003). My literature review critiques this dichotomy, problematises the pathologisation of school non-attendance behaviours and questions some of the assumptions inherent in professional intervention attempts. My study is significant because, unusually, it gives a voice to young people themselves and brings no prior assumptions about the reasons for low attendance. My purpose is neither to judge nor to attempt to change behaviour but to explore the sense which young people make of their own experiences.

I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse the transcripts of five semi-structured interviews with low-attending young people in Year 11 at a single mainstream Upper School. Interview questions related to school experiences past and present, perceived barriers to full school attendance, and aspirations and priorities for the future. Principal themes drawn from the transcripts included social and relational experience, passivity and lack of control, personal competence and agency, values and priorities, school systems and the establishment, and the emotional self. All five participants reported some experience of difficult peer and/or staff-student relationships. Anxiety was a factor for some participants.

My discussion considers issues of co-constructed versus professionally imposed values and priorities, young people's emotional well-being, and the importance of the social experience of school. I also explore issues around young people's agency, motivation and control and the passivity which some experience in school and within the wider educational system. I hope that this research will provide those working with low-attending young people with some new perspectives to consider and questions to ask.

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Contents

Introduction

The idea for this research came about after a chance conversation with the SENCO of the Upper School in the area in which I work (henceforth I will use the pseudonym Newton School; see Appendix VI for some background information). The SENCO expressed the view that she would love someone to carry out some research around the ongoing issue of persistently low attendance amongst Newton School students and that she and her colleagues would appreciate the opportunity to gain some insight into 'what is going on' for these students. The issue of extended absenteeism is also one of a number of priority areas for my placement EPS. There is a small team of EPs who have protected time allocated for working with students whose attendance is low or non-existent. My research was therefore steered both by the priorities of my placement EPS and by the local Upper School and the interests and concerns of staff there.

At the SENCO's suggestion, my research was initially going to relate to mental health amongst low-attending students. As I planned my research and explored the methodological options, I realised that this was too deductive an approach with which to begin a qualitative study (my reasons for choosing a qualitative approach are explained in my Methodology chapter). I could not pre-suppose a link between mental health and school absenteeism within a piece of inductive research. My concerns were compounded by my own critical awareness of issues relating to psychiatric diagnoses and 'disorders' and the seemingly circular arguments which can be used to justify pathologising emotional experience. I broadened my focus, then, to explore the experiences of young people whose school attendance has been persistently low but without any assumptions about details or causality. In this way, my research has sought to give a voice to low-attending young people themselves, highlighting their experiences, perspectives and priorities rather than superimposing any presuppositions or agenda. This aim contrasts with the dominant narratives in the relevant literature, in which low school attendance tends to be framed as a 'deviant' behaviour which research seeks to find ways to 'correct'.

After this introduction, my thesis is structured as follows:

Literature review. I will critically consider a range of literature relating to the topic of young people's extended non-attendance at school. This will include an exploration of the prevalent terminology and the rationale for my own choice of terminology. I will identify the salient gaps in the current literature and explain how my research will aim to address some of those gaps and make a unique contribution. At the end of this chapter I will explain and provide a rationale for my research title and questions in full.

Methodology. I will consider a range of approaches to research and explain my choice of a qualitative methodology. I will then explore several different qualitative research methodologies and explain and justify my use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Methods. I will describe and explain the processes involved in carrying out the practical elements of my research: identification and selection of participants, planning and carrying out interviews and analysing interview transcripts.

Analysis. I will apply the analytical processes described in the Methods chapter to my interview transcripts. I will identify emerging themes, subordinate themes and superordinate themes. I will explore six of my nine superordinate themes in detail, alongside illustrative quotations, and the remaining three superordinate themes more briefly.

Discussion. I will explore the outcomes of the analytical process with reference to relevant literature (some from my literature review and some newly-introduced). I will evaluate the experience of carrying out my interviews and analysing the transcripts before reflecting on the rigour and quality of my research. Finally, I will consider the limitations of my research and explore its implications for practitioners and future researchers.

N.B. Single quotation marks (' ') are used throughout this thesis to denote words or phrases which are used with reservations or which might be

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considered colloquial. Speech marks (" ") are used around quotations.

Abbreviations

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESNA	Extended school non-attendance
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The word 'data' is used throughout my thesis as both a singular and a plural, as is consistent with common usage.

All names have been changed throughout my thesis, except for my own name. Pseudonyms are used for people and schools and all geographical identifiers have been removed.

Literature Review

Introduction

Within this chapter I will provide an overview of some of the literature concerning young people's non-attendance or low attendance at school. My intention is to sample critically the available literature (focusing predominantly on relatively recent research, i.e. post-2000) in order to set the context and rationale for my research. I have organised the sub-headings in this chapter according to what seemed, to me, to be the most salient themes and issues which arose from my reading around the topic. I will begin by examining some of the terminology traditionally associated with low-attending young people and will argue that categorising these young people and their behaviours dichotomously, in terms of 'truancy' and 'school refusal', is disingenuous and unhelpful. I will consider the notion of 'mental health', its place in prior research and its possible relevance in my own. In addition, I will explore systemic and environmental factors which have been linked with young people's non-attendance at school, although I will argue that these are not necessarily fully separable from 'within-person' factors. Before setting out the rationale for my research, I will consider a range of intervention approaches from the literature. Although the intention of my research is not directly to recommend interventions, it seems implicit in much of the published research that the recommendation of intervention methods is amongst its principal aims. Despite some problematic issues around the idea of a 'successful' intervention and the assumptions carried by this notion, a literature review would be imbalanced without considering some intervention-related research. As this literature review progresses it will become apparent that there may be implicit ways in which low- or non-attending young people and their behaviours are widely understood, which in turn create particular assumptions relating to how professionals 'should' respond.

Terminology: 'school refusal', 'truancy', 'extended school non-attendance'

Berg et al. (1969) defined 'school refusal' according to four essential criteria: persistent difficulties attending school, severe emotional distress when faced

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with the prospect of attending school, being at home with the knowledge of parents/carers, and not showing 'anti-social' behaviours. These criteria (or an approximation of them) have endured in the literature (e.g. Egger et al., 2003; Elliott, 1999; Lauchlan, 2003; Lyon & Cotler, 2007). Lauchlan (2003) highlights several ways in which 'school refusal' has been traditionally presented as different from 'truancy': 'truants' choose deliberately to avoid school, whereas 'school refusers' do not make a conscious choice. 'Truants' often show what might be deemed anti-social behaviours and their parents/carers are generally unaware that they are not in school. 'Truancy' is understood as a behavioural issue whereas 'school refusal' is seen as an emotional one (Lauchlan, 2003). 'School refusers' may experience psychosomatic complaints and can show an increased risk of long-term mental health difficulties (Lauchlan, 2003), whereas 'truants' lack interest in school and may be unwilling to conform to school behavioural expectations (Elliott, 1999). 'School refusal' has also been described in the literature as 'school phobia' (Miller, 2008) for reasons relating to the emotional difficulties some young people experience in relation to attending school; Lyon and Cotler (2007), however, are critical of this term, suggesting that 'phobia' is merely one possible strand of 'school refusal' behaviour. Corville-Smith et al. (1998) suggested that levels of anxiety experienced by the 'school refusers' in their study were no different from the levels of anxiety experienced by full-time school attenders; anxiety may not, therefore, necessarily be a consistent feature even in behaviour specifically described as 'school refusal'.

The dichotomy between 'school refusal' and 'truancy' is not clear-cut; the assumption that absentee behaviour can always be categorised this way may be flawed (Kearney, 2008). As Lauchlan (2003) notes, most young people will miss school on some occasions for a multitude of reasons. Kearney (2008) argues that both 'truants' and 'school refusers' are extremely heterogeneous groups and that there can be considerable overlap between them. Another reason for which Kearney argues against the 'school refusal'/'truancy' dichotomy is that the 'success' of different intervention approaches does not consistently relate to how the absentee behaviour is categorised. There are

examples of literature, however, in which it is argued that this categorisation of behaviours does point towards helpful distinctions between intervention approaches (e.g. Elliott, 1999). I will consider the literature on interventions, and how 'success' might be defined, later.

Egger et al. (2003) attempted to categorise a sample of American nine- to sixteen-year-olds into 'truants' and 'school refusers' based on a psychiatric assessment (using the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment, or CAPA; Angold et al., 1995). They were unable to classify every participant this way. They concluded that 'school refusal' and 'truancy' were distinct but not mutually exclusive, with a number of young people meeting the criteria for both behaviours either simultaneously or over time. This mirrors the findings of Berg et al. (1993), who also failed to maintain a clear dichotomy between 'truancy' and 'school refusal' behaviours using the Berg et al. (1969) criteria. Although Egger et al. (2003) found an association between psychiatric diagnoses and school non-attendance, there was no single psychiatric difficulty which consistently separated 'truants' from 'school refusers'. I will consider the issue of school non-attendance and mental health later.

Although the term 'school refusal' is prominent both in the literature and within popular discourse, Pellegrini (2007) prefers the term "extended school non-attendance". He argues that this describes behaviour non-judgementally, highlights the potentially long-term nature of the situation, and redirects some emphasis onto systemic and environmental issues rather than focusing exclusively on within-person factors. To use the term 'truancy' in my thesis might imply that I consider young people to have made a deliberate choice to behave in what might be termed a 'deviant' way, and with this assumption may come further potentially negative preconceptions relating to young people's and their families' values and priorities and even parenting styles and capabilities (e.g. Egger et al., 2003). To use the term 'school refusal' might appear inherently contradictory; the word 'refusal' implies a degree of agency and choice, yet the literature frames 'school refusal' as predominantly emotionally-based and involuntary (Lauchlan, 2003; Berg et al., 1969). The use of this term

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might imply assumptions relating to young people's short- and long-term mental health and even that of their parents (e.g. Egger et al, 2003). The terms 'truancy' and 'school refusal' both allude strongly to the reasons why young people are thought not to attend school. I would prefer to take a holistic and non-judgemental approach rather than one which is wholly within-person or potentially blaming, therefore I will adopt Pellegrini's (2007) phrase and refer to "extended school non-attendance" within my thesis. My chosen terminology will not imply any causality, nor will it imply the presence or absence of individual agency or choice. It allows for systemic, environmental, circumstantial, relational, within-person and any other factors to be considered equally, without prejudice or prior assumption. My choice of language, then, is both ideological and evidence-based. Using the term "extended school non-attendance" will enable me to shift my focus away from the categorisation of individuals and towards a more holistic view of young people's situations. In the interests of succinctness I will abbreviate this phrase to ESNA. I will use this term broadly, to include any situation of long-term low or non-attendance at school for any reason. It is not intended to be in any way a diagnostic category, merely a loosely descriptive term abbreviated for literary convenience.

ESNA and mental health

Despite my aim to avoid an entirely within-person approach to understanding ESNA, it is impossible to review the literature without considering the topic of young people's mental health. Ek and Eriksson (2013) claim, based on a broad-ranging literature review, that approximately 90% of young people who 'refuse' to attend school (without differentiating between 'truants' and 'school refusers') experience a diagnosable psychiatric 'disorder'. The issue of psychiatric diagnosis is apparent within a great deal of the ESNA literature; Lyon and Cotler (2007), for example, observe that many studies have used differential psychiatric diagnoses to attempt to distinguish between categories of ESNA. Egger et al. (2003), using the CAPA, suggested that the commonest psychiatric diagnoses amongst 'truants' were conduct disorder and oppositional defiance disorder. Amongst 'school refusers' the commonest diagnoses were depression and separation anxiety. However, Egger et al. also found overlap

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between the psychiatric disorders diagnosable in both groups, with a proportion of both groups meeting diagnostic criteria for depression, conduct disorder and oppositional defiance disorder. Those described as showing 'anxiety-based school refusal' showed more fears and worries, more difficulties with peer relationships and more physical complaints than those described as 'truants'. Both groups of young people showed similar levels of social anxiety and separation anxiety. Egger et al. (2003) suggested that the parents of young people showing anxiety-related school non-attendance were more likely to have been treated for mental health difficulties themselves than parents of 'truants', who were described, on the whole, as taking a less strict approach to parenting than the parents of 'school refusers' (although this observation is clearly subjective and value-laden).

It could be argued that the Egger et al. (2003) study contains an element of circularity. By diagnosing psychiatric disorders on the basis of behaviours, but also categorising school non-attendance behaviours in part on the basis of these psychiatric diagnoses, a level of self-fulfilling prophecy seems almost inevitable. It could be argued that this element of circularity is inherent in any psychiatric diagnosis, when diagnoses are given based on behaviours and then used to 'explain' those behaviours. This is an important issue to acknowledge but one which extends beyond the scope of this thesis. Pilkington and Piersel (1991) also criticised the limitations of much research into 'anxiety-based school refusal', arguing that this relied too heavily on single case studies and retrospective accounts, focused primarily on within-person and within-family pathology, and ignored external factors such as aspects of the school setting.

Kearney and Albano's (2004) research involved 143 long-term school non-attenders. These young people (aged between five and seventeen) were referred to a specialist clinic for school absenteeism, which in itself suggests heavily 'within-person' causal assumptions. The most common psychiatric diagnoses assigned to these young people were separation anxiety disorder (22.4%), generalised anxiety disorder (10.5%), oppositional defiance disorder (8.4%) and depression (4.9%). Almost a third of participants, however, did not

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meet the criteria for any diagnosis. This contrasts with the findings of Egger et al. (2003), in whose sample separation anxiety did not feature prominently. This could be the result of differences between participant samples, differences between diagnostic tools (Kearney and Albano used the Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule for Children; Silverman and Albano, 1996) or perhaps a difference in researcher expectations. Again, the potential for circularity and self-fulfilling prophecy seems apparent. The data here seem to have been collected rather selectively due to the use of a single, very specific tool, i.e. a tool designed specifically to identify anxiety-related difficulties. Such methods will inevitably limit greatly the extent to which participants can communicate the nuances of their emotional experiences and will exclude consideration of any other relevant factors.

The literature above relates to specific, diagnosable psychiatric conditions. I would argue, however, that the term 'mental health' can be understood much more broadly. Blank et al. (2009) define mental health as encompassing general emotional, psychological and social well-being and health. This definition does not limit discussions about mental health to those diagnosed with 'disorders'. Blank et al. seem to remove the onus for describing mental 'health' or 'illness' from professionals; the emphasis can be placed on individuals' subjective, lived experiences. Most of the ESNA literature, however, does not incorporate this way of understanding mental health, perhaps because it is subjective, unquantifiable and lacks clear boundaries. The research which I have considered so far has all taken a positivist stance and employed quantitative methodologies. Within this approach, variables self-evidently need to be measured and categorised. The broad and subjective definition espoused by Blank et al. (2009) perhaps renders the whole concept of 'mental health' too slippery and vague to be considered within a quantitative study, and qualitative studies into ESNA are relatively few. I will consider some of these later.

Systemic and environmental factors
Egger et al. (2003), for example, who took a strong 'mental illness' focus, nevertheless suggested that 'separation anxiety' amongst their participants was

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relatively low; anxieties related predominantly to aspects of the school environment. Kearney (2008) argues that numerous environmental factors have been associated with ESNA. He stresses, though, that these associations do not necessarily imply causality and that any causality could operate indirectly and/or bidirectionally. Kearney claims, for example, that ESNA can in itself be a risk factor for teenage pregnancy, psychiatric difficulties, high-risk sexual behaviours, suicide attempts, substance misuse and being involved in violence. He also argues that ESNA can be associated with premature school drop-out, which can lead to disconnection from school-based services and, in the longer term, economic deprivation and social and psychological difficulties in adulthood.

Kearney (2008) considers contextual factors to have a less direct, and perhaps by implication weaker, influence on school attendance behaviour than the within-person factors already considered. Homelessness and poverty are cited as significant risk factors for ESNA in both US and UK studies (Kearney, 2008; Place et al, 2000). Teenage pregnancy is also cited as a risk factor, although absenteeism and drop-out amongst pregnant teenagers may be reduced by the availability of family support, school-based pre-natal support, and alternative educational provision for young mothers after they have given birth (Barnet et al., 2004). Fear of bullying or victimisation in school, and particularly fear of being the victim of violent crime in school, is also cited as a significant risk factor by Kearney (2008), although it should be remembered that his research is American; it might be argued that the violent crime to which he refers may be more prevalent in schools in parts of the USA than in the UK. Kawabata (2001) writes that an association between experiencing bullying and ESNA can be observed in Japanese students, suggesting that this issue, in its broadest sense, is not limited to schools and systems within Western societies. Kawabata suggests a direct causal link; he states that ESNA is increasing in Japanese schools and that being the victim of bullying is one of the principal reasons for this, although his research is based on only two single case studies. In a UK-based study involving a small group of non-clinical participants, Place et al. (2000) cite social exclusion, peer difficulties and bullying, poverty, deprivation

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and family stress as significant correlates with ESNA. Again, however, it should be remembered that correlation does not necessarily imply causation and that any causal relationships could operate multi-directionally and in complex, indirect ways.

Lauchlan (2003) and Kearney (2008) associate further aspects of interpersonal relationships within school with ESNA. Lauchlan (2003) identifies as ESNA risk factors a high prevalence of bullying and disruptive behaviour, distant or hostile student-teacher relationships, an authoritarian and rigid school management style with strict rule enforcement, poor understanding and communication between home and school, low staff morale and low academic achievement (see also Place et al., 2000). Large class sizes and frequent staff absenteeism have also been linked with lower student attendance (Lauchlan, 2003). Kearney (2008) describes "school climate" and "school connectedness" as significant factors in supporting school attendance; these factors relate to the positive relationships and social and academic support which students experience and the extent to which students feel valued, respected and safe in school. Boredom, an inappropriate level of challenge and a curriculum not sufficiently tailored to meet individual needs are also cited as factors linked with ESNA and school drop-out (Kearney, 2008).

In the same way that it is difficult and not always meaningful to consider 'school refusal' and 'truancy' as a clear dichotomy, it can be equally problematic to dichotomise 'within-person' and 'environmental' risk factors for ESNA. Some social, relational and demographic factors, for example, transcend this binary. The factors described above, particularly those relating to interpersonal relationships and bullying, could be argued to incorporate within-person elements in addition to systemic or environmental influences. Place et al. (2000) provide another perspective on the potential relational aspects of ESNA; taking what might be termed a psychodynamic approach, they consider that the nature of parent-child relationships can be significant, with a highly co-dependent, anxious relationship being common between parents and children in their participant families. This is an example of a single factor which is neither

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exclusively within-child nor solely systemic or environmental.

Another self-evident risk factor for ESNA is physical illness. This issue is discussed at some length by Kearney (2008), amongst others, but I am not intending to consider this because this type of non-attendance is uncontroversial and largely unavoidable. Physical illness provides a simple and straightforward explanation for ESNA; it is not a topic which particularly lends itself to exploring a range of contrasting perspectives.

Intervention approaches

Pellegrini (2007) discusses a range of approaches which have been taken to ESNA, including systemic, group and individual interventions. He discusses the efficacy of behaviourist interventions which aim to prepare students to face feared situations, such as entering school, more calmly. Pellegrini argues that a gradual exposure approach may be less stressful for those experiencing anxiety than a rapid return to full-time schooling. Pellegrini also points out the need to consider any positive reinforcement which might be present in the home environment; he argues that attending school needs to appear a more attractive and rewarding proposition than remaining at home or partaking in any other available activities during the school day. Pellegrini argues, though, that the evidence in support of individual behavioural interventions is weak, and that individual intervention should not be expected to succeed in isolation; outcomes will be limited if the underlying issues concerning school systems or environment are not addressed. The apparent inefficacy of behaviourist-based interventions is unsurprising given the emphasis which previous literature has placed on the importance of emotional and mental health-based aspects of experience and their links with ESNA; an approach which is predominantly behavioural seems unlikely to take into account young people's emotional lives to any great extent.

An alternative approach to individual intervention is explored by Atkinson and Woods (2003), who used Motivational Interviewing (Rollnick & Miller, 1995) with a young person described as "disaffected" whose school attendance had been

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low. Atkinson and Woods used a definition of disaffection incorporating negative attitudes and beliefs towards school, and in particular academic attainment, expressed via "negative" behaviours (McNamara, 1998). Within Atkinson and Woods' approach seems to have been the intention to take a non-judgemental, non-coercive approach to supporting this Year 10 student to resolve ambivalence within her attitude towards school. The reported outcomes suggest that Atkinson and Woods' participant's attendance did increase after their work with her, and that her attitude towards school and towards her own capacity to succeed academically became a little more positive.

Group interventions intended to address ESNA have included parenting training and CBT-based social skills interventions (Pellegrini, 2007; Spence et al., 2000). Spence et al. (2000) suggested that children with weaker social skills may be more likely to develop what they term 'social phobias' which could lead to school non-attendance as a result of difficulties understanding, negotiating and coping with the complex social environment of school. Based on this assertion, they evaluated a targeted CBT-based social skills intervention. They found some evidence to suggest that this had a positive impact on some young people's ability to re-engage with school, but found no real evidence that parental training or involvement had any tangible effect. Pellegrini (2007) points out that the sample size employed by Spence et al. was small, and that it was difficult to disentangle the effects of their social skills intervention from other, broader interventions which took place in parallel. High levels of parental anxiety and limited parental coping skills may impact adversely on young people's anxiety and coping skills, in any case, and these factors are thought to contribute towards school 'phobia' and non-attendance in the first place (Spence et al., 2000).

Lauchlan (2003) argues that the involvement of both a young person's family and their school are key to addressing ESNA. Systemic and environmental factors, he argues, need to be recognised as having an important role to play, and any intervention needs to be tailored according to an analysis of what is contributing to the situation. He notes, for example, the potential impact of

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relationship difficulties within the home. Lauchlan identifies a tendency for some ESNA to be attributed to relationship-based factors such as attachment difficulties or separation anxiety, but argues that there are also features of the school environment which can predict heightened rates of chronic non-attendance amongst students (see above). Lauchlan suggests that any situation involving ESNA should be considered on a number of levels, including any academic concerns, any issues around a young person's relationships with peers and school staff, and factors relating to the school environment such as whether the young person has somewhere to go to feel safe and whether a trusted adult is available with whom the young person can speak should they need support.

These intervention studies raise two pertinent questions: how (and by whom) are 'successful' interventions defined, and whose needs and priorities are such interventions intended to fulfil? There may be an implicit meta-narrative to be acknowledged here which relates to issues of power, coercion, social control and the idea of persuasion and legal force being legitimate tools to control those whose behaviour (i.e. school non-attendance) violates social and cultural norms. The assumption inherent across the literature seems to be that the best possible situation for any young person is that they attend school full-time; this is how a 'successful' intervention is implicitly defined. The above research does not question whether young people's aims and priorities are consistent with the expectations and norms espoused by professionals, other adults and wider social and educational systems, although Atkinson and Woods' (2003) study does take some account of individual motivation; Motivational Interviewing depends upon the individual having some motivation towards change and does not attempt to enforce this. It seems possible that there may be an issue of differences in priorities and expectations, however, in a lot of the ESNA research. If poverty, teenage pregnancy, being involved in bullying and violent crime, and low levels of Kearney's (2008) 'school connectedness' are accepted as risk factors for ESNA, perhaps one reason underlying this might be that school attendance and academic achievement are not equally valued across society. Professionals and researchers are amongst those who have

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succeeded educationally; almost by definition they have bought into the values of the education system, worked within it and aspired to achieve according to its definitions of success. It is hardly surprising, then, that these are the voices which are heard by far the most strongly in the literature and, more broadly, in the legislature. I will return to this point at the end of this chapter when I will set out the rationale for my research.

Relativist research: Young people's voices and experiences

As noted previously, the research considered so far has been positivist and quantitative and seems implicitly to contain assumptions relating to what is 'best' for young people without giving them a voice. Within this section of the chapter I will explore research which has been conducted from a relativist perspective, i.e. qualitative studies which focus on the voices, narratives and experiences of young people themselves. Such research forms a minority of the published literature. I assume that this imbalance probably relates to a publication bias in favour of what might be termed 'gold standard' and other quantitative research conducted according to positivist definitions of rigour.

Wilkins (2008) examined the reasons why a group of American secondary-aged students who had previously been absent from school for an extended period of time felt able to attend an alternative provision quite willingly. Wilkins explored the ways in which students found their specialist setting different from their previous schools and considered how these differences might have contributed towards a renewed ability to attend. The four main themes which Wilkins drew out of her interviews with these young people concerned the school climate, the academic environment, school discipline and students' relationships with teaching staff. These themes can be linked with the systemic and environmental factors discussed by Lauchlan (2003) and others, and point towards a complex picture; even for Wilkins' participants, who were able to re-engage with education relatively easily when alternative provision was offered, the reasons for ESNA were not straightforward.

A more recent study by Nuttall and Woods (2013) used thematic analysis in a

case-study research design exploring the experiences of two secondary school-aged young people. The main focus of this research was the efficacy of a range of intervention approaches. Interestingly, despite referencing Pellegrini (2007), Nuttall and Woods refer to "school refusal" throughout their article. Despite this, though, they acknowledge the influence of social constructionism in their approach to their data. Their recommendations regarding intervention approaches, based on the themes drawn from their interview transcripts, are heavily systemic and culminate in a proposed "Ecological model of successful reintegration" (Nuttall and Woods, 2013, p. 360). Reminiscent of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework, Nuttall and Woods' model places the young person at the centre surrounded by concentric layers representing factors supporting within-child psychological factors, factors supporting the child's family, the role of professionals and systems, and finally wider context. Despite their terminology, Nuttall and Woods' approach to understanding the behaviours and experiences of their participants appears holistic and context-based. The authors do not question the aim of successful intervention, however, which is implicitly synonymous with reintegration into school.

Within a week of my research proposal being submitted, a paper by Gregory and Purcell (2014) was published. Gregory and Purcell's UK-based research explored young people's and parents' experiences of ESNA with two aims: firstly to identify the concerns and experiences of school non-attenders and their families, and secondly to inform the practice of EPSs. Gregory and Purcell interviewed five mothers and three secondary school-aged young people about their experiences and analysed their responses using IPA. All three young people had psychiatric diagnoses (one of Asperger's Syndrome, two of anxiety and depression). None of the young people in the study were in mainstream education; three were home-schooled and the other two were receiving tuition from the LA's Home Tuition Service. Gregory and Purcell alluded to mental health difficulties, particularly anxiety, as being linked with ESNA before they interviewed their participants; they drew on Kearney and Silverman's (1993) research and referred to anxiety within the school setting, social anxiety,

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attention seeking behaviour and reinforcement within the home within their interview schedule. It could be argued that this stance, alongside prior knowledge of the young people's diagnoses, could have biased the research towards finding explicit links between mental health difficulties and ESNA.

Gregory and Purcell (2014) identified and conflated themes taken from their interviews which included medical, social, experiential, emotional and circumstantial factors. A theme entitled "child's voice" was created; this related to the extent to which young people had had a say in the arrangements which were made and the support which was offered to them. No differentiation was made between themes extracted from interviews with young people and those with their parents and, given that five mothers and only three young people participated, I would argue that this research gives a stronger voice to parents than to young people. It also seems possible that there may have been an element of demand bias; young people who are aware that their parents are also being interviewed might plausibly tend to give responses which they feel would be consistent with their parents' views. This seems particularly likely for those young people who were home-schooled and who might therefore be a) conscious of the perceived sacrifices their parents had made in order to make this arrangement possible, and b) very aware of their parents' values and attitudes towards education.

Like Nuttall and Woods (2013), Gregory and Purcell (2014) consider ESNA holistically, attempting to move beyond a within-person perspective towards a more systemic understanding which acknowledges the complexity inherent in ESNA and the interactions between environmental and other factors (e.g. Place et al., 2000). Gregory and Purcell (2014) discuss the issue of language and, for similar reasons to those outlined earlier, seem to prefer the term "extended school non-attendance" to 'school refusal', 'school phobia' etc. (c.f. Pellegrini, 2007). On the whole, Gregory and Purcell attempt to problematise the medicalised discourses which have traditionally prevailed in the literature and advocate for a more 'social model' view. However, they nevertheless make reference to "anxiety disorder", for example, as a risk factor for "school refusal",

which may suggest a level of epistemological dissonance within their approach.

Rationale for my research

As noted above, the majority of published ESNA research uses quantitative methodologies, implicit in which are positivist assumptions about the objective nature of reality and the need for variables to be measurable. Some qualitative studies have emerged in recent years (see above) but these are relatively few. I would argue that young people's core values and priorities continue, for the most part, to be overlooked; their views are being interpreted within a framework constructed from the values and assumptions of adults who have 'succeeded' within the educational system. In the same way, interventions are being designed, carried out and evaluated according to professional priorities. What does not seem to be considered in the literature is the issue of whose goals such interventions are designed to fulfil and who decides what constitutes a 'successful' intervention. The aim of my research will not, therefore, be directly to inform professional intervention; its aim will be to facilitate professional understanding of the ways in which young people themselves make sense of their experiences in relation to ESNA.

Placing my research alongside that conducted by Wilkins (2008), Nuttall and Woods (2013) and Gregory and Purcell (2014), then, my study will offer a unique contribution to the literature in a number of ways. Firstly, my participants will all be on roll at a UK mainstream school rather than being home-educated or taught within a specialist provision. I will not consider my participants in terms of any psychiatric diagnoses; to do so would give weight to the positivist assumptions of diagnostic systems and to professionals' perceptions of young people. My research will be about the ways in which young people make sense of their own realities, not about how those young people are described by adults. My participants will all have experienced school transition at the start of Year 10 (a peculiarity of my placement LA). My research will aim to incorporate young people's experiences of school transition and compare young people's school experiences across different settings. In this way I hope to gain some insight into the impact of the local system on young people's experiences.

Lastly, my research will focus on young people's views, not on those of parents, carers or professionals. I hope to be able to present as fully as possible young people's experiences and the ways in which they themselves understand and make sense of these.

The title of my thesis, then, based on the above, is:

Exploring the experiences and perceptions of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low.

I will aim to address this broad title with particular reference to the following questions:

1. What are participants' experiences of becoming low attenders, and how do they understand and give meaning to these experiences?

The literature which I have reviewed does not really address this point; young people are categorised as 'truants' or 'school refusers', or their ongoing behaviour is described as 'extended school non-attendance', but the issue of how this situation arose for young people in the first place is not really considered. The ways in which young people themselves make sense of these kinds of experiences has also failed to arise in any of the literature I have found.

2. What are their perceptions of the barriers to regular attendance?

This question, again, reflects a gap in the literature; as discussed above, the views and perspectives of young people are generally not represented. Some of the literature reviewed above concerns itself with professionals' opinions on the barriers some students may experience (often indirectly, e.g. by way of considering mental health diagnoses), but students' own perspectives are seldom sought.

3. What are participants' experiences of school transition?

This question is particularly relevant within my placement LA, where students transfer from High School to Upper School at the end of Year 9 (see Appendix VI for more contextual information). I am curious as to whether the experience of transition between schools might emerge as a salient feature within my participants' experiences.

4. What are their goals and priorities?

This question, again, arises as a result of the lack of emphasis in the current

literature on students' own values, aims and priorities. It also relates to my earlier reflections on the literature on ESNA interventions and the issue of whose needs and priorities these are designed to fulfil. My research will aim to give my participants the opportunity to reflect on and to communicate their own personal goals and priorities, particularly in relation to their education but also more broadly.

Methodology

In this chapter I will explain and justify my choice of methodology. I am not approaching this task with strong opinions on the absolute value of any particular methodology, epistemology or ontology; I believe that different topics and types of question require different approaches, depending on the aims of the research and the type of knowledge which is sought. Perhaps my view could best be described as pragmatic, although I have some sympathy with the social constructionist view that 'reality' is constructed by the use of language and social interactions (e.g. Burr, 2003). I would acknowledge that the language we use can play a large part in how we understand and construct our own realities (e.g. Willig, 2001). However, I cannot help but feel that experiential 'reality' can also be much more than that which is created linguistically and that language can be a tool for conveying subjective realities which are experientially already present. Based on this stance, I will start this chapter broadly and then gradually narrow my focus. I will begin by explaining my reasons for choosing a qualitative methodology. I will then consider a range of qualitative methodologies and explain my reasons for selecting IPA. After this I will consider relevant aspects of the philosophical background of IPA and how these will impact on my work. Finally I will discuss how I intend to ensure rigour and quality within my research.

Why a qualitative methodology?

The aim of my research is to offer an in-depth understanding of the experiences of young people in Key Stage 4 whose school attendance has been low over the last academic year. My research makes no claim to objectivity nor to direct wider generalisability but aims to explore the quality of my participants' experiences.

Qualitative research is an "umbrella term" (Sandelowski, 1986, p.28) encompassing a range of epistemologies and methodologies (Willig, 2001). On a simple level, qualitative research can be described as gathering information "usually consisting of words rather than numbers." (Miles & Huberman, 1994,

p.1) Each qualitative method has its own conventions relating to aims, objectives and interpretation but there are key features common to most, if not all, qualitative methodologies (Willig, 2001):

- They are concerned with meaning-making, with how people understand and make sense of their experiences. This focus is very consistent with my aims.

- They do not try to identify cause and effect; rather, they explore the nature of human experience. Again, this is very much my aim.

- They are inductive and do not make predictions. I am not approaching my study with any particular expectations; my aim is to understand participants' experiences on their own terms.

- They locate knowledge within a context and within particular systems. My research will be located within one school and will focus on participants' experiences within the systems associated with that setting.

- They are subjective and reflexive; interpretation by participants and researchers is part of the process. My aim is to examine and interpret the experiences of my participants and to understand how they subjectively make sense of these.

It would have been possible to carry out a quantitative study; I could have used a questionnaire, for example, containing questions pertaining to aspects of young people's experiences. I could have generated results indicating statistical trends such as frequency of particular experiences, frequency of particular responses to certain experiences, etc. I could have planned to carry out interviews or gather written data and used content analysis to generate similar information relating to the frequency of the appearance of various themes. A questionnaire could not have been inductive, however; I would have generated questions which would then have limited participants' responses. A content analysis of interview data might have provided more flexibility but nevertheless could have led to an over-simplification of the richness of individual experiences. The epistemological assumptions of a quantitative

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approach do not seem fitting in the context of my aims, in any case. I am not seeking results which are generalisable but am hoping to generate information which is rich, relevant and meaningful in my research context. It is possible that broad themes will be identified which may have theoretical relevance to other young people with similar experiences to my participants (e.g. Smith et al., 2009) but this would be a secondary aim. Given that my research is inherently subjective, focusing on individual experiences in context, a positivist approach assuming a single objective reality (e.g. Woolgar, 1996) would be inappropriate.

By focusing on individual experiences, my research question lends itself to an idiographic (rather than nomothetic) approach. Idiography focuses on the particular rather than the general, the individual rather than wider populations (Smith et al., 2009). Qualitative research, which aims to examine individual experiences in depth and in context, is almost by definition idiographic. Nomothetic research into individual differences, for example, has been criticised for creating a logical fallacy; by generating statistics based on studying a large group of people, norms and assumptions are generated which cannot be argued to represent any real individual(s) (Smith et al., 2009; Lamiell, 1987). In the same way, I would argue that a nomothetic approach to my research would not lead to an enhanced understanding of individual experiences.

Qualitative approaches to research

I could have selected any of a number of qualitative approaches which might have been appropriate given the considerations outlined above. I will consider here some of the methodologies which I explored and explain why I did not pursue them.

Discourse analysis and narrative psychology

Although this sub-heading encompasses a range of related methodologies, I have grouped them together because they are all language-based and social constructionist (Burr, 2003; Willig, 2003; Willig, 2001). Because of these similarities, my reasons for not using them are also similar.

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Discourse analysis encompasses a number of similar methodologies (Willig 2003; Willig 2001) which can be employed to address questions concerned with how language is used by participants to create their own subjective realities (Willig, 2001). School staff have told me that my participant group may include young people who can struggle to express themselves verbally (including those described as experiencing a range of SEN). I therefore did not want to use a methodology which is so exclusively dependent on participants' use of language that it assumes that what is created linguistically is the only 'reality' there is. In addition, I tend to believe that language cannot be the only means by which realities and knowledge can be constructed (see above).

Narrative theory states that the creation and exchange of stories is central to human experience (Murray, 1999). Narrative research is undertaken by conducting interviews and analysing how participants tell their stories in terms of structure, content and the use of language (Murray, 2003). I considered using narrative psychology to explore the stories young people told about their experiences but decided against this because of the linguistic considerations and assumptions carried by any social constructionist methodology (see above) and because the focus of my research question relates to lived experiences rather than stories.

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory involves extracting meaning from qualitative data relating to experiential phenomena, in particular those relating to social processes. These factors could have made it an appropriate means of addressing my question. There are two main approaches to Grounded Theory, one occupying a position close to naive realism and the other leaning towards social constructionism (Willig, 2001). The assumptions of Grounded Theory include the notions that qualitative methods can be systematic and rigorous, that data collection need not be separated from analysis, and that qualitative research can generate theory without needing to be supplemented by quantitative methods (Charmaz, 2003). Grounded Theory involves identifying categories of meaning from qualitative data and making links between these categories. It is an inductive

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approach and the literature review is left until after data analysis so that prior knowledge of the topic influences researcher perceptions as little as possible during the analysis (Charmaz, 2003). Categories of meaning are created which are initially descriptive but become increasingly abstract as analysis progresses. The end-product is the creation of theory, the aim of of which is to explain the phenomenon in question (Willig, 2001). Grounded Theory research is organic; data is analysed as it is collected, and further data is collected in response to this analysis until 'saturation' is reached (i.e. no further new categories of meaning are identified from new data). The researcher therefore cannot predict at the outset how many participants will be needed or how long the process will take.

Certain aspects of Grounded Theory would have been appropriate and applicable to my research. Its inductive nature is consistent with my aims and my research question. The clear, systematic approach appealed to me; by following an established systematic methodology such as this, I would hope that my research might be more rigorous than if I had followed a more free-form approach (particularly as this is my first extended piece of qualitative research). Willig (2001) highlights a number of links and similarities between Grounded Theory and IPA, my chosen methodology (see below). Both are concerned with accessing underlying cognitions, beliefs and attitudes which impact on participants' understanding of their experiences. Both methodologies involve extracting categories of information from qualitative data and making links between these categories across data from a number of participants, the aim being to generate a broader understanding of a phenomenon than could be gained from a single participant. Both Grounded Theory and IPA adopt a cyclical approach to data analysis and interpretation whereby data are continuously compared, assigned and reassigned to categories which evolve and change as analysis progresses.

My reasons for not using Grounded Theory were mainly pragmatic. Grounded Theory can require a large number of participants and an extended period of transcription and analysis. My potential participant group is limited and I was

concerned that I could struggle to recruit sufficient young people. Another reason for deciding against Grounded Theory is that it might superficially appear quite positivist. Conversations with school staff have given me the impression that their expectations of my research are implicitly positivist. I do not want to give them something which claims to provide an explanatory 'theory' or causal explanations for students' behaviours. To claim that any 'theory' generated was generalisable beyond the research context, or that it represented an objective 'truth', would have been disingenuous. I therefore decided that it would be preferable to avoid this potential implication.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is an approach to qualitative research concerned with how individuals understand and make sense of their lived experiences. It arose from the philosophical school of thought known as phenomenology (see below) and aims to understand experience on its own terms whilst putting to one side, or 'bracketing', prior knowledge, assumptions and preconceptions (Smith et al., 2009). IPA concerns itself with the subjective meanings which individuals give to their experiences. However, for reasons which I will consider in more depth below, IPA should not be considered a social constructionist methodology. Part of the reason for this is that language is better understood within phenomenology as a means by which to communicate one's understanding of experiential realities rather than as a means by which those realities are constructed. I will consider the ontological and epistemological implications of my choice of methodology below.

IPA is rooted not only in phenomenology but also in hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). In making sense of their experiences, individuals necessarily interpret those experiences. Their interpretations will be influenced by a range of factors relating to prior knowledge, earlier experiences and expectations. In addition, the IPA researcher places their own interpretation onto individuals' interpretations of their experiences. In this way, IPA contains a "double hermeneutic" (Smith et al., 2009), i.e. two layers of interpretation separate the analysis from the experience or phenomenon itself. It could be

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argued that a third hermeneutic occurs when research is read and re-interpreted by its audience. I will consider further the notions of bracketing and researcher reflexivity below. Consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, my research will be inductive; I will be led by the data, acknowledging my role in co-constructing and interpreting this data based on an awareness of my own prior knowledge and experiences.

Why IPA?

Firstly, my research question concerns participants' lived experiences and the meaning which they make from those experiences. The main aim of my research is to support and add to others' understanding of young people's experiences. IPA and phenomenology are philosophically ideally suited to this type of exploration. Secondly, although any qualitative methodology is to an extent language-dependent, I felt that IPA perhaps reduced the dependence on participants possessing sophisticated linguistic skills. Had I made the social constructionist assumption that reality is only created via the use of language, a possible conclusion could arguably be that the realities of those with limited language skills might therefore be lacking in richness or meaning. As IPA considers language merely to be a tool for the communication of experience, it seems epistemologically appropriate to assume a richness of lived experience beyond that which language can necessarily fully communicate. While Smith et al. (2009) refer to the ideal that IPA research participants be reasonably articulate, phenomenology's assumption that there is more to experience than language can create renders the requirement for highly articulate participants less fundamental, I would argue, than in a social constructionist methodology. I will therefore be prepared to supplement my interviews with visual methods (e.g. time-lines, scaling activities, pictures) if these help some participants to express themselves more effectively. Thirdly, IPA enables me to carry out my research with a small number of participants, a factor which may prove important given that my potential participant group is limited and may prove difficult to reach.

Limitations

IPA has its limitations, not least of which is my skill as a researcher and my ability to interpret my data effectively. Further limitations are those shared by all qualitative research findings, including a lack of generalisability across different contexts and wider populations and a lack of 'objectivity' or 'certainty' in the knowledge gained (see above, though, for a brief critique of the generalisability of certain types of nomothetic research findings). My aim, though, is not that my research will be directly generalisable across large populations. Rather than having statistical generalisability, I hope that my findings might have some theoretical relevance to some other young people in similar situations to my participants. Rather than providing conclusive answers or generalisable evidence, I hope that my research will augment ways of seeking to understand young people's experiences. I hope that it might suggest some alternative ways of thinking or further questions to consider, based on the broad themes generated, for those working with young people whose school attendance is low. A further general limitation of qualitative research is the inherent difficulty in making comparisons between the outcomes of different pieces of research approached from different epistemological positions (Willig, 2001). In addition, qualitative research does not identify causal mechanisms and is therefore limited in its capacity to explain rather than merely describe the phenomena being studied. However, I would argue that these limitations should not be seen as criticisms; my research does not aim to generate objective knowledge, nor does it set out to identify causal relationships (see Willig, 2001). If the assumptions of positivist, quantitative research are set aside, these limitations of qualitative research should not be seen as criticisms but as inevitable and intended consequences of adopting a relativist research philosophy. The nature of the knowledge which is gained is consistent with the philosophical approach to the research.

Willig (2001) identifies a specific limitation of IPA based on assumptions linked with the use of language; this does not relate to the linguistic capabilities of participants but to the epistemological function of language itself. As I have acknowledged, IPA relies heavily on language. This could be said of any

qualitative methodology. Willig's issue is that IPA presents language as a vehicle for the communication of meaning and experience, whereas she claims that language inevitably constructs, rather than merely describes, 'reality'. Willig argues that any experience can be described in a number of ways, and the words which are chosen will add their own meaning rather than merely "giving expression to experience" (Willig, 2001, p.63). I would argue that this issue is acknowledged and addressed clearly within IPA; it is by definition interpretative. Willig (2001) also argues that language can lack the necessary nuances to describe the subtleties of lived experience, particularly for participants who are not accustomed to speaking in detail in this way. It is reasonable to acknowledge these limitations but I would argue that, despite this, language generally remains by far the most effective communication tool available. As IPA is not a social constructionist methodology, it might be argued that to apply a critique which assumes a social constructionist view of knowledge is inconsistent with the philosophical stance on which IPA is based. For this reason, I acknowledge the potential limitation posed by a heavy reliance on language but am not concerned by Willig's argument.

Philosophical background

In order to make sense of my choice of methodology, I will now consider some of its background. This is necessary in order to explain and clarify my stance whilst carrying out each stage of my research, as well as to distinguish my analytical approach from other forms of thematic analysis. I will focus in particular on the notion of bracketing, which is central to the practical application of phenomenology within research. In this section I will consider some of the philosophical underpinnings behind phenomenology and IPA, bracketing, and the ontological and epistemological position which my research will take.

Phenomenology and bracketing

Phenomenology is a school of thought based on the study of human experience. The work of four leading phenomenological philosophers has particularly influenced the development of IPA: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (Smith et al., 2009). I will focus here predominantly on Husserl,

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty; their contributions seem to me most relevant to the practical application of IPA within my research, although the work of Husserl presents some particular challenges which will be considered below. Phenomenology requires the setting aside ('bracketing') of taken-for-granted prior knowledge, experience and beliefs in order to try to consider an experience openly, naively and on its own terms (Ashworth, 1996). Phenomenology is inductive; only experience is accepted as a source of evidence (Vacek, 1989). Husserl believed that by examining experience in this way it becomes possible to transcend the individual circumstances of an experience and discover the essential qualities of the experience itself (Smith et al., 2009). Husserl also believed that people display what he termed the "natural attitude" (Smith et al., 2009), the assumption that there exists an objective reality, independent of perception, on which 'science' and 'knowledge' are based (e.g. Spiegelberg, 1984). Husserl argued that this "natural attitude" itself needs to be bracketed (Ashworth, 1996). Phenomenology makes no claim about the existence or otherwise of an objective reality; this question is irrelevant to the phenomenon of interest, human experience. Phenomenology is also unconcerned with causal explanations, focusing solely on investigating the 'life-world', the subjective meanings of lived experience.

It could be argued that it is impossible to separate the 'life-world' from any objective or 'scientific' world; the two influence one another (Ashworth, 1996; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). On the one hand, knowledge is self-evidently derived from experience. On the other hand, the influence is bidirectional; prior knowledge influences our experiences and our interpretation of these (Spiegelberg, 1984). Besides which, human activity takes place within a context, not in isolation, and consciousness operates within the world rather than outside of it (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). In terms of my research, young people's experiences will be taking place within the context of the systems in which they live and learn. I do not think that it will be meaningful, desirable or possible to disentangle the 'essence' of young people's experiences from the contexts in which these happen; Husserl's notion of transcending worldly context seems to me unrealistic and impractical for my purposes. The prior

knowledge which young people will have in relation to these contexts, in particular the school environment and the expectations implicit within school systems, might be expected to influence heavily the ways in which they make sense of their school-related experiences.

Merleau-Ponty acknowledged an interdependent relationship between consciousness and the self and worldly knowledge and context (Smith et al., 2009). For Merleau-Ponty, bracketing means setting prior knowledge and experience to one side rather than turning away from it; complete removal of the self and prior knowledge is impossible (Finlay, 2008; Ashworth, 1996). Merleau-Ponty extended this notion of interdependence with the concept of embodiment, the idea that experience of the world is inseparable from our physical being within the world (Smith et al., 2009). In this way, with experience filtered by our physical being in the world, we can never fully immerse ourselves in another's experience (Smith et al., 2009; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This notion of embodiment presents a further potential limitation to the practical application of phenomenology in research, but this is a limitation which is addressed within IPA by the hermeneutic aspect of the approach (see below). Within my research, I acknowledge the centrality of the interpretative process and the double hermeneutic which this creates, whilst also retaining a reflexive position in relation to my own role within the interpretative process.

Heidegger moved away from Husserl's emphasis on the transcendental and towards a more interpretative, or hermeneutic, phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). Heidegger's work focused on the ways in which individuals give meaning to, and make sense of, their experiences. Heidegger referred to "Dasein" ('there-being'), or the experience of being human and experiencing the world as such (Smith et al, 2009). Heidegger's perspective is located within the world, rather than aiming to transcend it; like Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger saw experience as inseparable from cultural and historical context (Finlay, 2008). The approach taken by IPA, which I will adopt, is much more akin to Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's position than to Husserl's, in that IPA is firmly rooted within a worldly context.

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Finlay (2008) argues that bracketing is not a one-off event but an ongoing process which needs to be intertwined with reflexivity, a critical awareness of the role of the self. Finlay describes the simultaneous process of bracketing and reflexivity as an improvised 'dance' with a research participant, wherein the researcher moves continually between a critical awareness of their own self and its role in interpreting the experiences of another, and the bracketing or setting aside of that self in order to engage more openly and naively with the essence of the other's experience. Finlay describes this 'dance' as dialectical but inevitable within the phenomenological approach. The researcher is not detached and does not aim for objectivity, but is actively involved and contributes to the knowledge which is created. I will aim to take this approach within my interviews and in my analysis, acknowledging my own knowledge, experience and assumptions and aiming to move between this reflexivity and an attempt to engage naively with my participants. This process will be part of my thought process during my interviews and will help to shape my interactions with my participants. I will also try to incorporate this 'dialectical dance' when I conduct my analysis.

Ontology and epistemology

As a philosophical stance which sets aside the "natural attitude", IPA can be argued to transcend the often-cited continuum ranging from positivism at one end to absolute relativism (including social constructionism) at the other (e.g. Willig, 2001, p.147). Pragmatically, though, its focus on the interpretative gives IPA much more in common with relativist than with positivist methodologies. The emphasis on the researcher's critical self-awareness and reflexivity rather than any attempt to be objective also implies a relativist stance.

Knowledge, within phenomenology, can only originate in experience, regardless of whether that knowledge is derived from positivist, relativist, or any other research. This definition of knowledge may have its limitations; it fails to address *a priori* knowledge, for example, although perhaps it could be argued that even this type of 'knowledge' is indirectly dependent upon prior learning and experience. A detailed consideration of the nature of knowledge goes

beyond the scope of my thesis. For my purposes, I will return to phenomenology and consider knowledge to be that which is gained experientially and which is subjectively 'true' for the person in question, i.e. their own lived experience supports its applicability, relevance and value. In this way I hope to retain epistemological consistency within my research.

In short, then, the question of ontology is largely side-stepped by a phenomenological approach; the question of whether reality is objective, subjective, or occupies some intermediate position is bracketed and considered irrelevant to the phenomenon of interest, which is experience. The question of epistemology is closely related to this position: knowledge, within phenomenology, is subjective and is only gained via experience. My research will take these assumptions as a starting-point, taking a relativist approach to reality and knowledge underpinned by a phenomenological approach to gathering and analysing information which will, I hope, distinguish my research from that adopting any other qualitative methodology.

Hermeneutics

Closely linked with phenomenology is hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. The work of Heidegger in particular brings the two together (Smith et al., 2009). For Heidegger, interpretation is a fundamental part of phenomenological thought. Access to the Dasein can only ever be through interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Both Heidegger and Gadamer argued that interpretation cannot be objective. One cannot help but see a new phenomenon in the light of one's previous experiences (Smith et al., 2009). This mirrors the dialectic described by Finlay (2008); the phenomenologist has to move between a position of openness to new experience and reflexive awareness of the self. An additional complexity is added by Heidegger and Gadamer: when addressing a new phenomenon, they argue, we do not know which particular preconceptions and prior knowledge might be relevant. The phenomenon itself can take precedence, after which elements of prior knowledge come into play (Smith et al., 2009). This represents a reversal of the assumption that we approach new experiences with preconceptions already in place, ready to influence our first

impressions. Heidegger and Gadamer advocate a dynamic approach to bracketing, with a two-way dialogue between interpreter and data, whilst also acknowledging that bracketing is only ever partially achievable. Perhaps this notion adds a further dimension to Finlay's (2008) dialectic dance; not only does the researcher have to move between reflexivity and naivety, but there may also need to be a bidirectional temporal element to considering the data, moving between one's initial impressions and a more considered view, and perhaps back again, in order to assess the impact of one's bracketed preconceptions on one's interpretation over time. This is a non-linear way of thinking which can be compared and aligned with the hermeneutic circle described below.

Scheiermacher (1998) considered two aspects of interpretation: the grammatical (the literal meaning of language) and the psychological (the individuality of the speaker). Scheiermacher's view of the purpose of language is very different from a social constructionist stance; Scheiermacher is interested in the meaning which language holds for the speaker, and the ways in which this represents their realities, rather than the ways in which language creates realities during a social interaction. For Scheiermacher, reality is more than the language which describes it, and interpretation is the tool which can reveal subjective realities which extend beyond the language used to describe them (Smith et al., 2009). Scheiermacher's stance contrasts with Willig's (2001) views on the constructionist function of language (see above); the former provides, I think, a helpful way to understand the subjective nature of language in a way which is consistent with a phenomenological methodology. It is Scheiermacher's view which aligns most closely with my perspective on the role of language in my research.

Smith et al. (2009) describe the hermeneutic circle, defined as a dynamic and bidirectional relationship between the parts of a text or transcript and the whole. In order to understand a part, it needs to be placed in the context of the whole, and in order to understand the whole, one needs to consider its constituent parts. The hermeneutic circle also appears to link closely with the bidirectional approach to phenomenological knowledge espoused by Heidegger and

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Gadamer; although text may be interpreted according to prior knowledge, that text itself also impacts on the interpreter's knowledge. This notion also links with Merleau-Ponty's (1962) and Spiegelberg's (1984) assertions that worldly context and prior knowledge are inseparable from subjective experience.

Research rigour

While much of this section relates to qualitative research in general, some of the content relates specifically to IPA. This is why I have placed this section at the end of my methodology chapter, after my exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of IPA.

The rigour of quantitative research is traditionally assessed using criteria relating to validity and reliability. There has been much discussion amongst qualitative researchers as to whether and how these constructs should be applied to qualitative research (Smith, 2003). Reliability can be defined as consistency of results over time, accuracy of findings in relation to the relevant population, and the extent to which results are reproducible using similar methods (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam, 1995). Implicit in this definition are generalisability, objectivity and stability of measurement, constructs based on the assumption that an objective 'reality' can be accessed and quantified. The researcher is a passive observer rather than an active co-constructor of knowledge. The concept of reliability, according to this definition, belongs within the positivist paradigm; to try to apply these criteria to relativist research would not make sense.

Reliability can be considered a necessary precursor to validity, the latter being a broader construct commonly divided into a number of domains. Different writers define and subdivide the concept differently. Merriam (1995), amongst others, divides validity into 'internal' and 'external' domains. Internal validity refers to the extent to which what is supposed to be measured actually is what is being measured. Merriam equates external validity with generalisability, the extent to which findings are relevant and applicable to other situations and wider populations (some overlap with reliability can be seen here). Again, the

notion of validity clearly depends on the assumption that there is an objective and quantifiable reality from which widely applicable conclusions can be drawn. The notions of reliability and validity, then, are problematic within my research due to an inherent dissonance between positivist assumptions and the phenomenological approach to knowledge. I am not trying to provide data which is widely generalisable or replicable, nor am I aiming to be neutral or objective; to apply quality criteria which assume these aims would be nonsensical. To force positivist assumptions relating to reliability and validity onto my research would lead to the latter appearing inadequate and inferior as a result of the epistemological mismatch (e.g. Smith, 1996).

Some writers have attempted to redefine reliability and validity to render them more relevant and applicable to qualitative research. Morse et al. (2002) argue that the use of relativist approaches to research has led to a shift in responsibility for ensuring rigour from researchers to those reading their work. They believe that this responsibility should be re-embraced by researchers as part of data collection and analysis, and that reclaiming notions of reliability and validity is an appropriate way to achieve this. They argue that the use of separate terminology in relation to rigour in qualitative research should be avoided because it, "marginalizes qualitative inquiry from mainstream science and scientific legitimacy." (Morse et al., 2002, p.16) It seems that a positivist philosophy underlies this argument; Morse et al. seem to be implying that qualitative research must take on the language of what might be termed 'mainstream science' in order to be credible or legitimate.

I prefer to see qualitative research, and in particular IPA, as a different but equally legitimate way of understanding the world rather than as a deviation from 'real' science. I intend, therefore, to avoid the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' and seek ways of ensuring rigour which are epistemologically fitting and consistent with a phenomenological approach. Smith (1996) suggests criteria for ensuring rigour within qualitative research including internal consistency, presentation of raw data, independent audit, triangulation of evidence, and member validation (checking one's interpretations with participants after

analysis). Smith's suggestion regarding the presentation of raw data, in order to allow readers to form their own opinions, appears in part to shift the responsibility for ensuring rigour from researcher to audience (as criticised by Morse et al., 2002). However, within a relativist paradigm, whereby knowledge is contextually co-constructed, reader interpretation of a researcher's interpretation can surely be expected and even invited. Within IPA this could be argued to extend the 'double hermeneutic' into a 'triple hermeneutic': phenomena are interpreted firstly by research participants, secondly by the researcher and thirdly by the reader.

Yardley (2000) offers a set of principles by which the quality of qualitative research might be ensured. These are briefly described below:

- *Sensitivity to context.* This includes awareness of relevant literature as well as using data as fully as possible to draw one's conclusions. I have already addressed the issue of the reflexivity-naivety dialectic in my approach to my data; this dialectic will also need to include holding but bracketing my awareness of the literature in my interactions with participants and interview transcripts. Sensitivity to context, within my research, will also include awareness of my own positionality, consciously bracketing my own preconceptions (yet also being aware of the limitations of this process) and placing my findings within their systemic context, i.e. the school and other systems in which participants' experiences take place.

- *Commitment, rigour, transparency and coherence.*

  ◦ Commitment: this can include extensive experience of the methodology and/or immersion in the subject matter and data. I cannot offer extensive experience of IPA but I can draw on my research supervisor's experience. I also intend to immerse myself as fully as possible in the interview data by listening, transcribing, reading and re-reading it.

  ◦ Rigour: this refers to the thoroughness of the analysis and the appropriateness of the participants selected. I will select my

participants according to criteria outlined in the next chapter and
will analyse my data as thoroughly as I can, with support from my
supervisor.

- ◦ Transparency and coherence: these allude to the way in which the
  research is written up, and might include ensuring that every stage
  of the process is made explicit, is appropriately justified and is
  consistent with the methodology. I shall endeavour to do this as
  thoroughly as possible within the permitted word limit.
- *Impact and importance.* This refers to whether the research provides
  useful insights and leads to improvements in practice. The aim of my
  research is to provide insights and ways of understanding to those
  working with young people whose school attendance is low, hopefully
  with the consequence that this insight and understanding might
  impact positively on their practice.

It has also been argued that one of the most important aspects of achieving
rigour in research is to ensure consistency between the research question,
ontology, epistemology and methodology; there is no 'right' or 'wrong' approach
provided that this consistency is maintained (Yardley, 2008; Carter & Little,
2007).

Based on all of the above, I intend to adopt the following approaches to
ensuring the rigour and quality of my research:

- I will aim to ensure epistemological and methodological consistency
  throughout, considering my data and my approaches to it from a
  phenomenological perspective.
- I will ask my research supervisor to comment upon the consistency
  and thoroughness of my analytical approach.
- I will present my interview transcripts in order that my analysis is
  transparent.
- I will relate my findings to the existing literature.
- I will make explicit the ways in which my participants were selected

and justify my choices.

- I will write up my research as transparently as possible, explaining and justifying my decisions clearly and consistently.
- I will suggest ways in which my research makes a unique contribution to the existing literature and how it might impact on practice.

I do not intend to take my analysis back to my participants to check my interpretation ('member validation': Smith, 1996). Firstly, I am unlikely to have sufficient time. Secondly, my interpretation is my interpretation, and will by definition contain something of myself rather than being a literal re-representation of the interview transcripts.

Methods

This chapter will describe the processes involved in the practical aspects of my research. The headings in this chapter are based on those suggested by Smith et al. (2009). Before beginning the processes described below (with the exception of the initial planning conversations and the completion of my pilot interview), I sought and obtained ethical approval from the university (see Appendix VII at the back of my thesis for evidence).

The table below shows a time-line of the planning and preparation of my research with school staff, from my initial conversations until I carried out my five interviews:

Date	Activity
September 2013	Initial conversation with SENCO
Autumn term 2013	Ongoing planning conversations with SENCO and EWO
December 2013/ January 2014	Focus and aims of research agreed with school staff. Pilot participant recruited by SENCO.
February 2014	Pilot interview with Robyn, Year 11 student.
May 2014	First attempts to recruit participants for main study (Year 10 students at the time); EWO approached numerous students who met my criteria (see below) and asked for indications of interest. EWO gave out information sheets and consent forms to all interested students.
June/July 2014	Repeated (unsuccessful) attempts by EWO to obtain signed paperwork for participation in study.
September/October 2014	I contacted EWO for progress update. No written consent gained yet. EWO rang parents of interested students to seek their consent to give me their telephone numbers. I obtained phone numbers for six potential participants' parents.
October 2014	Made contact with potential participants' parents; received positive response from five (no response from sixth).
Late October/early November 2014	Carried out five interviews.
November 2014	Began process of transcription and analysis.

Selection and contact with participants

During the planning of this research I met several times with the SENCO and EWO at Newton School. They offered to approach Year 11 students and ask

them whether they would be interested in participating. Possible participants were approached by the EWO if they met the following criteria:

- School attendance during Year 10 was below 90%
- No clear reason for absence (e.g. long-term illness, a trip abroad, etc.)
- School staff judged that a discussion about school attendance would be unlikely to cause the student undue distress
- Students were not described as experiencing learning/language difficulties which would specifically impede the ability to communicate in an interview situation.

Other than the final bullet point, a consideration which seemed ethically and pragmatically necessary, I deliberately did not investigate whether any of my participants were, for example, on the school's SEN register, known to the EPS, known to CAMHS, or whether any had been given any psychiatric diagnosis. I did not want any such knowledge to feed into any preconceptions I might have. In any case, the focus of my research is on participants' lived experiences and the sense which they make of these experiences, not the ways in which other people describe them as individuals.

I asked the EWO (henceforth called Mrs Summers) to give information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix I) to any potential participants who met the above criteria and who showed an interest after a brief verbal description of my study and its purpose. She did so, but no forms were returned (despite additional prompts and reminders). I then asked whether Mrs Summers could seek verbal consent from the parents/carers of willing potential participants to give me their telephone numbers so that I could speak with them myself. This was arranged and I had six potential participants' parents' telephone numbers by mid-October 2014. I succeeded in making contact with five of these and arranged to visit each of them at home in order to speak with them and their children about taking part. All five agreed, and I obtained verbal and written consent from each young person and a parent and conducted each interview on

the same visit. My final five participants, then, were amongst a larger number approached by Mrs Summers; these five were the only young people who met the above criteria who agreed to participate and whose parents also consented.

Pilot interview

In February 2014 I conducted a pilot interview with a student then in Year 11 (henceforth called Robyn) who met the above criteria. The main purpose of this was to try my interview schedule with a young person in order to assess whether it would be workable and whether it would be likely to elicit appropriate information in relation to my research question. I was also able to ask Robyn for her opinion of my questions and of the interview process. Robyn was very helpful. She was able to reflect on how she felt about responding to my questions and whether she thought that they would be appropriate for others in a similar position. In response to Robyn's feedback I removed one question from my interview schedule, a question relating to the participant's view of themselves as a person. Robyn found this question difficult and slightly uncomfortable and, on reflection, I decided that it was not sufficiently relevant to my research question to justify inclusion anyway. Robyn also suggested that, had she been asked to participate in my interview a year or two previously, when her own difficulties were more acute, she may have found the experience upsetting. This led to my request to school staff that they explicitly consider the potential emotional impact of participation for any students whom they might approach.

Having completed the interview with Robyn, I transcribed and began to analyse part of it. The purpose of this was two-fold; firstly to enable me to practise the initial stages of an IPA analysis, and secondly so that I could seek an opinion from my research supervisor about the approach I had taken, in order to be better prepared for beginning to analyse participants' interview transcripts later. Robyn's interview was not analysed fully and included in my thesis; I did not have ethical approval for my study when I interviewed her, and I did not have her consent to use her interview data in this way.

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Participants

The five young people who took part in my research were Year 11 students at Newton School, all aged fifteen at the time of their interviews (October and November 2014). All have been given a pseudonym, some chosen by themselves and others chosen by me. All of my participants (coincidentally) came from the same high school. All are native English speakers. It emerged during and after my interviews that Eden had been given a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) by CAMHS and that Sarah and Michael were actively known to CAMHS as a result of anxiety-related difficulties. It also emerged later than none of my participants had been known to the EPS during their time at Newton School. Key information relating to each participant is summarised in the table below:

Pseudonym	Gender	Attendance (Year 10: whole year) - to nearest %	Parent present in the room during interview?
Michael	M	78%	No
Rosie	F	81%	No
Eden	M	89%	Yes
Sarah	F	89%	No
George	M	79%	Yes

Development of the interview schedule

My interview schedule was developed with direct reference to my research questions and to the advice provided in Smith et al. (2009). In addition to my interview schedule, Appendix IV also contains a table showing the links between my research questions and my interview questions. I aimed to develop questions in a format which would be compatible with IPA and a phenomenological approach to knowledge. My goal was to produce questions which avoided imposing my own agenda and allowed for knowledge to be created inductively. I was aware of the risk that my questions, if sufficiently directive, could potentially create the themes which I would later identify, so I sought to avoid this by making the questions broad and open-ended. I sought to avoid implications of causality in the questions, as this is not something which IPA (or qualitative research generally) aims to address (e.g. Willig, 2001).

The interview process

On arrival at each participant's house, I explained my purpose and talked each young person and a parent through the information sheet (see Appendix I). I invited them to ask questions and clarified their right to withdraw at any point, including afterwards. Sarah was uncertain whether she wished to take part so I showed her my interview schedule in order that she could make a more informed decision. The other four participants agreed without hesitation.

I explained that I was not there to judge nor to criticise behaviour, nor was I trying to change it; I merely hoped to understand participants' experiences better. I explained that I did not work for Newton School. I reassured participants that everything they told me would be fully anonymised (unless a safeguarding issue arose). I told them that my findings would be shared with colleagues within my placement EPS and with some school staff. I explained that, by sharing this information, I hoped that professionals might gain an enhanced understanding of some of the issues which can be faced by young people whose school attendance is low, and that it might provide them with some additional factors to consider and questions to ask. I also told participants and their parents that interviews would be audio-recorded so that I could transcribe and analyse them afterwards.

Each interview was fully audio-recorded, including a repetition of me gaining participants' verbal consent to participate. I asked each parent and young person whether the parent wanted to remain in the room, and each parent deferred this decision to their son or daughter. Eden's and George's mothers remained in the room whereas Michael's, Rosie's and Sarah's did not (but all remained within the house). Michael's interview lasted for two hours and the other four interviews lasted 30 to 40 minutes each, including, in George's case, a conversation with his mother after the main interview. I have not analysed George's mother's contribution, as this would have been methodologically inappropriate, but I will explore this a little in my Discussion chapter.

The analytical process

I began my analysis by listening to each audio recording and transcribing each interview in full into the central column of a table (see Appendix VIII for full transcripts). My speech is represented by italic black text and my participants' speech is in ordinary black text. In Eden's and George's interviews, their mothers' speech is in green text. I then read through each transcript and began adding exploratory comments in the right-hand column as I read. I repeated this process, adding to my notes on the second reading. I used ordinary text for general, literal comments, italic text for comments relating to participants' use of language, and underlined text for more conceptual comments (as suggested by Smith et al., 2009). Throughout this reading and commenting process I tried to keep in mind the phenomenological approach to knowledge and its focus on lived experience. I tried to avoid adding much interpretation at this stage, basing my comments closely on the content of each transcript and attempting to be aware of, and to bracket, my prior knowledge and assumptions.

After completing my initial exploratory comments on each transcript, I moved into the left-hand column of each transcript and began to identify emerging themes. Again, this process is described by Smith et al. (2009). This part of the analysis involves a higher level of interpretation and moves further from the original transcript, relying as much on the exploratory comments as the transcript itself. This is the stage at which the 'interpretative' part of IPA becomes more salient; I selected the exploratory comments which I felt were most important and most reflective of something fundamental to the lived experience of each individual participant. I created my emerging themes based on these.

Having repeated this process with each of my transcripts, I copied and pasted the contents of the 'Emerging themes' column from each transcript into a new document. I began grouping the emerging themes together into columns, forming what Smith et al. (2009) term "subordinate themes". The tables showing my subordinate themes for each transcript can be found in Appendix II. I decided on these categorisations based on criteria related to distinctiveness:

each subordinate theme appears, to me, to be significantly different and distinct from every other subordinate theme within the same transcript. There is some overlap in terms of individual emerging themes; there are some which might have fitted into more than one subordinate theme and I had to choose which appeared to offer the best fit. This is subjective and interpretative and there were no 'right' or 'wrong' ways to organise this information. I attempted to ensure a degree of rigour here by consulting with my research supervisor for a second opinion on the categorisation of some emerging themes from Michael's transcript and also by ensuring that I could argue for the individual distinctiveness of each of my subordinate themes within each transcript.

Having generated a list of subordinate themes from each transcript, I then copied and pasted all of the subordinate themes from all five transcripts onto a single document (colour-coded for each participant: see Appendix III). I moved these subordinate themes around into groups in order to create superordinate themes, each encompassing subordinate themes from between one and five participants. Subordinate themes which I considered sufficiently distinct to be separable at that analytical level have, in many cases, been organised into the same superordinate theme. This reductionism is an inevitable part of the analytical process. I have endeavoured to ensure, though, that some of the original complexity and distinctiveness of the original subordinate themes is retained in my analysis. This is part of the hermeneutic circle: the part is considered in the context of the whole, and the whole in the context of smaller constituent parts.

In the next chapter I will present the outcomes of the analytical process described above. The chapter will be divided into sections, each of which will focus on one of the superordinate themes which I identified (see Appendix III). I will begin with the superordinate themes identified in all five interviews and then proceed to a selection of the superordinate themes which I identified in fewer transcripts. Within each section of the chapter I will refer back to some of the subordinate themes which comprised each chosen superordinate theme, selecting those subordinate themes which seemed to me to encapsulate best

the essence of each superordinate theme for my participants. I will refer back to some emerging themes where this is helpful and I will use quotations which I consider to illustrate the essence of my participants' experiences in relation to the themes explored.

This process has been interpretative and necessarily reductionist; it is impossible to include every nuance of each participant's experience and perspective. I have had to be selective, and my selections will reflect my own subjective view of what should be prioritised. I have tried to make my selections, as far as possible, according to what seemed most important and salient for my participants, based on my phenomenological interpretation of their accounts. There is inevitably some overlap and cross-referencing between the superordinate themes; these divisions in content are, after all, a construction of my own rather than an experiential reality. While I feel that I can argue for the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each superordinate theme (and each subordinate theme within each transcript), nevertheless there are emerging themes within subordinate themes, and subordinate themes within superordinate themes, which could quite appropriately have been categorised in more than one way. Because of this overlap there is a tendency for sub-sections of my Analysis chapter to become shorter as the chapter progresses; some relevant material from within the later superordinate themes will already have been explored earlier in the chapter.

Given that I am acknowledging the interpretative nature of my analysis, it should be borne in mind that the language which I use reflects my interpretation rather than any objective reality. My analytical claims are my own subjective responses, and as such should be seen as the second part of the double hermeneutic; the sense which I make of my participants' sense-making of their lived experience.

Analysis

The superordinate themes and the number of transcripts in which I identified them can be seen below:

Superordinate theme	Number of transcripts
Social and relational experience	5
Passivity and lack of control	5
Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities	5
Personal competence, agency and control	4
Impression management and positive self-presentation*	4
School as a holistically negative experience*	3
School systems and the establishment	3
Temporal aspects of experience*	3
The emotional self	2

*Themes created predominantly out of participants' use of language.

Within this chapter I will not rely on overtly psychological language or specific psychological theories. This is because my aim is to take as inductive an approach as possible, aiming to understand my participants' experience on its own terms rather than imposing any prior knowledge or theories from the literature. In this way I hope to ensure methodological consistency, retaining the principles of a phenomenological approach to research in which knowledge is derived only from lived experience. This chapter will not make specific references to the literature, nor will it endeavour to link my analysis back to my research questions at this stage; I will bring all of these aspects of the research together in my Discussion chapter.

Some of the subordinate theme headings included within superordinate themes

in this chapter appear to overlap significantly. This is the result of having to bring together a number of emerging themes within each transcript to create subordinate theme headings which best described the emerging themes contained within them. It was not easy to encapsulate the breadth of the constituent emerging themes in each case without some duplication of vocabulary across transcripts, but I hope that the nuances of each subordinate theme included below will be tangible in my explorations of these and in the quotations which I have selected with which to illustrate them.

Space prohibits the detailed exploration of every superordinate theme identified. I will begin with the three superordinate themes identified in all five transcripts: 'Social and relational experience', 'Passivity and lack of control' and 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities'. I will then proceed to consider the superordinate themes 'Personal competence, agency and control', 'School systems and the establishment' and 'The emotional self'. I have selected these six superordinate themes to explore in detail for the following reasons:

- Analysing in detail those superordinate themes which I identified in all five transcripts enables me to give all five participants more of a voice.

- The superordinate themes which I have chosen seemed to me the broadest and most rich, in that I could explore them in depth and provide good illustrative quotations to support my analysis.

- These themes, to me, lend themselves most effectively to a phenomenological approach to analysis (unlike those superordinate themes identified predominantly via participants' use of language).

- Given the limited space available, analysing every superordinate theme in detail would limit the depth and detail which I could include. It is in keeping with the idiographic nature of my research to explore a narrower range of topics in depth rather than a wider range of topics in a briefer, more shallow way. This research is not intended to be exhaustive.

- 'The emotional self' is analysed in some detail, despite only being

identified in two transcripts, because it appeared so significant in both of those accounts and because its inclusion gives Sarah, who said relatively little, more of a voice. This superordinate theme also relates strongly to much of the ESNA literature. The inclusion of this superordinate theme here is arguably based more on the 'interpretative' part of IPA than the 'phenomenological'. I will consider this issue further in my Discussion chapter.

The remaining three superordinate themes, those which were more predominantly language-based, will be considered much more briefly at the end of this chapter.

Some quotations have been edited so that the most salient points could be highlighted without unnecessary wordage (e.g. me prompting participants to expand on their points). Quotations are referenced using line numbers and can be found in full in the transcripts in Appendix VIII. An ellipsis does not signify an omission; I have used this symbol where a speaker failed to finish a sentence or where I have started or finished a quotation mid-sentence. Omissions are signified by the use of empty square brackets: [ ]. Text contained within square brackets is editorial, added for contextual clarification.

Social and relational experience

This very broad superordinate theme manifested in a variety of ways across and within my interviews. I will explore this by focusing on the following subordinate themes:

- Bullying and social difficulties
- Importance of friendships and positive social experience
- Self as distant/different from peers
- Teacher behaviour/relationships with teachers

Bullying and social difficulties

For Rosie, the experience and consequent fear of being bullied, along with the feeling that school staff and systems had failed in their duty to prevent this,

constituted the major barrier to school attendance.

Rosie: *Erm... I used to go, like, every day, but then, like, I used to get hit and everything, and then Mrs Lang never done anything, so... I just got scared to come to school and everything.*

Karen: *Yeah?*

Rosie: *So that's why I didn't go as much.*

(Rosie, 44-50)

Rosie's experience of bullying was the turning point; she went from attending full-time to avoiding school because of the fear of violence. Rosie casts herself as the innocent victim of bullying and implies an expectation that school staff should have intervened. The notion of Rosie's passivity in this situation will be explored within the next superordinate theme, 'Passivity and lack of control'.

Michael expressed the view that bullying will always be present, regardless of efforts to prevent it; his attitude is more resigned than Rosie's, as though he does not really expect anyone even to try to deal with it. Michael casts 'bullies' as a homogeneous out-group, unreachable and unchangeable. Based on his experience, he regards systemic anti-bullying efforts as largely futile:

Michael: *Er... From what I can remember, I've always had bullies. And you can't stop bullies. Like, even if you have anti-bullying things where they have in some schools, where you have to sign a thing to say that you won't bully someone...*

Karen: *Oh yeah?*

Michael: *But it doesn't stop bullying, they still do it. Like, they don't care.*

(Michael, 194-202)

Issues around loneliness and social isolation are also prominent in Rosie's and Michael's accounts:

Rosie: *In St Peter's, because I was always lonely, I was, like, that girl that, like, when she got called names... I'd just put my head down, and just walk away, sometimes cry and everything...*

(Rosie, 262-264)

Rosie may feel that her resilience and coping resources were reduced by her loneliness and lack of friends. The flip-side of this, the buffering effect of

friendships, will be considered later. Michael made several references to being 'outcasted':

Karen: *Outcasted?*

Michael: *Not accepted by the common majority would be a way to explain that.*
(Michael, 1456-1459)

For Michael, this 'outcasting' is a very salient part of his social experience and may have become a key part of his identity. Michael attributes aspects of his personality development and a sense of maturity to this experience:

Michael: *So, er, the way I've, like, the way I've changed within growing up, being outcasted and such, I've learnt to have more independent thought, which is why I grew up so early, at like 14, 15 probably.*
(Michael, 1666-1669)

Michael refers to his GCSE English text, "Of Mice and Men", to explain his views on the impact of loneliness:

Michael: *But like, when people get lonely, they, they change. A lot. So like, some people get depressed, some people get, like, really horrible, and mean-spirited. So like... you can't go for so long being alone.*
(Michael, 1581-1584)

Michael sees friendship and positive social contact as fundamental human needs; without them, emotional well-being will decline and behaviour and even personality, according to Michael, will be adversely affected.

A recurring issue (present in my interviews with Sarah, Rosie and Michael) is an unexplained loss of previous friendships. Sarah reported having started at Newton School with friends from her previous school, but this situation did not last:

Karen: *...And then did they stay your friends, or...*

Sarah: *No... [ ] Erm, they just went off with other people...*
(Sarah, 322-328)

Michael's experience on transfer to St Peter's may be comparable:

Michael: *...by the time I got to St Peter's, like, everyone had changed, at least*

> *most of my old friends, apart from like one or two of them... [ ] So I just had like no friends till Year 8 or 9, and I was really sad.*
>
> *(Michael, 48-54)*

This may relate to Michael's experience of being "outcasted"; he and his former friends grew apart and he found himself excluded from what he saw as the social mainstream. His reported sadness seems directly related to his social isolation. The experience of losing friends seems, for Sarah and Michael, to have coincided with moving to a new school. Rosie may also have shared this experience:

> *Karen:* So it started off alright... [her time at St. Peter's]
>
> *Rosie:* Yeah
>
> *Karen:* ...and then it got worse?
>
> *Rosie:* Yeah, because like loads of my friends had ditched me.
>
> *(Rosie, 104-110)*

Rosie describes the profound impact on her experience at Newton School of a peer who, she reported, bullied her and manipulated her relationships, causing arguments and "fall-outs", turning others against her and even threatening her family:

> *Rosie:* [after verbal bullying relating to Rosie being upset when her Grandad died]
> And then, like, this year, it was like really big arguments - she started threatening me, and threatening to burn my house down, with me and my family in it and everything. And, like, Year Room didn't do anything.
>
> *(Rosie, 183-186)*

This quotation highlights, again, Rosie's expectation that school staff would intervene and her disappointment that they did not. Rosie reported that there was a week when this peer was absent from school, during which she had had no difficulties in attending full-time:

> *Rosie:* ...the week she was gone, it was peaceful. It was, like, me and my cousin, we got closer and everything, and me and my friends, we was really close and everything, we all got on well. [ ] ...there was no fall-outs, there was no people getting upset or anything, no-one starting arguments. And then she came back and then it all just started again.

(Rosie, 363-369)

By this stage it seems that Rosie understood her low school attendance as predominantly, if not solely, the result of unresolved problems with this single peer.

Importance of friendships and positive social experience

This subordinate theme resonates, to an extent, across all five transcripts. I identified a recurring emerging theme suggesting that friends can act as a protective factor or buffer against negative school experiences, increasing resilience and making the negative aspects of school life tolerable. Eden's account clearly illustrates this:

Karen: Ok. What was going well at school for you, at that time?

Eden: Er, dunno. I just... had friends and stuff.

Karen: You had friends?

Eden: Yeah, so I used to go in all the time. I didn't like the school really.
(Eden, 69-74)

Despite not liking school, having friends provided sufficient motivation for Eden to attend; it seems that the reward gained from these positive social interactions outweighed the negative aspects of school and made it bearable.

The general sense I gained from my interviews (with the possible exceptions of George and Eden) was that friendships and the social world were probably the most important aspects of school life, over and above learning, academic achievement or future aspirations (priorities of my own which I have tried to bracket). I asked Michael about his best hopes for the remainder of Year 11:

Michael: ... To deal with something that someone is dealing with now, that I've actually been really... I wouldn't say bad at dealing with, I've just been... over the year, this has gone on, this thing has gone on since July, I've known them. This thing between two people, er... I want to get that solved... [ ] So, I dunno, I just... I want to get some things solved between people, but I don't know if I can do it. But I'm there to, like, help, in case they need it.
(Michael, 991-1005)

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This aim illustrates Michael's self-appointed role as someone who is there to help and support his friends (this will be explored further below); this role has given him purpose and he takes his responsibility very seriously. To Michael, his small group of "outcasted" friends are by far the most valued aspect of school life. Michael's longer-term hopes also relate predominantly to the maintenance of friendships, particularly those friendships which have been strengthened by shared experiences of adversity:

Michael: *Er, my hopes for the future? Er... to be alive, and still have all the people I care about still be my friends. Even, like, no matter what happens, I still want them to be friends, because we've just been through so much, it's sort of just like... It would be the worst to just throw it away for nothing. So, just that...*
           (Michael, 978-982)

Sarah's recent experience of having made new friends took her experience of school, on a scale of one to ten, from a 'two' to a 'seven'. She cited new friendships as the only factor which had changed; the fact that she now has friends in school seems to have removed the former barriers to full-time attendance, again suggesting a positive buffer effect.

Self as different/distant from peers
This subordinate theme is particularly strong in Michael's account but also identifiable, in a different way, in Rosie's interview. Michael's description of himself and his friendship group as "outcasted" forms part of this. There are many moments in his interview in which Michael positions himself as different from most of his peers, in particular as more mature, thoughtful and intellectually superior:

Michael: *Er, yeah, I'd rather have, I'd just rather have a choice in everything that I do, but I know that wouldn't be a good idea for a lot of people, because there are some people who are actually quite unintelligent...*
           (Michael, 907-909)

Michael: *...But that only works for me because I've actually been thinking about this, whereas other people might not...*
           (Michael, 1234-1235)

Michael sees himself as an independent thinker who, rejected by the mainstream, has chosen to reject the mainstream and many of its values in return. By finding his own motivation and purpose, rather than adhering to the priorities of others, Michael's school attendance and academic achievement have become relatively unimportant to him. Michael has internalised, and perhaps takes some pride in, this sense of difference. Michael's disdain for his peers can be seen in the way he describes them, elevating himself above and away from them by homogenising them into derogatory out-group categories:

Michael: *Like, I hate attention-seekers and I hate sheep. Attention-seekers draw attention to themselves and sheep follow the people who draw attention to themselves, and then draw attention to themselves as a group. But then there's also the kind of people that would also bully other people, and it's the same, it's the same kind of group of people...*

(Michael, 1276-1281)

Rosie also sees herself to an extent as different but in a more passive way, framing herself as the undeserving victim of rejection:

Rosie: *Erm... I always got called a loner, as well, cos I was always alone at lunch and everything.*

(Rosie, 121-122)

This rejection is unwanted but Rosie seems to feel powerless to change it.

Teacher behaviour/relationships with teachers

This subordinate theme is strong in George's interview. George contrasts his experience of St Peter's School with that of Newton, based on his view of the staff and their impact on his enjoyment of lessons:

Karen: *...what was good at St Peter's, then?*

George: *The teachers were better.*

Karen: *Right, ok... What else?*

George: *I just enjoyed the classes more.*

Karen: *[ ] ...Is that to do with the subjects, or the teachers, or is that to do with, erm, who else was around, or... what do you think made them good?*

George: *Er, probably just the teachers were better then.*

(George, 70-86)

Later it emerged that George considered the teachers at Newton School to be excessively strict, stricter than they had been at St Peter's.

Karen: *...at what point did you stop going in full-time?*

George: *About three weeks after I started the Grammar... [ ] I just didn't like the lessons, or half the teachers... [ ] They was... a lot more strict.*

Karen: *...can you give me any examples of what that was like, then, what did they do, or...*

George: *Just pick on you more for, like, little things. Like talking and stuff.*

(George, 110-127)

George's experiences here also link closely with the superordinate theme 'Passivity and lack of control' explored below. George's mother told me that George was at imminent risk of permanent exclusion, as a result of his low attendance, and explained her view that he had become caught in a vicious cycle of rigidly-enforced sanctions which were actually making it more difficult for him to attend school. It seems possible that George's feelings of enforced passivity and negative experiences of school systems may be linked with this wider situation in addition to his relationships with individual staff members. These issues will be considered further in the Discussion chapter.

Eden's view of teachers and their impact on his experience also links with broader issues around control:

Eden: *I just never really liked school... [ ] I just don't like being educated! [ ] ...And I don't like some teachers.*

[ ]

Karen: *[ ] You don't like being educated, you said, didn't you... tell me what you mean by that.*

Eden: *Like, I just don't like having to be told what to do, and stuff.*

(Eden, 435-466)

Eden's relationships with his teachers are problematised by his dislike of being

controlled. His dislike of "being educated" seems to have less to do with individual teachers or education *per se* than to do with being "told what to do". Teachers (as a group) and school (as a system) represent the external control and loss of individual freedom which Eden appears to resent.

Michael, despite positioning himself as separate and distant from most of the systems and values of school (this will be discussed further later), is bothered by the thought that one particular teacher "hates" him:

Michael: *...my teacher just hates me, and it's not nice to have teachers hate me.*

Karen: *No...*

Michael: *But at the time I just, like, brush it off as though I don't care, but sometimes I do care.*

(Michael, 640-646)

Michael does, however, allude to the impact of positive relationships with teachers at Newton School:

Karen: *Can you think of anything that's going well for you at school at the moment, in general?*

Michael: *Oh, hmmm... No, I can't actually. Apart from, like, being chilled with most of my teachers, like... Some of, most of the teachers I have are actually pretty chilled...*

(Michael, 626-631)

Given that this was a very open question, having positive relationships with his teachers may be an important feature of Michael's current experience. This would be consistent with Michael's wider values: positive relationships with others are clearly very important to Michael, despite (and perhaps even because of) his self-described 'outcasted' status. Michael may also see himself as being more on a par with the adults in school, given that he sees himself as superior to most of his peers, which may help to explain the importance, to Michael, of being positively regarded by school staff:

Michael: *[having just described being irritated by a peer's behaviour]*
                So, a few lessons later I just asked, "Could I move a room away from this child?" and she's just like, "Sure." Like, she knows, she knows he's an arsehole, so it was fine...

(Michael, 1269-1272)

Michael may see himself as being on the same 'wavelength' as the teacher; he sees himself and the teacher as united in their derogatory view of the peer in question (as a "child" and an "arsehole").

Passivity and lack of control

Again, this is a broad superordinate theme with aspects manifesting across all five transcripts. The five subordinate themes which I identified are:

- Self as passive victim of others' actions/inaction
- Inevitability, lack of power/lack of conscious control
- External locus of control/others as responsible
- Self as passive/resigned to a situation
- Self as passive/helpless within the system

A salient point, for me, is that the two girls positioned themselves as very passive within their social and educational contexts without seemingly noticing or problematising this. The three boys were more explicit about their dislike for finding themselves in a passive, powerless position. Being in control and retaining personal agency seemed more explicitly important to them. I will explore this issue further in my Discussion chapter.

Self as passive victim of others' actions/inaction

This subordinate theme originates in Rosie's transcript. Rosie positions herself initially as a passive victim, vulnerable to bullying and to powerful peers controlling her social relationships (see above). She seemed to have felt let down or betrayed by school staff, whom she saw as powerful but ineffectual:

Rosie: *I would have liked them [school staff] to, like, have a word with her, when she like, when she says all these things. But, like, when she used to hit me and everything, like, yeah. Like, they didn't do anything about that either.*

Karen: *Did they not talk to her, then, or anything?*

Rosie: *No. They said that they'll sort it, but they never did.*

(Rosie, 223-230)

Rosie cast herself as someone who needed adults to deal with peer difficulties

on her behalf. She seemed to feel that she had no choice about this because she herself was powerless:

Rosie: Year Room never done anything about it, so then I always had to ring my Mum, and then my Mum had to come into the school, and she had to like, she had to go to Year Room herself and tell them, because every time I told them it was like, "Yeah, we'll sort it," and then it never got sorted...

(Rosie, 204-208)

The implication seemed to be that Rosie may have felt little agency when it came to missing school. It seemed that she had never thought about her experience of missing school in terms of choice. The way in which she positions herself in relation to her social experiences, and her experiences with school systems, seem to suggest that she experienced little sense of control. She may have felt pushed into a situation in which she could see no other options.

Inevitability, lack of power/lack of conscious control

For Michael, issues around passivity are more global, relating to the inevitabilities of the school system, wider society, human nature or life in general. Michael's feeling of resignation has already been explored a little in relation to bullying (see above). Some of his feelings can also be explained, I think, by his beliefs about the impact of upbringing on personality development and behaviour:

Michael: No, it's just... er... It's something to do with, er, just how kids are brought up to be, and that. Because, like, you know, some people have horrible upbringings, and it makes them into a horrible person...

(Michael, 207-209)

Michael is reluctantly resigned to others' negative traits and behaviours and does not blame them; he sees them as the victims of inadequate parenting and early life experiences. He frames some aspects of behaviour in very behaviourist terms, as the result of conditioning rather than choice. This perspective seems to apply to his own behaviour and that of others:

Michael: I think this is just people, just in human nature - when people know, or at least think they can get away with something, they'll try doing that

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> *something they can get away with. And I don't like it, but it's just how it is...*
>
> *(Michael, 1395-1398)*

Michael also sees the experience of school as stressful as an inevitability:

Michael: *All school usually does is just add on stress, so, not really... not really a stress reliever in any stretch of the imagination, it's just like, all it is is just a pile-up of stress and it, it doesn't go down so you just have to sort of deal with it. And it's a pain, just, what you have to do, I guess.*
(Michael, 829-833)

He cannot explain fully the reasons for the stressfulness of the school experience, but he sees it as universal and is resigned to having to deal with it as best he can:

Michael: *I think, I think the people - the attention-seekers that I was talking about - I think they probably are stressed at school, they just explain it differently, because they're just, they're just so stupid! Really. And it's, it's all annoying, that, like, when you actually sit and listen to them it just sounds like, er, school, for whatever reason, makes them stressed out. That's just how it is with everyone. I don't know why it is, but I am also stressed out by school.*
(Michael, 1340-1347)

This quotation also provides a rare example of Michael expressing a commonality between his own experience and that of the majority of his peers, although in doing so he reiterated his intellectual superiority; perhaps he felt the need to qualify or limit that commonality rather than let it stand at face value.

Almost paradoxically, Michael explained that his dislike of being externally controlled is an inevitable part of adolescent development which he is helpless to change:

Michael: *[after explaining his view that children should be brought up with strict boundaries]*
...I'm thinking control but I don't like control and I don't want to say it, but, you know, it's sort of necessary isn't it really... 'Cos I'm still, I'm probably still at the rebellious stage of growing up, so, er, like, control for me, I hate it, I hate control in any degree. I hate control, that's just how it is.
(Michael, 1940-1944)

A further paradox within Michael's account, also relating to choice and control, is his feeling that missing lessons in order to offer emotional support to his friends

has become not a matter of choice but one of duty, directly arising from his (consciously chosen) purpose in life:

Michael: When that happens I feel that there's no choice because it's sort of my duty now, it's sort of what I've, er... I just want to live to do that, instead of live for nothing.

(Michael, 506-508)

External locus of control/others as responsible

Like Michael, Eden shows some resentment towards his own lack of power and freedom; this can be seen above in his quotation about not wanting "to be educated," i.e. not wanting to be told what to do. Eden appears unhappy to find himself in a passive position, having things done to him rather than actively doing things for himself. Despite this resistance, though, Eden may see school staff and systems, rather than himself, as responsible for making school a more positive experience:

Karen: ...what would have helped you to get back into school full-time? What would have made a difference, do you think?

Eden: Erm... uh... Like, making some of the lessons more fun.

(Eden, 300-303)

Eden does not want to be seen as being controlled or affected by teachers' attempts to reprimand him for his absenteeism. His dislike of being "shouted at", and his lack of acknowledgement that this had any impact on his behaviour, suggest that he may be resisting attempts to control him and also resisting being seen to be controlled:

Eden: The teachers just used to, like, have a go at me and stuff...

Karen: Did that bother you, that teachers were having a go at you?

Eden: Hmmm, yeah. I don't like being, like, shouted at and stuff.

Karen: No, no. Do you think that changed your behaviour at all?

Eden: Erm... I'm not sure if it did.

(Eden, 891-899)

Eden may be trying to retain some power and agency within a system which he may perceive as trying to diminish this. Being able to retain control and choice

may be an important part of the way Eden sees himself. This stance, though, appears to contrast with Eden's external attributions, for example the reason for the onset of his absenteeism:

Karen: I'm just wondering what changed at that time, then?

Eden: Dunno... I think... I think it's 'cos I got a new game.
                                                          (Eden, 133-135)

Eden offers further reasons for his absenteeism:

Karen: What was your motivation there... [ ] what made you choose that?

Eden: Just when I had a bad lesson, like, I'd just go out of school with my mates.
                                                          (Eden, 734-738)

Again, the attribution appears to be external; despite his previous assertion that his behaviour is a choice, Eden explains his reasons in terms of external events (e.g. his new game, or "a bad lesson") and other people ("with my mates").

Self as passive/resigned to a situation

Sarah's passivity, I felt, manifested in the way in which she responded in the interview situation. The emerging themes within this subordinate theme came about, for the most part, as a result of her not replying, or replying, "Don't know," to many of my questions. She could not see how others could have changed her situation, how her situation could have been different, nor could she imagine how she would like the remainder of Year 11 to transpire. Sarah also presented as very passive in relation to her negative social experience:

Karen: So when you first came up to Newton School then, from St Peter's, did you have any friends that came up with you?

Sarah: Yeah.

Karen: You did? And then did they stay your friends, or...

Sarah: No.

Karen: Oh ok, can you tell me about that?

Sarah: Erm, they just went off with other people.

(Sarah, 317-328)

Sarah did not comment further; she did not seem to feel the need to provide any explanation or share how she felt about this. I pursued the topic again later:

Karen: *Were there any actual fall-outs, or was it just a case of they kind of drifted off and found new friends, or... how did that happen?*

Sarah: *They just found new friends.*

(Sarah, 525-528)

Again, Sarah seemed resigned to this experience. She made no attempt to elaborate nor to offer any description of her response.

Like Eden, Sarah expressed the view that lessons should be more "fun" and it is implied that it is the responsibility of others to make them more enjoyable:

Karen: *...imagine a scale that goes from one to ten, ok, one is 'school is really rubbish' and ten is 'school is really brilliant'. Where would you rate it at the moment, on that scale?*

Sarah: *Seven.*

Karen: *Seven? [ ] Ok, so what would need to change, then, for it to become an 'eight'? Just one step better?*

Sarah: *(Pause) Don't know.*

Karen: *Can you think of any slight, just slight improvements?*

Sarah: *(Pause) Better lessons.*

Karen: *Better lessons? What, what would make them better? Do you mean, like, different subjects or...*

Sarah: *No, like, just more fun.*

(Sarah, 365-383)

Self as passive/helpless within the system

George, like Eden, seems frustrated by his lack of power and control. The way in which George talks about the sanctions which are applied to him suggests that he sees himself as passive, albeit unwillingly, within wider school systems. Like Eden (see above), George seems reluctant to acknowledge that sanctions might impact on his subsequent behaviour. The fact that he reports repeatedly

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receiving the same sanction (isolation) suggests that his behaviour is not changing as a result:

George: *I'm still, like, getting sent out of some lessons. [ ] I end up put in isolation.*

Karen: *Do you? Does that happen a lot, then?*

George: *Yeah.*

Karen: *What for?*

George: *Just, getting sent out of lessons, getting caught off-site.*
<div align="right">*(George, 389-403)*</div>

When I asked George whether the threat of permanent exclusion had motivated him to change his behaviour, he did not answer. If he had said 'Yes' he would have had to acknowledge that his behaviour is being successfully controlled by school systems. If he had said 'No' this could, I think, perhaps have lead to some tension with his mother and might have gone against his general attempts to portray a positive impression of himself. George may be treading a fine line between maintaining some control and choice around his behaviour and also retaining aspiration and hope for his educational future. Keeping his mother on his side might also be a contributing factor to the way in which George attempts to minimise, through his use of language, what might be termed his 'deviant' behaviour (see 'Other superordinate themes' at the end of this chapter).

George may also see himself as the victim of others' expectations which he is powerless to change:

Karen: *...So, thinking back to that time, when you first started to, to miss lessons and to miss days, what do you think might have helped you to get back into school full-time?*

George: *Erm, dunno.*

Karen: *Is there anything anyone could have done, either anyone in school... Anyone in school could have done, first of all?*

George: *Could have got me out of French!*
<div align="right">*(George, 190-199)*</div>

I do not know whether George has tried to negotiate this outcome, but his response implies that he may see the removal of this expectation as someone else's responsibility. Perhaps there is an element of resignation in George's view of the school as an organisation (akin to aspects of Michael's experience); he cannot beat the system.

Although George explicitly takes responsibility for his behaviours, there is also an element of him being led by peers. Despite his apparent motivation to change his behaviour, he cannot avoid being distracted by the behaviour of others:

Karen: *...you say, actually, you could stop messing about, and you'd like to stop messing about, I wonder what's getting in the way of you stopping messing about.*

George: *Just people in my lessons, I just get distracted.*

Karen: *Ah, ok. People distract you, you end up messing about, I see. People like your friends, or other people, or...*

George: *Just my mates.*

Karen: *...Ok. What do they do, then, that distracts you?*

George: *Starts talking to me, then... just mess around.*

(George, 488-501)

Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities
The following subordinate themes comprise this section:

- Personal values/beliefs
- Aspiration and priorities
- Personal goals and motivations
- Values and motivations

Personal values/beliefs
Michael talks a great deal, explicitly and implicitly, about his values and beliefs. These link strongly with elements of personal choice, control and agency (see above) and with inevitability and an external locus of control (see above also).

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One of Michael's most explicitly-stated values relates to his decision to find a purpose in life, and his choice that this purpose should be to help others (see above). He elaborates:

Michael: I'm a very big, I'm very big on humanism, I guess it's called, where like...
              Are you familiar with that term? I've heard people say it but I think it's
              like to do with how... the way you believe the world should work is like
              people, like, together working, rather than anything else. I'm big, I'm big
              on that, like, just supporting other people and having other people
              support me as well. It's nice when people support you but it's, it feels
              nicer, er, to give something than to take something...

(Michael, 1183-1190)

Michael's espoused philosophy here is very much in keeping with his stated purpose. His cooperative, mutually supportive approach is reflected strongly in his actions (e.g. getting others out of trouble, missing lessons to be with friends who need emotional support).

Michael: So, yeah, I dunno, I just kind of like helping people out, and I prioritise
              everyone else over myself, because I don't think there's that many
              people that, like, I care for that care back, so, like, I just show my caring-
              ness a lot more often to show that it's actually there... rather than some
              people that don't show it at all. They do care, but they just don't show it,
              or something like that. So... I like to show it, 'cos it, you know, it's nice to
              show it, and it makes people happy, and making people happy makes
              me happy.

(Michael, 545-552)

It seems very important to Michael that he cares for others and that he shows this; it is also important to him that others know that he cares about them. Michael is motivated to make others happy:

Michael: ...it feels better to give someone something, I think, like... it's nice to
              take things as well because it's like a memento, kind of thing, but it's
              nice to give things because, you know, it makes people happy, so...
              even if it is just false happiness, I, I'm still happy with it, as long as
              they're at least somewhat happy, then I'm fine.

(Michael, 1212-1217)

Michael will give material gifts to make others happy, but he does not see the recipient's happiness in this case as particularly meaningful. For Michael, genuine happiness seems to arise as the result of positive relationships and mutual understanding with others.

Michael's values sometimes conflict with the systems in place around him in school. Referring to the points-based sanctions system, he explains:

Michael: *But I just, I just don't care because it's a false reward system, so I just don't care.*

Karen: *So it's not meaningful to you, that system, really?*

Michael: *No, but they make it out to be something that you're supposed to care about but I just... Sometimes I just forget I'm supposed to.*
                                                                          (Michael, 144-151)

Michael understands that the system is designed to motivate him to behave in a certain way and feels that there is an expectation that he is "supposed to care" about it. To him, though, it is meaningless; the notion of "caring" about this system is externalised. This links with Michael's positioning of himself outside of the mainstream, distant from his peers and from the systems around him.

Aspiration and priorities

Michael does not talk a great deal about academic aspiration. He seems ambivalent about whether to take on board advice that academic success is important:

Michael: *...I'd just rather have a choice in everything that I do, but I know that wouldn't be a good idea for a lot of people, because there are some people who are actually quite unintelligent and think that, like, English, Maths and Science and whatever you need for qualifications isn't important, when they actually are. Or they just don't care, and that's bad, because you're supposed to care about that. But, like, I don't really see why I'm supposed to care yet, but I've been told I'm supposed to care so that's sort of what I'm doing.*
                                                                          (Michael, 907-915)

Michael seems torn between genuinely caring about academic achievement and wondering whether this is merely another externally-imposed value which he should reject, or at least question. He equates being "unintelligent" with not thinking that certain academic subjects are important. He seems to imply that, although he cannot really see the value of academic achievement at the moment, there may come a time in the future when he will.

Rosie, however, already appears to have fully internalised academic success as a priority:

Rosie: *Like, I've realised that I need to, like, buckle down more and everything, because I've got all my exams this year...*

(Rosie, 159-160)

There is no indication that this is externally imposed; Rosie seems to have made this decision herself. This priority seems to have helped to give Rosie the strength to focus on her academic work rather than being drawn into altercations with those who bully her. For Rosie, increased school attendance is also a sign that she is succeeding:

Rosie: *Like... I'm doing better this year 'cos, like, I got an e-mail from Mrs Lang the other day saying that my attendance was better.*

(Rosie, 33-35)

Rosie's espoused values and priorities appear quite strongly aligned with the values and priorities of the school system, even though she appears to feel let down by school staff and systems when it comes to dealing with bullying (see above). This attitude contrasts starkly with Michael's conscious rejection, or at least questioning, of many systemic values. Also unlike Michael, Rosie has a clear goal for the future:

Rosie: *...When I finish school I want to go to college and do childcare.*

(Rosie, 544)

Rosie has done a little research into this option and knows where the relevant training course is available. Rosie also strongly values friendships (see above) but her stated goal is her own and she does not frame her future in terms of her relationships with her peers. Sarah talks about her future in very similar terms:

Karen: *So, what are your, what are your best hopes for the rest of your time in education?*

Sarah: *Hmmm... I want to go to college and do childcare.*

(Sarah, 461-464)

Like Rosie, Sarah had already spoken about the importance of friendships within the school environment, but, again like Rosie, her future plans appear to be her own and she makes no mention of her social world forming part of her future planning. Sarah knew where she could study her chosen subject but appeared to have given relatively little thought to the qualifications she would need in order to access this, or to what she would do after completing the two-year course.

Personal goals and motivations

Both Eden and George are, like Rosie, motivated towards a specific future goal. Rosie seems motivated to succeed in her examinations for their own sake, and does not explicitly link academic success with her career goal. Eden's and George's academic aspirations appear much more directly motivated by their career goals (although Eden also expresses an interest in learning about engineering). Eden explains:

Karen: *...what are your aims, educationally, what do you hope to do in the future?*

Eden: *Be a plumber.*

[ ]

Karen: *Do you know what you need to do, to...*

Eden: *I, I looked it up on the internet, at, like, what grades you need, and stuff.*
(Eden, 539-551)

George is hoping to train with his father to become a builder. He has linked the need to achieve specific GCSE passes with this longer-term aim:

Karen: *Think about the rest of this academic year, then, the rest of Year 11 - erm, what are your best hopes for that time, the rest of that time?*

George: *Er.. to get GCSEs.*

Karen: *Yeah? Tell me more about that, then - what do you want to achieve there?*

George: *Er, to get a GCSE in construction.*

Karen: *Ah ok, is that your main focus, is it, construction?*

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George: *Yeah.*

Karen: *So what are you planning to do after Year 11, then, next year?*

George: *Er, get an apprenticeship, with my Dad.*

Karen: *Oh right. What does Dad do?*

George: *Er, builder.*

(George, 531-551)

Rosie's career aim appears to be strongly linked with her own and her family's view of her abilities, and perhaps a feeling of being valued for showing these strengths and skills:

Rosie: *...I've been wanting to do it [childcare] since my little brother Mark was born, because like...[ ] I babysit him like every week, and it's like... When my Mum and Dad walk out the door it's like I'll just be sitting here, while Mark is watching TV, and then like when they come back they'll just see me and Mark playing games, like playing cards or something. And my Mum and Dad said that I am, like, good at helping with Mark. Because, like, Mark has told my Mum and Dad as well that he likes me looking after him cos he enjoys himself and everything.*

(Rosie, 572-593)

For Eden, however, the main motivation behind his career goal (and therefore his motivation towards academic success) appears to be financial:

Eden: *I looked at what grades you need to be a dentist, but I'm not clever enough to be a dentist.*

Karen: *Do you think you'd like to be?*

Eden: *Yeah, 'cos I think they get paid a lot.*

Karen: *Ah... is that, erm, is that a big motivation for you?*

Eden: *Yeah.*

[ ]

Karen: *Do plumbers get paid quite a lot?*

Eden: *Yeah.*

(Eden, 567-583)

I wonder whether, for Eden, the motivation towards a high income is linked with his need not to be controlled by others but to be able to make his own decisions

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(see above). Eden's desire to succeed academically does not seem to be the result of him internalising the values system of the school, but rather a case of his own priorities happening to coincide with school priorities on this occasion because of potential long-term gain indirectly resulting from examination success:

> Karen: ...you've gone from not really being bothered about grades, and then you said that the experience had made you think, actually, you are bothered about getting good grades. I wonder what made that change happen?
>
> Eden: Er, I just thought, like... when I'm older I'd be, like, poor, if I didn't get good grades and stuff.
>
> Karen: Ah...
>
> Eden: So I wanted to do good at school so I can, like, try and become rich.
> (Eden, 844-855)

Values and motivations

George's values and motivations, as well as being career-driven, appear to link with inclusion and acceptance. George's school attendance appears to have increased since he was threatened with exclusion from Newton School; despite not liking the school, George appears motivated to remain there rather than being sent elsewhere. Like Rosie, George seems unconsciously to have internalised some of the values of the school establishment:

> Karen: ...what was going well, then, at that time?
>
> George: Er, I was just attending all my lessons and everything.
> (George, 58-60)

Full attendance is framed as a positive, something to be acknowledged as holistic evidence of school "going well". George's internalisation of school values is only partial, however:

> George: Well it's my choice to, like, speak, and mess around and that.
>
> Karen: Yeah? Even though you know that you're gonna get... Or do you like to get sent out?
>
> George: If it's French I'm not really bothered.

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Karen: *Right, ok. So I guess that's maybe not a particularly effective sanction for you, then...*

George: *No*

Karen: *... if you're not actually that bothered about being in there anyway... is that a fair comment?*

George: *Yeah.*

(George, 419-433)

Personal competence, agency and control

This superordinate theme was identified in four out of five transcripts (all but Sarah's). This is a shorter section than the previous two; I do not want to repeat material which I have already explored under 'Passivity and lack of control' above (this superordinate theme could be argued to be largely the flip-side of that). Here I will focus on the following subordinate themes:

- Self as competent and in control of the future
- Personal competence and agency
- Externally imposed 'control' vs. freedom

Self as competent and in control of the future

George and Eden seem to see themselves as academically competent enough to achieve their future goals. They have both taken some independent responsibility in terms of researching the qualifications they will need in order to be able to access apprenticeships. Eden is realistic enough to consider that he may not be "clever" enough for some career options, but he seems fairly confident that he can reach his chosen goal:

Karen: *...what are your aims, educationally, what do you hope to do in the future?*

Eden: *Be a plumber. [ ] I, I looked it up on the internet, at, like, what grades you need, and stuff.*

[ ]

Karen: *That's good...*

Eden: *I always look at what grades you need for jobs.*

Karen: *Yeah?*

Eden: *I looked at what grades you need to be a dentist, but I'm not clever enough to be a dentist.*

(Eden, 539-568)

George, similarly, has clear plans for his future. He is reasonably confident that he can achieve his goals:

Karen: *Is that, is that gonna happen? Is that, are you on target for achieving those things that you want to achieve? [the GCSEs required to start his apprenticeship]*

George: *Er, I dunno...*

Mum: *You're not, are you?*

George: *Yeah, I'm on target.*

Karen: *You think that you're likely to get the grades that you need, or that you're hoping to get?*

George: *Er, should do, yeah.*

(George, 571-583)

Despite his mother's doubts, George has taken control of planning for his future and is taking some responsibility for ensuring that he can meet his goals. George's sense of agency in terms of behaviour is also salient within his interview:

Karen: *...when you started to miss school, how much did you feel that was your choice, and that you were in control of that, or how much did you feel like you had to, there wasn't really any choice? [ ]*

George: *It was my choice.*

(George, 179-184)

George takes responsibility for his behaviour and sees himself as able to change this at will, despite the influence of his friends (see above):

George: *I dunno, I just need to stop messing about in lessons.*

Karen: *Ok... and could you do that, if you wanted to?*

George: *Er, yeah, probably.*

(George, 477-481)

Eden's sense of competence is also expressed in terms of meta-cognitive development. He reports having learned about himself as a result of his experiences:

Karen: ...has your experience with school in Year 10 changed the way you see
                yourself as a person, do you think?

Eden: Erm... I think it's made me realise I want to get good grades, and stuff.

Karen: Ok... well that's a useful learning experience, I guess, isn't it, that it's
                made you think, "Actually, I do want to do well," after all? Did you not
                think you were that bothered about it, earlier on, then?

Eden: Yeah, I used to think I wasn't bothered, like.
                                                                        (Eden, 511-521)

Eden's priorities have shifted; he has discovered that he is motivated to achieve academically after all. He seems to have learned this for himself as the direct result of his experiences.

Personal competence and agency

Michael and Rosie both present themselves in ways which might be described in terms of positive personal competence. For Rosie this comes towards the end of her interview, as she describes developing her own strategies for dealing with bullying. Rosie's new-found competence is about taking control and increasing her own power in the face of ongoing peer difficulties. She discovered the strength to 'turn the other cheek', albeit because she felt that no-one else was doing anything to stop the bullying:

Rosie: ...it just never got sorted. And then I had to sort it myself.
                                                                        (Rosie, 238-239)

Rosie: ...now it's like, when someone calls me names I just smile and ignore
                them, and, like, I think it's annoyed people that it's, like, not annoying
                me.
                                                                        (Rosie, 264-266)

Rosie also talked about her competence in terms of a changed attitude towards school work, a shift in her priorities:

Rosie: Like, I've realised that I need to, like, buckle down more and everything,
                because I've got all my exams this year...[ ] So it's like every time that

> *someone bullies me I just ignore them, and just get on with my work.*
> *(Rosie, 159-165)*

Rosie's renewed focus on academic achievement, as a result of her impending examinations, seems to have helped to give her the strength to rise above the bullying. There are clear parallels here between Rosie's shift in priorities and Eden's process of self-discovery as a result of his experiences (see above).

Michael presents as being highly motivated to make his own choices and to retain personal control.   Michael's values and priorities are a deliberate choice:

Michael: *I just want to live to do that [help and support his friends], instead of live for nothing. Because I've never had a reason to live, yeah?*

Karen: *Yeah?*

Michael: *So I've finally chose something I want to do, and that's help people...*
(Michael, 507-513)

Michael gains satisfaction from being in control and will manipulate a situation to ensure the outcome he desires:

Michael: *I had to act very remorseful whilst I was in the isolation room, and be all like, you know, "Don't give her too much of a punishment, 'cos like it was my fault that it happened, it was my choice."*
(Michael, 333-336)

In this situation, Michael was keen to communicate to school staff that the girl who tattooed his arm had done so at his request and that he took full responsibility. This resulted in a lighter sanction for her, which was his intention, even though this may have resulted in a harsher sanction for him; in this way, Michael retained some control of the way in which adults responded to the situation. Michael also acknowledges occasions on which he has 'played stupid' in order to control a situation:

Michael: *I do that intentionally now, I be stupid so I get out of a lot of trouble, but...*

Karen: *What, on purpose?*

Michael: *Yeah, I just do it so I can get less punishments, or get other people less punishments. Anyway that's... I like doing*

> *that.*
>
> *(Michael, 305-312)*

The control which Michael displays here seems to relate to his chosen role, i.e. supporting his friends (in this case getting them out of trouble) and also to his rejection of the values of the school system. Perhaps what Michael also 'likes' in this situation is both the retention of personal control and the outward demonstration that school-based sanctions carry little or no meaning for him.

Externally imposed 'control' vs. freedom

This subordinate theme relates predominantly to issues raised within the three boys' interviews. Eden's explicitly-stated dislike of being told what to do has already been explored a little above. Eden also expressed resentment that teachers impose control on his social behaviour, preventing him from talking with peers during lessons:

Karen: *...you don't like some teachers... is that... tell me more about that. What's that about?*

Eden: *I dunno. I just... some are like really, like, strict and stuff. They don't let you talk or anything.*

(Eden, 449-453)

George, too, dislikes the control imposed by teachers on his social communication:

George: *They [the teachers when he arrived at Newton School] was... a lot more strict.*

Karen: *Hmmm, ok. So, can you give me any examples of what that was like, then, what did they do, or...*

George: *Just pick on you more for, like, little things. Like talking and stuff.*

(George, 122-127)

Michael talked a great deal, towards the end of his interview, about the contradiction between the high level of parental control of children which he felt was necessary for the greater long-term good of society and his own strong dislike of being controlled. Michael seems to be advocating a system involving

the state universally monitoring and controlling parenting standards:

Michael: *I think that, like, when people are really young they should have better parents, and, like, maybe there should be a way, someone make sure the kid's ok, without like having, er, without having erm, someone actually call and say there's a problem. Rather have someone check in, or something like that.*

(Michael, 1700-1705)

However, Michael himself, if he were a parent, might resent his proposed system:

Michael: *I'd probably hate to have that, because like, er, you know, I think after a while, or at least if I have a child, I'd probably think that it's very against privacy [ ] ...I think that if someone came to my door like every week or so I'd probably get a bit annoyed and that.*

(Michael, 1705-1710)

Michael recognises the conflict inherent in his arguments and acknowledges this explicitly. He attributes his own dislike of being externally controlled to his current age (see above) and also hints at his own parents perhaps not bringing him up from an early age with a high level of control. He thus places himself on the outside of his proposed system, as he also places himself outside of the school systems and social systems currently around him (see above and below). Michael thinks, though, that his system would be worth the personal sacrifices (of others) which it would entail:

Michael: *But I say, I say I want parents to control their children, but it's very hard to do that because, without hurting the child's feelings, because like... er, I dunno, it's... it's a weird one, because I hate, I hate being controlled-slash-spied on by my parents, but like... I think if the children are grown up to think correctly they shouldn't have a problem with being spied on because, like, they're not doing anything bad.*

    [ ]

Karen: *You think it'd be worth it, then? Would the pay-off be worth it?*

Michael: *Yeah. But it would be very hard to get some people to do that.*

(Michael, 1872-1886)

School systems and the establishment

I will focus here on two subordinate themes:

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- School systems as negative/ineffective
- Self as distant/separate from the establishment

School systems as negative/ineffective

This subordinate theme was identified in George's transcript and links closely with the aspect of his values and motivations considered above. Like Michael, George does not find (at least some aspects of) the school sanctions system effective or meaningful (see above) although he is motivated to avoid spending a day in isolation. Michael's view of isolation is rather different:

Michael: *I don't care about isolation! They put you in a room for a day, that's a good thing, depending on who's in the room.*

(Michael, 1392-1394)

Whereas George seeks to avoid isolation by avoiding school altogether on those days, Michael appears not to see isolation as a punishment. Given Michael's self-identified social anxiety and dislike of large groups of peers, perhaps a day in isolation might sometimes even be preferable, for him, to a day spent in school with his peers.

The rigidity of the sanctions system may be exacerbating George's situation:

Karen: *And would you have ended up staying in school more, do you think, if they hadn't just kept sending you to isolation?*

George: *Yeah, probably.*

(George, 1014-1017)

Self as distant/separate from the establishment

I identified this subordinate theme in Michael's interview, although there are also elements of this in Eden's and George's accounts in terms of resistance to being controlled (see above). For Michael, some of this is reflected in his view of the sanctions system (see above) and his choice not to internalise fully the values and priorities of the school system (see above also). There is also a strong link between this subordinate theme and one explored above relating to Michael's positioning of himself (under the superordinate theme 'Social and relational experience') as 'distant/different from peers'. Michael positions

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himself as distant from the systems in place around him, implying that he does not really know or care what they are, nor does he see himself as part of them:

Michael: I got into maths, sat down, Miss was like, "Where you been?" and I was just like, "I been skiving."

Karen: You said that?

Michael: Yeah, I said it like that! And at the time I was, like... I don't know, I guess I was happy that I did it, then she like... she gave me, erm, she probably gave me negative whatever-it-is, the system is there. 'Cos they have, like, most schools have like a points system, don't they?

Karen: I guess...

Michael: Yeah, so, like, she probably gave me negative whatever-it-was they had there, that I don't remember. Because I'd forgot I was supposed to care at that point.

(Michael, 113-129)

Again, 'caring' about the system is framed as an external expectation of which Michael is aware but has largely rejected. Given Michael's view of his own intellect and maturity, and his disdain for the majority of his peer group (see above), perhaps he also sees himself as above being drawn into the nuances of the school's rewards and sanctions system.

The emotional self

This superordinate theme was particularly apparent only in Sarah's and Michael's interviews. Although there are elements of positivity within this superordinate theme (e.g. emerging themes from Michael's interview relating to stress relief, sense of purpose and making others happy), the emerging themes within Michael's and Sarah's accounts which fed into the two subordinate themes below are predominantly negative and most relate strongly to experiences of stress, anxiety and fear. The two subordinate themes which comprise this superordinate theme, then, are:

- The emotional self, stress and anxiety
- Fear

The emotional self, stress and anxiety

Michael's self-described social anxiety has already been mentioned briefly

above. He explains:

Michael: *...I don't like people at all, like. People make me anxious.*
(Michael, 694-695)

This can present a real barrier for him in terms of accessing aspects of the school experience:

Michael: *I've been told that I can go to the library instead of going to assembly because the teacher knows that it makes me want to throw up. I actually feel a little bad now because I'm thinking of a big crowd, of an assembly, like just the assembly room... [ ] There's a point I was trying to make somewhere, and I don't know what I was talking about, 'cos like, now I feel sick!*
(Michael, 1533-1540)

Even talking about this experience, at home during the half-term holiday, elicited a negative psychological and physiological response. I wonder whether this experience (i.e. social anxiety difficulties, being excused from assemblies, etc.) might also contribute towards Michael's sense of being different from his peers. Michael is very conscious of the difficulties he can experience around social communication:

Michael: *...what you've probably noticed is that I'm horrible at making eye contact. I just can't do it. I don't know why, but it just makes me anxious to do it, and I just can't do it.*
(Michael, 718-721)

Michael positions anxiety as an external force which "messes [his] head". He is very aware of the impact it can have on his life, including his school attendance:

Michael: *But it kind of messes my head, but, with anxiety and everything, and all that kind of thing, I have thrown up before going to school. I did it on Friday, and then I didn't go to school on Friday...[ ] And, like, I threw up, then freaked out, then rang someone twenty times, then my phone battery died, then my Dad came to pick me up... That was a bad day.*
(Michael, 738-751)

For Michael, 'anxiety' and 'stress' are two different emotional experiences, both seemingly framed as external forces which impact on his well-being:

Karen: *Do you think that taking on board their [his friends'] problems, does that add to your stress, your anxiety, do you think?*

Michael: *Er... Probably to my stress, I wouldn't know about my anxiety. Probably to my stress, yes to that.*

(Michael, 770-775)

The sense of inevitability and resignation which Michael feels in relation to school-based stress has been explored above; to him, stress is a universal and unavoidable part of the school experience. Michael also frames stress as potentially a type of illness:

Michael: *...I don't think there's anyone that's never had a day off school.*

Karen: *Oh, no.*

Michael: *Like, everyone's going to have a day off school at one point or another. But, like, some people are just sick, others are actually like sick in terms of stressed...*

(Michael, 1333-1339)

Michael seems to be implying that stress, as an illness, can lead directly to school absence, and he relates this stress to belief in the long-term importance of school and awareness that one's actions in the present carry future consequences:

Michael: *I don't know why it is, but I am also stressed out by school. It could be that school is such an important part of life that, like... At a very young age you're told that everything you do now will have consequences in the future, and when you're a child you don't want to be told that.*

(Michael, 1346-1350)

Michael attributes at least some of his current stress to the pressure of managing this knowledge from a young age.

Michael: *I was told it at like eleven or twelve or something, like, really young like that, so, for me, for me it's just always been like, "Oh, this is really important," but it's actually important, so it just gets me stressed. And, like, for people who say they don't care, like, if they didn't care then they wouldn't go to school non-stop. But they obviously do care to some degree about what job they're going to get in the future, and that's just how it is really...*

(Michael, 1358-1365)

A further reason for Michael's stress seems to link with his values here. Despite consciously rejecting many of the values of the school establishment, he seems to acknowledge that he has internalised the need to achieve academically in

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order to maximise his future career prospects. There may be some ambivalence in his views here (as discussed above). It seems that Michael actually does care about more than the social world of school, despite his earlier protestations:

Michael: Yeah, I don't care about a lot of things.

Karen: No?

Michael: No, apart from, like, people...

<div align="right">*(Michael, 155-159)*</div>

However, it seems that Michael's worry about the consequences of his actions and the need for academic attainment may be proving counter-productive; his "caring" seems to be adding considerably to his experience of stress, which then leads him to miss school.

Fear

Sarah expressed fear about the prospect of having to move schools because of the new people she anticipated having to meet:

Karen: ...the experience of moving between schools, the transition. How was that for you?

Sarah: (Pause) Scary.

[ ]

Karen: ...What do you think it was that you were scared of?

Sarah: Because there would be, like, new people.

<div align="right">*(Sarah, 16-32)*</div>

Like Michael, it seems that Sarah may experience anxiety relating to social situations. However, for Sarah the anticipation (on this occasion) was worse than the reality:

Karen: What was it like when you actually got there, then?

Sarah: It was ok.

<div align="right">*(Sarah, 39-42)*</div>

The notion of fear also appeared in Rosie's interview, although Rosie's fear related to the imminent threat of violence rather than a more nebulous sense of anxiety (see the very first quotation in this chapter). Rosie's fear was very specific, relating to her experience of physical bullying. This seems quite a different emotional experience from that alluded to by Michael and Sarah, whose anxiety seems to relate more generally to situations involving large numbers of people.

Other superordinate themes

I will consider here, much more briefly, my remaining three superordinate themes. These were formed, on average, out of fewer subordinate themes than the superordinate themes explored already and thus may lack in richness and detail compared with those above. They are also more predominantly language-based and therefore arguably less well suited to phenomenological exploration.

Impression management and positive self-presentation

The language used by some participants led me to feel that they were motivated to create positive impressions of themselves on me. Eden and George repeatedly use the word 'just', perhaps in an attempt to minimise what might be described as their 'deviant' behaviour:

Eden: *Erm... I just started skiving a few lessons a day.*
                                                                       (Eden, 201)

Eden: *Erm... I think I, like, went to lessons for, like, two weeks and then I just started skiving a few lessons again.*
                                                                       (Eden, 295-296)

George: *I dunno. Just... I just start talking and then get sent out.*
                                                                       (George, 255)

George: *I just get... I end up put in isolation.*
                                                                       (George, 394)

The quotations above also demonstrate George's use of the passive voice, as though perhaps he is distancing himself from any individual agency; rather, things happen to him and he is helpless to change them. It is interesting to note

that both Eden's and George's interviews were conducted with their mothers present, which could plausibly have contributed to their apparent desire to portray themselves in a positive light.

Rosie, too, seems to choose her words in order to minimise the extent of her absenteeism over time:

Karen: Oh ok... So when you were at St Peter's, was that... were you at school full-time then?

Rosie: Kind of, yeah.

Karen: Kind of?

Rosie: Like, I spent a bit of time off there, as well.

(Rosie, 57-64)

Michael's attempts to manage the impression which he gives to me are much more explicit. He is keen to ensure that I do not think of him as 'bad' or 'naughty':

Michael: I'm just going to make that clear, it's not 'cos I was a naughty kid or anything that I moved schools...

(Michael, 38-39)

Michael: I'm not a bad kid, I'm just late a lot.

(Michael, 138)

School as a holistically negative experience

There are several instances during Rosie's, Michael's and Eden's interviews in which school is reduced to a wholly negative experience by way of participants' choice of language. For Rosie, "everything" became "bad":

Rosie: Like, erm, it was ok, at the start, and then like everything just turned bad...

(Rosie, 92-93)

Michael reduces the school experience, at one point, school to a single negative feature:

Michael: All school usually does is just add on stress...

(Michael 829-830)

Eden's dislike of school appears all-encompassing and complete:

Eden: I don't know. I just never really liked school.

                                                                (Eden, 435)

As will be seen from the more detailed explorations of the other superordinate themes earlier in this chapter, there is far more to these participants' experiences of school than these brief quotations might suggest. Nevertheless, they are illustrative, I think, of a tendency at times to think about the school experience in quite a negative, 'all or nothing' way.

Temporal aspects of experience

This superordinate theme was particularly apparent in George's interview. I felt that there was a real sense of his motivation and attendance declining gradually over time:

George: It started with just certain lessons, then went into whole days.

                                                                (George, 155)

George: ...I just got to the point where I couldn't be bothered to even go to school.

                                                                (George, 655-656)

It seems that George may have felt slowly but increasingly ground down under the pressures and negative aspects of the school experience. For him, becoming a low attender was a gradual process rather than a sudden change.

The temporal aspect of Sarah's experience came across predominantly in the way in which she seemed to imply a comparison between her recent school experience and what might be considered an idealised, 'rose-tinted' view of school in the more distant past:

Karen: So how was school for you, when you were full-time, what was it like?

Sarah: It was good.

Karen: What was going well?

Sarah: Everything.

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Karen: *Good. Did you enjoy it?*

Sarah: *Yeah.*

(Sarah, 62-72)

Sarah remembers this experience as universally positive, which contrasts starkly with her appraisal of her experiences at Newton School (see above).

There is a temporal element to Rosie's account too, which links in part with her shift from framing herself as a passive victim to taking control and managing her social difficulties. Rosie seems to remain reluctant, though, to describe school as an unqualified positive experience:

Karen: *Is there anything now that's still maybe not going so well for you,*
                     anything now that's still bothering you in school?

Rosie: *...No.*

Karen: *Not really?*

Rosie: *No, not any more.*

(Rosie, 498-504)

Rosie seems to be highlighting here the contrast between the past and the present, as if to say that, although things may be going better now, this does not mean that the past can be forgotten or overlooked.

In the following chapter I will relate these analytical findings, superordinate theme by superordinate theme, back to my original research questions and to some relevant literature. I will then evaluate the research process and consider the implications of my research for both practitioners and researchers.

Discussion

Introduction

In this final chapter I will draw together my analysis with my original research questions and the literature explored earlier, in addition to bringing in some new literature which relates directly to the superordinate themes explored in the previous chapter. The addition of new literature at this stage may appear unorthodox but, given the inductive nature of my research, it was clearly not possible to tailor my literature review to the themes which would later arise. Smith et al. (2009) advise that it is appropriate, for this reason, to bring new literature into the discussion section of an IPA study.

The aim of my research was to explore the experiences and perceptions of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low, with particular reference to the following questions:

1. What are participants' experiences of becoming low attenders, and how do they understand and give meaning to these experiences?
2. What are their perceptions of the barriers to regular attendance?
3. What are participants' experiences of school transition?
4. What are their goals and priorities?

I will refer to these questions as I explore the superordinate themes which I examined in my Analysis chapter and again when I consider the potential implications of my research.

I will begin, then, by examining each of the superordinate themes which I explored in my Analysis chapter in relation to some relevant literature. It will soon become apparent that these superordinate themes overlap somewhat when they are considered more broadly along with the relevant literature and its implications (as noted previously, these themes are my own constructs rather than a representation of any 'reality'). I will then comment briefly on some superordinate and subordinate themes which I did not analyse in as much detail. After this I will evaluate and reflect on my experience of carrying out my interviews and undertaking the analytical process. I will also reflect on the

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rigour and quality of my research in relation to the criteria outlined in my Methodology chapter and consider the limitations of my study. Finally, I will consider the potential implications of my research, both for future research and for educational professionals.

Superordinate theme 1: Social and relational experience

This broad superordinate theme links with all four of the specific questions my research set out to address. I will refer back to these as appropriate during this section of the chapter.

My first literature review referred to research linking ESNA with bullying (Kearney, 2008; Lauchlan, 2003; Kawabata, 2001) as well as more general social exclusion and peer difficulties (e.g. Place et al., 2000). In a study carried out across a range of UK schools, Archer et al. (2003) found bullying and what they termed "perceived bullying" to be a factor thought to precipitate "school refusal" and "school phobia" (the latter is constructed as a specific sub-type of broader "school refusal"). Rosie's experience of bullying represented, for her, the most salient part of her experience of becoming a low attender. Thambirajah et al. (2008) expand on the idea of bullying; they include the notion of 'relational bullying', defined as deliberately controlling and manipulating others' friendships and shunning or excluding peers. They also link more general difficulties with making and maintaining friendships with ESNA. Difficulties maintaining friendships, for whatever reason, feature in the experiences of Michael, Sarah and Rosie, which again links in with my first question relating to young people's experiences of becoming low attenders. My second question is also relevant to Sarah here; her lack of friends seemed to create an ongoing barrier to full attendance. The concept of 'relational bullying' describes perfectly Rosie's experience with her peer, Jade; Rosie perceived Jade to have controlled and manipulated her relationships, causing her to become increasingly socially isolated and reinforcing her difficulties in maintaining full-time attendance. Rosie predominantly attributed her ongoing absences during Year 10 to Jade's presence and behaviour and reported being able to attend school quite happily in Jade's absence (Rosie, 362-385).

Archer et al. (2003) also cite wider friendship problems, particularly amongst secondary-aged students and between girls, as a factor believed to contribute towards ESNA. This study does not take into account the views of children and young people; Archer et al. used questionnaires and interviews to elicit the views of school and LA staff only, so their conclusions are drawn solely from a professional perspective. Nevertheless, this research resonates with the experiences of my participants; Rosie, Michael and Sarah all reported a sense of social isolation following a loss of friendships during the secondary phase of their education. In Sarah's case this related specifically to the time following her transition into Newton School, and in Rosie's and Michael's cases it seems to have followed their transition into their previous school, St. Peter's. It seems that this time of transition may be a difficult time for some young people in terms of friendships. This links in with my third research question, relating to young people's experiences of transition between schools. Jindal-Snape and Miller (2008) argue that, while good social skills and positive social relationships may increase young people's resilience at times of transition, at such times "Children who have been classmates for six or seven years can become strangers," (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008, p. 222) and young people can experience a real sense of loss in terms of familiar people, places and routines. For young people who may lack social skills or acceptance or who may struggle to feel included, it might seem reasonable to suppose that the experience of transition could potentially precipitate or increase a sense of social isolation, which, based on my participants' experiences, might plausibly be linked with becoming or remaining a low attender (c.f. Spence et al., 2000; see Literature Review chapter).

Davies and Lee (2008) conducted interviews with 13 "truants" regarding aspects of their school experience. Despite their questionable linguistic construction of the young people in question, Davies and Lee did at least seek to consider the issue from young people's own perspectives. Like Archer et al. (2003), they noted that peer relationships appeared to be a more significant factor for the girls in their study, whereas for the boys the issue of relationships with school staff seemed more salient. This finding is also supported by Kinder et al.

(1996), who interviewed a number of "disaffected" (including low-attending) secondary-aged young people about their experiences. These observations link with my three male participants' experiences, and also a little with my fourth question relating to young people's priorities. George and Eden barely mention peer relationships but both refer to their dislike of teachers' "strict" behaviour. Michael highlighted his experience of having "chilled" relationships with his teachers as a positive feature of his school experience, and acknowledged the hurt he experienced as the result of feeling "hated" by one particular teacher (Michael, 639-646). Kinder et al. (1996) noted that a number of their low-attending male participants complained of a lack of respect from teachers and reported often feeling unfairly blamed or singled out, which links closely with George's experiences at Newton School. Neither of my female participants referred to their relationships with school staff but both talked repeatedly about friendship-related difficulties (c.f. Davies & Lee; 2008, Archer et al., 2003). Social relationships on the whole came across as being an extremely important, if not the most important, part of the school experience for most of my participants.

Place et al. (2002), in a study involving 17 adolescent participants and their families, suggest that "school refusers" often experience social isolation and may lack age-appropriate social skills. These issues may arise as a result of low-attending young people missing out on social relationship-building opportunities (Carroll, 2011; Thambirajah et al., 2008); any causal relationship between social isolation and ESNA may be bidirectional. The coping skills employed by 'school refusers', according to Place et al. (2002), may differ significantly from the coping strategies used by young people attending school full-time. All 17 of the young participants in the Place et al. (2002) study had experienced bullying and most reported that avoiding school was the only way in which they felt able to avoid being victimised. There is a limit to the generalisability of these findings, given the small and localised sample of participants involved, but again Rosie's experience seems to reflect these findings in relation to using school avoidance as a coping strategy. This links in again with my first two research questions, relating to the experience of

becoming a low attender and the ongoing barriers to full attendance. It seemed that, for Rosie, avoiding school was the only way she could find to cope with, or avoid, the bullying which she experienced.

Place et al. (2002) suggest that positive social experience may reduce the need felt by some young people to avoid school; good peer relationships and a strong sense of belonging may be protective factors. Eden in particular alluded to the buffering effect of having friends in an otherwise negative school environment (Eden, 69-74). In an IPA study exploring the experiences of a group of Year 7 students transferring from primary into secondary school, Sancho and Cline (2012) identified a sense of belonging in their new school as amongst the most important factors which enabled students to adjust to a new setting and to experience school positively. This sense of belonging related strongly to peer relationships and social acceptance but also included positive relationships with school staff (likewise, negative interactions with staff were seen as contributing to a weak sense of belonging). While this research does not relate explicitly to ESNA, it provides qualitative evidence, from young people themselves, about the fundamental importance of a positive social experience (linking with my fourth research question, relating to young people's priorities) and a sense of being liked and accepted in school, particularly in relation to the experience of transition (linking with my third research question). Sancho and Cline also link pupils' sense of belonging with more general emotional well-being and a positive attitude to learning. This may be very relevant to my participants, all of whom reported difficulties in their relationships with staff, peers or both. Michael in particular alluded a great deal to his strong sense of not belonging or fitting into the social or systemic worlds of school. These issues of relationships and belonging also link with the concepts of "school climate" and "school connectedness" (see Literature Review chapter); Kearney (2008) argues that positive relationships, social and academic support, feeling respected, valued and safe within school all support regular school attendance.

Superordinate theme 2: Passivity and lack of control

This superordinate theme links less directly with my original research questions,

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although there may be indirect connections within this section of the chapter with my first question (relating to participants' experiences of becoming low attenders), second question (relating to the ongoing barriers to full-time attendance) and fourth question (relating to young people's goals and priorities). Despite setting out with specific questions to address, the inductive nature of my research meant that I could not predict the directions my analysis might take, nor the extent to which the content might grow and develop. I felt that this superordinate theme formed a significant part of all of my participants' experiences, as relayed to me via the interview schedule designed specifically to address my research questions.

Gamman (2004) argues that, "the only way children can comment on and shape the curriculum... is to reject it." (Gamman, 2004, p. 153). He claims that the examination-oriented way in which the school curriculum is constructed forces children to become passive recipients within a system which fails to allow them any real agency, control or choice. Opting out, according to Gamman, is the only way in which children can express an alternative view or exert control. The three boys in my study all reported some sense of choice and agency when it came to missing school. They consciously problematised the passivity they felt and seemed to want to fight it or find ways to subvert it. The two girls alluded to it implicitly but appeared not to be particularly conscious of their own passivity (in Rosie's case, in relation to dealing with bullying; in Sarah's case, in relation to her friends deserting her and in relation to the general lack of potential for agency or change within her situation). My participant sample is far too small to draw any general conclusions from this gender divide, and in any case such an aim would be inconsistent with my research philosophy. However, I think that this observation raises questions which might be considered when working with low-attending young people: to what extent do they feel passive and/or helpless, whether or not they acknowledge this explicitly? Can they be supported or encouraged to gain some agency within their situation? Would this be helpful in terms of supporting them to fulfil their goals, whatever these may be? In Rosie's case, it was her discovery of her own strength and her choice to take control of the bullying which led to her feeling more confident and

becoming able to attend school full-time again. In Eden's case, it was his new-found priority to succeed academically in order to improve his career prospects which led to his increased attendance. Eden took control and made this choice; he decided that he wanted to achieve after all.

Mcintyre-Bhatty (2008) supports Gamman's view of school non-attendance behaviour, arguing that 'truancy' and 'school refusal' should be seen not as 'deviant' behaviour but as valid expressions of dissatisfaction with the available educational provision. This links in with my fourth research question, that relating to young people's goals and priorities, although this issue will be explored in more detail later under the more directly-related superordinate theme 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities' below. Mcintyre-Bhatty argues that an increased range of provision (e.g. alternative provisions, home-schooling) should be more readily available for those young people whose needs and priorities are not met by the standard, mainstream educational system. The stance taken by both Gamman (2004) and Mcintyre-Bhatty (2008) regarding absenteeism links with the questions which arose from my reading of the ESNA intervention studies outlined in my literature review: whose needs are such interventions designed to meet, and whose values and priorities are they aiming to fulfil? Mcintyre-Bhatty's seemingly radical proposals still seem to depend on young people remaining motivated to learn and achieve academically despite other barriers to regular mainstream school attendance.

The research explored in my literature review relating to mental health could be argued to have a place within this superordinate theme. Within the literature, 'school refusal' (as distinct from 'truancy') is generally presented as an emotional rather than a behavioural issue (Lauchlan, 2003; Berg et al., 1969), incorporating emotional distress in response to the prospect of attending school and implying a lack of individual agency. This notion could link with my first two research questions relating to young people's experiences of becoming low attenders and the ongoing barriers to full-time attendance. I would also argue that studies explicitly linking psychiatric diagnoses with reduced school attendance (e.g. Kearney & Albano, 2004; Egger et al., 2003) imply a lack of

agency. They attribute ESNA to a within-person, uncontrollable influence; the individual is framed as the victim of a psychiatric 'disorder' which limits or controls their behaviour. Although I now know that three of my participants are, or have been, known to CAMHS (Michael, Sarah and Eden), none of them linked any psychiatric diagnoses or specific mental health-related difficulties with a sense of passivity, nor directly with becoming or remaining low attenders. My participants' experiences of passivity, as I interpreted them, seem to have come about as the result of the limitations and expectations imposed by wider school systems (George, Eden, Michael), social difficulties (Sarah, Rosie) and the perceived constraints of human nature and the impact of upbringing and early life experience (Michael).

Superordinate theme 3: Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities

I have found it difficult to locate ESNA-related literature which explicitly addresses students' beliefs, motivations and priorities. The literature relates more to how 'disaffected' and 'disengaged' students can be motivated to attend school and to achieve academically. This approach, again, seems implicitly to assume that professional and systemic priorities are the 'best' or the 'correct' ones. Turner (2007) highlights the importance of shared meaning and values between school staff and students. In a climate where students are not succeeding, cannot see the relevance of their learning or are not forming positive relationships with staff, Turner argues that they are likely to form, with peers, their own sets of values and priorities, independent of (and often contrary to) those espoused by school staff and the wider system. This view is supported by Farrell (1990), who argues that students will tend to respect the values of those around them (peers or adults) who provide them with positive reinforcement, whereas they will not respect the values of those who do not. Values, Farrell argues, need to be co-constructed between staff and students of all abilities, which is "no easy task in a system predicated on academic success being the marker of self and school esteem." (Davies & Lee, 2008, p.12) Farrell seems to be implying that academic success should not be seen as the only purpose of school nor the only way of measuring its success, but that all students should be able to contribute and find esteem within an inclusive

system which listens to them and values them as individuals.

Cohen et al. (2009) expand Kearney's (2008) notion of "school climate" into the realm of personal and systemic values and priorities. Cohen et al. define school climate in terms of students' experiences of school norms, values, relationships, teaching and learning practices and organisational structures and systems. Cohen et al. cite numerous studies linking positive school climate with lower levels of school non-attendance; it seems that the experience of positive relationships with others, including at least one member of school staff (referred to here as "school connectedness"), may be an important factor. This links with the literature explored under 'Social and relational experience' above. Michael mentioned his "chilled" relationships with school staff as a positive feature of his school experience, but he was the only one of my participants who explicitly mentioned positive relationships with teachers or other adults in school.

Cohen et al. (2009) also claim that positive school climate is strongly connected with students' motivation, not only to learn but also to participate actively in shaping and constructing their own learning and to engage pro-actively with additional activities (e.g. debates, community projects, etc.); in this way, school climate also relates to students' experience of agency and control. It seems that positive school climate may provide the antithesis to the enforced passivity criticised by Gamman (2004) and Turner (2007), encouraging and supporting students to take an active role in co-constructing their own learning, values and priorities and their own active social participation: "Positive school climate, by definition, is characterized by strong collaborative communities." (Cohen et al., 2009, p.186)

Superordinate theme 4: Personal competence, agency and control
This superordinate theme is most directly relevant to my fourth question, relating to young people's goals and priorities. This section of the chapter will also allude indirectly to my first and second questions, relating to young people's experiences of becoming low attenders and the barriers to full-time attendance.

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"We're motivated enough to make up our own minds and decisions. We don't just do what others tell us to do." This quotation comes from one of Davies and Lee's participants (Davies & Lee, 2008, p.12) and summarises the authors' observation that most of their student participants presented themselves as sufficiently mature and confident to deal with their own difficulties and make their own choices. This quotation reminds me particularly of Eden's assertion that he did not "like being educated," (Eden, 443) because he did not "like being told what to do." (Eden, 466) Davies and Lee highlight students' need to feel that their opinions are valued and that they are given opportunities actively to influence what happens in their lives; where these things are lacking, barriers to engagement might be created. This notion connects strongly with self-determination theory (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000), which postulates that individuals are intrinsically motivated towards learning, growth and progression provided that the social conditions are conducive to this. Ryan and Deci write that, in order to fulfil their potential for learning and self-development, individuals need a sense of autonomy, choice, the chance to be proactive, an optimal level of challenge, positive feedback, and a sense of their own competence. Passivity and disengagement can result if the conditions necessary to foster this intrinsic motivation are not met, i.e. if individuals do not experience a sense of control, competence and autonomy and/or do not value the activity in question (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The idea that children and young people should have a say in decisions which affect them is protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 1989); perhaps Gamman (2004) and Mcintyre-Bhatty (2008) might argue that this right is not being upheld fully within the education system. Davies and Lee's (2008) findings here also link closely with the superordinate theme explored above, 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities,' in terms of students' values being explicitly incorporated into school systems, rather than systemic values and priorities being imposed on them by professionals (c.f. Turner, 2007).

The notion of 'control' within the ESNA-related literature is largely framed in

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terms of controlling students' behaviours (i.e. increasing their school attendance) rather than any sense of control which students themselves might experience. This conflicting interpretation of control was articulated very clearly by Michael, who, despite "hating" external control, spoke of a need for parents to "control" their children from a young age in order to ensure the smooth running of society as a whole (Michael, 1942-1953). Michael's advocacy for control in this way suggests a utilitarian aim, i.e. the greatest good for the greatest number. Perhaps Michael's view reflects the implicit assumptions found in much of the ESNA literature: the majority of the literature seems to assume that full-time school attendance is in the best interests of all young people. The views and priorities of young people themselves are seldom taken into account.

Superordinate theme 5: School systems and the establishment

This heading, again, links strongly with the section above on values, beliefs, motivations and priorities, in particular Turner's (2007) work on the impact of dissonance between systemic and individual values and priorities. School climate research (see Cohen et al., 2009; Wilkins, 2008) is also relevant here (see above).

George's mother added some further background context and perspective after George's interview. It seems that George's description of teachers as "strict" (see Analysis chapter) may relate as much to wider school systems as individual staff members. She explained that George had become stuck in a vicious circle of sanctions. At Newton School, students are reportedly not permitted to leave the site during the day. George, however, regularly goes off-site to smoke at breaks and lunch times. He is routinely caught doing this, for which the sanction is a day in isolation (sitting alone in a room for a whole school day). The prospect of isolation motivates George to miss that day at school. However, unauthorised absence can also result in isolation, so George can end up 'owing' the school several days of isolation for going off-site to smoke and then missing isolations. George's mother feels that George (whom she described as "no angel") has such a poor reputation amongst school staff

that even minor incidents (e.g. a comment perceived as rude/cheeky) can land him in isolation when peers would attract a lighter sanction for the same behaviour. This situation also contributes to the vicious circle whereby George tries to attend his lessons but is sent to isolation for minor offences, which fuels further absenteeism.

Lauchlan (2003: see literature review) relates higher rates of ESNA to distant or hostile relationships between students and teachers (see also Wilkins, 2008), strict rule enforcement and a rigid or authoritarian school management style. George might relate to these descriptors in terms of his experiences of the school sanctions system. George and his mother viewed the sanctions at Newton School as excessively, counter-productively harsh, inflexible and impersonal. Gorard and See (2011) argue that students aged fourteen to sixteen are more likely to find school a positive experience when they feel they are treated more like adults than children and are accorded respect by school staff. George's experience of the sanctions system may suggest that he probably does not feel respected or treated as an individual by the staff and systems around him.

A further feature of the school system which may be relevant within my research is the local peculiarity whereby young people attend High School from Year 7 until the end of Year 9 and then transition to Upper School for the beginning of Year 10. This represents an additional experience of school transition compared with most young people across the UK. Davies and Lee (2008; see above) claim, based on their interviews with low-attending young people, that, "Transition from primary school to secondary and from Year 9 to 10 is problematic and for many, may lead to non-attendance." (Davies & Lee, 2008, p.5) If this is the case, then my participants may be experiencing a 'double whammy' given that their transition from Year 9 into Year 10 also involves a change of school. For George, the onset of his non-attendance coincided clearly with his transfer into Year 10 and the accompanying transition into new school systems which he and his mother experienced as more rigid, strict and authoritarian and less supportive than the systems in place at his former school.

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For Sarah, the transition into Year 10 appears to have coincided with a reorganisation of the social groups around her, a change which resulted in her becoming socially isolated.

An aspect of the school system which arose in Eden's and Sarah's interviews was the issue of lessons needing to be 'more fun'; both said that they would like lessons to be more enjoyable but neither could suggest how this could be achieved. Nardi and Steward (2002) found, in their study exploring 'under-achieving' Year 9 students' views of mathematics lessons, that students often reported finding such lessons 'boring' and perceived them as consisting of the presentation of isolated, context-free knowledge with little relevance to students' lives. I wonder whether learning which might be seen by students as more directly relevant to them might be seen as more 'fun'. Eden, for example, reported an interest in learning about engineering, a subject which has clear practical and vocational applications. Nardi and Steward's notion of the presentation of knowledge, with the implication that students are the passive recipients rather than co-constructors of learning, is reflected in the "school climate" arguments presented by Cohen et al. (2009; see above): when students contribute actively to the ways in which the systems around them operate, they are likely to be more motivated and engaged in their learning. Gorard and See (2011) argue, based on the stated views of their Key Stage 4 research participants, that enjoyment of learning was enhanced by allowing students some control of their learning whereas passive teaching styles were found to decrease students' enjoyment. Teenage participants in the Kinder et al. (1996) study also reported that their school attendance was adversely affected by the content of the curriculum appearing boring, too difficult or irrelevant to their future plans. A passive approach to teaching and learning (i.e. having to sit and listen extensively rather than engage actively) was also linked, for these young people, with a reduced motivation to attend lessons.

Superordinate theme 6: The emotional self
This superordinate theme resonates with a great deal of the ESNA literature, particularly that linking ESNA with 'mental health' issues. This theme appeared

particularly salient and important within two interviews, Michael's and Sarah's. Given the emphasis in the literature it would be remiss of me not to explore this superordinate theme in some detail, despite it only having been identified within two interview transcripts (this is consistent with the 'interpretative' part of IPA).

Both Michael and Sarah talked about what might be broadly termed social anxiety. Kearney and Albano (2004; see literature review) found anxiety-related psychiatric conditions to be the most common diagnoses amongst their sample of long-term school non-attenders. I have already argued against the 'explanatory' use of psychiatric diagnoses but, setting aside that particular argument, Kearney and Albano's findings may nevertheless point towards the experience of anxiety as perhaps being common amongst students whose school attendance is low and who are known to mental health services (as are Michael and Sarah). As noted earlier, however, Kearney and Albano's research methods may have steered them particularly towards anxiety-related findings from the start. Egger et al. (2003) did not identify generalised or social anxiety-related conditions as being amongst the most common within their participant group. Egger et al., though, used a heavily diagnosis-related approach to grouping their participants; what might be termed 'sub-clinical' levels of anxiety may not have been captured within their research. To summarise, these studies are not conclusive and neither is mine, nor is it intended to be. My research and the literature raise questions to consider, however, about the potential impact of social experience on some students' emotional well-being and also *vice versa*, the potential impact of some students' emotional well-being on their social experience. In turn questions are raised relating to the impact of these factors on students' experience of school and their school attendance.

Other themes

Space prohibits a detailed exploration of the other, more linguistically-based, superordinate themes which I identified in my interview transcripts. One of these which stood out for me was the superordinate theme entitled 'Impression management and positive self-presentation'. This demonstrated my participants' motivation to present themselves to me and to others in a positive

light. There was a tendency for participants to distance themselves from what might be seen as 'deviant' behaviour, even amongst those who professed not to care much about sanctions. My interpretation here was driven by participants' hesitations, their apparent reticence and reluctance to talk in detail about their behaviour, and their use of the passive voice (perhaps implying that they were not in control, as such, but that certain behaviours 'just happened'). Psychological theories relating to a basic human need to portray oneself positively to others are numerous and well-established (e.g. impression management theory, etc., see for example Tedeschi, 1981) and research has also pointed towards the salience of this behaviour in a one-to-one interview situation (Ellis et al., 2002). However, the purpose of my analysis was not to explore participants' language; IPA understands language as a vehicle for the communication of experience and not a means of constructing a reality. I felt, therefore, that to pursue this particular line of interpretation too far might be epistemologically inappropriate.

Two of the subordinate themes which I identified in Michael's interview did not fit into any of my superordinate theme headings. These were 'Conflict and contradiction' and 'The role/purpose of school'. Both of these subordinate themes could be argued to result from a sophisticated level of meta-cognition not really demonstrated by my other participants. Michael stood out, for me, as an exceptionally thoughtful, insightful, self-aware and articulate young man. Michael's attempts to make sense of his thoughts and experiences are rich and detailed. He has observed the contradictions and paradoxes within his own experience and is struggling to work out how to reconcile these. I could, perhaps, have included these two subordinate themes under the superordinate theme, 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities,' but to do so would, I think, have been over-simplistic. For these reasons I decided to let them stand alone.

Reflections on conducting my interviews and the analytical process

Whilst in conversation with my participants I tried hard to be aware of my own prior knowledge and preconceptions in order to try to set these aside and attempt to engage openly with each individual's experiences (see Methodology

chapter). In practice it was difficult to do this whilst also maintaining a naturalistic conversation; I felt that there was not only a need to balance an awareness of my own prior knowledge with a naive openness (c.f. Finlay's (2008) dialectic 'dance'), but also a need to balance that attempt at naive openness with a level of personal engagement which would enable me to come across as friendly and approachable. This was easier to achieve with the more talkative participants. The same can be said of the analytical process; there was a need for me to try to balance a level of openness and naivety with my awareness of my own prior knowledge and the influence I may have had on the participant's sense-making and expression. Some participants struggled to respond extensively to more open-ended questions, which resulted in me steering the conversation more than I would have liked. This made it difficult not to offer, even implicitly, anything of my own perspective.

Bracketing my prior knowledge and experience became more difficult as I progressed through the five interviews and as I progressed through my analysis of the five transcripts afterwards. Not only did I have to set aside the views with which I began the process, but also those gained from previous interviews. I may not have consistently achieved this bracketing as well as perhaps I might have done, particularly in conducting my final interview (George). This was partly, I think, a result of my anxiety about failing to elicit sufficient information. Sarah (my fourth interviewee) was very quiet and shy; after this I was particularly concerned to ensure that I had sufficient material to analyse, hence the effect on my interactions with George. Perhaps my own anxiety and its impact on my interactions with my interviewees is illustrative of Ashworth's (1996) argument that the bracketing process can be more emotionally than cognitively challenging. Again, by the time I began to analyse the content of Sarah's and George's interviews in particular, I already had some preconceived ideas, which I tried to set aside, which had arisen from my partial analysis of the earlier interviews. The cognitive process of bracketing, then, was also made doubly challenging during the two final interviews and the analysis of Sarah's and George's transcripts because a) they were less communicative than my earlier participants, and b) they were chronologically last to be interviewed and

their transcripts were the last to be analysed.

Given the need to be aware of my own preconceptions, I was reminded particularly during Michael's interview that this awareness can be bidirectional; one may not initially be aware of which preconceptions one may need to set aside until one becomes more aware of the life-world of another, aspects of which then bring to conscious awareness aspects of one's prior knowledge. Michael's interview contained some surprises which highlighted this bidirectionality, in particular his new-found purpose in the form of responsibility towards others and how this led to a perceived lack of choice, for him, when it came to missing school in order to support friends in need. I was also reminded of the potential significance of absence (Sartre, 1956/1943; Smith et al., 2009); academic aspiration tended to play a lesser part in the stated priorities of my participants than I might have expected.

Before conducting my interviews, I had planned to offer participants the chance to include visual communication methods (time-lines, numerical scaling exercises, etc.). I used a numerical scaling technique, accompanied by some related solution-focused questions, in some interviews but did not pursue any visual methods. The reason for this was that it felt inappropriate. It seemed important to maintain good rapport with my participants and it felt unnatural and awkward to introduce pen-and-paper exercises into my interviews. I had not anticipated this issue during my planning. In any case, none of my participants had been described to me as experiencing any particular communication difficulties. I feel fairly sure that the brief responses given by some participants were not the result of a lack of linguistic skill, but perhaps a lack of confidence or merely being unaccustomed to talking about these types of experiences in this way (e.g. Willig, 2001) and/or with a stranger. As George's mother summarised (George, 926-927):

> *"...Just trying to get a lad to put that, vocalise that in a conversation isn't the easiest thing to do, is it?"*

My expectations of my participants may have been slightly unrealistic, perhaps partly as a result of my pilot participant being so articulate and eloquent (see

Methods chapter). With the exception of Michael and perhaps Rosie, my participants tended to struggle to respond in depth to my open-ended questions.

I found my semi-structured interview schedule helpful; I followed it approximately but not rigidly in all five interviews. There was sufficient variation in my presentation of the questions to allow for differences of experience and differences in willingness or ability to communicate, but sufficient similarity to ensure five comparable interviews from which common themes could be identified. I designed my interview questions to be sufficiently open-ended and broad so that the themes which I later identified during my analysis would not merely be reflections of the questions which I had asked. I think that I achieved this quite successfully; the superordinate themes explored in the previous chapter and this one, and the subordinate themes from which they were created, do not particularly reflect the questions on my interview schedule (see Appendices II, III and IV).

Evaluating the rigour and quality of my research

In my Methodology chapter I outlined the criteria which I would attempt to apply to optimise the rigour and quality of my research. Briefly, these criteria were:

- To ensure epistemological and methodological consistency
- To seek my research supervisor's feedback on the consistency and thoroughness of my analysis
- To present my full interview transcripts to ensure transparency
- To relate my analytical findings to the literature
- To make explicit, and justify, my participant selection process
- To write up my research as transparently as possible
- To suggest ways in which my research makes a unique contribution to the literature and to ensure that it has the potential to impact on professional practice.

I have sought to bear these factors in mind throughout the research process. In particular, I have considered the phenomenological approach to knowledge and

tried to carry out my interviews and analyse my transcripts from the perspective of trying to bracket my own knowledge and assumptions. My aim has been to begin to understand the world view, experiences and sense-making of my participants, as far as is possible for someone in my position who has not lived their experiences for myself. I would compare my experience here with the views espoused by Merleau-Ponty (1962; see Methodology chapter and Smith et al., 2009); my participants have lived their experiences as their own embodied selves, and I can never fully appreciate or understand that lived experience. Bracketing, for Merleau-Ponty (Smith et al., 2009) means setting aside, rather than fully removing, prior knowledge and assumptions; the self cannot be removed from the process (Finlay, 2008; Ashworth, 1996). I therefore acknowledge the role of my subjective self in the analytical process, but argue that this is the 'interpretative' or hermeneutic part of IPA and as such is a fundamental part of the analytical process. I have provided some information about my own background and educational experiences in Appendix V in order to set my subjectivity in context.

I sought my research supervisor's opinion on the initial analytical stages of Michael's interview, the first one which I tackled and the most detailed and complex of the five. I then incorporated my supervisor's thinking on this (most of which was consistent with my own, although there were some additions) into my subsequent analysis of all five transcripts (again trying to bracket the supposition that similar ideas might be found in subsequent interviews). My supervisor's input related more to ways of thinking about the transcripts rather than actual thematic content; the aim was not to challenge my analysis but to ensure its rigour. In the interests of transparency, my five full transcripts (annotated with my initial exploratory comments and emerging themes) are presented in Appendix VIII (on the CD inside the back cover of this thesis).

I outlined my participant selection in my Methods chapter and explained the criteria which I used. Perhaps in an ideal world I could have narrowed these criteria further; Rosie's cumulative attendance, for example, was significantly higher than the other four participants' attendance. I could have requested a

lower attendance figure for participants to be eligible to take part. However, despite my original intentions to interview at least eight young people, the five students who are included here were the only five who agreed to take part when approach by the EWO and whose parents also responded and consented to their participation (a sixth student agreed in principle but I was unable to contact her parents, despite several efforts).

I have tried to write up my research as clearly and transparently as possible, again with the support and advice of my research supervisor. I have explained the rationale for my research (see Literature Review chapter), the gaps in the current literature which I have tried to address, and the ways in which my research is unique. I have referred my analytical findings back to the literature. The principal aim of my research is not directly to inform wider practice; this would be ontologically and epistemologically inconsistent with IPA. However, I hope to be able to provide some insight into the experiences of these five young people and to provide 'food for thought' and questions to consider for staff working within the school systems in which these young people find themselves (this might include teachers, support staff, EPs, EWOs, etc.). These questions are outlined below (see 'Implications of my research').

Limitations of my research

In addition to the limitations of any small-scale qualitative research, and of an IPA study in particular (see Methodology chapter), I have identified a number of specific limitations in my research. Firstly, my interviews were conducted in the presence or proximity of a parent. I think that this may have limited what some participants felt able to say (Michael alluded strongly to this during his interview). This is an unavoidable limitation; safeguarding considerations made it impossible for me to meet with participants alone. Secondly, despite making it clear that I did not work for Newton School, participants may have seen me as a 'professional' and therefore part of the educational system. This could potentially have inhibited their conversation with me and could also have influenced the impression they might have wanted to create. My age and perhaps my perceived educational success (participants knew that this research

formed part of a university-based professional training course) may also have contributed to this limitation. Thirdly, there is a body of research suggesting that what might be termed co-dependent or enmeshed parent-child relationships, leading to what might be termed separation anxiety, can be strongly linked with ESNA (e.g. Lyon & Cotler, 2007, Place et al., 2000, Place et al., 2002). Family relationships barely featured during my interviews (except for Michael's views on the need for parental control). This could be partly, perhaps, a result of the age of my participants and partly, perhaps, because of the presence or proximity of parents during my interviews. It may also be difficult for young people to reflect on aspects of their relationships with their own parents, for the simple reason that they only have their own experiences of being parented and therefore no direct point of comparison. In any case, my research did not really address young people's experiences of family relationships. Finally, a further limitation might be the limits of my own interpretative ability and my ability to empathise with my participants. As explained in Appendix V, I have no experience of the phenomenon I have researched and have no particular personal affinity with those who have been long-term absentees. Whilst I have tried to bracket my own knowledge, assumptions and experiences (as considered in detail elsewhere) I would argue that this process can only ever be partial at best.

Implications of my research

As explained above, it is not my aim to provide concrete, definitive, widely-generalisable conclusions or recommendations. This would be inconsistent with my research philosophy. However, I will return here to my original research questions and consider, for each question, the issues which my research has raised and the questions which it might trigger for those working with low-attending young people.

My first question was this: what are participants' experiences of becoming low attenders, and how do they understand and give meaning to these experiences? My second question asked what the perceived barriers were to regular attendance. My participants reported a range of experiences in relation

to these two questions. Issues to consider might include whether a young person is experiencing difficulties within their social relationships, including any form of bullying, or difficulties within their relationships with school staff (see superordinate theme 'Social and relational experience'). It would be worth considering the impact of school systems on a young person, and the extent to which that young person feels that they have a say in the values and priorities of those systems (see superordinate themes 'School systems and the establishment' and 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities'). An important point to consider might relate to the extent to which young people feel that they have control, agency and choices within school, or whether they position themselves (willingly or unwillingly) as passive recipients of the school experience (see superordinate themes 'Personal competence, agency and control' and 'Passivity and lack of control'). I would suggest considering the following explicit questions regarding a low-attending young person, relating to these first two research questions:

- Is this young person struggling socially? Do they have the skills and the confidence to maintain friendships and/or to remain socially included in the long term? The social world might be far more important to a young person than adults might expect.

- Are they experiencing bullying, whether directly or indirectly? If so, how can this be addressed? What may appear trivial to some adults might be having a profound impact on a young person's school experience.

- Does the young person have a good relationship with any member(s) of school staff? If not, how can such relationships be developed?

- Does this young person feel much of a sense of belonging within school? How can this be enhanced/supported?

- Does this young person feel trapped in a passive position, or are they inadvertently assuming that they have to take a passive role? (Does this relate to gender?) How can they be supported to gain more of a sense of choice, control and agency within their experience of school?

- Are this young person's emotional needs being taken into account (see superordinate theme 'The emotional self')? How can their emotional well-being be maintained or improved? Is it possible to adjust systemic expectations in order to include more effectively an anxious young person, for example?

My third question related to young people's experiences of school transition. This did not emerge as a particularly salient feature for all five participants, but for some it appeared significant in terms of changes within social relationships (see superordinate theme 'Social and relational experience') and school systems (see superordinate theme 'School systems and the establishment'). It would be worth considering the potential impact of school transition on low-attending young people, particularly those who may be struggling socially or who may be experiencing school systems as very different from those in their previous setting. I would suggest considering the following questions in relation to this issue:

- Has the experience of transition into a new school led to particular social difficulties? Does this young person have sufficient social skills and social confidence to manage the inevitable changes to their social world resulting from transition? How can they be supported to maintain friendships and/or to build new ones in a new school context?
- How is this young person perceiving and making sense of the new systems in place around them in their new school? Are these very different from the systems at their previous school, and, if so, how? How can this young person be supported to adjust to their new environment? How can the environment be modified to help them to settle/adjust?

My fourth research question sought to explore young people's goals and priorities. This question relates particularly to the superordinate theme 'Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities' and, to an extent, 'Personal competence,

agency and control'. I would suggest considering the following issues in relation to this research question:

- What is really important to this young person? What motivates them? What are their aspirations, and how can they be supported to achieve these? Are the necessary conditions in place to optimise their capacity for intrinsic motivation (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000)?

- Does this student feel respected and treated as an individual with valid opinions? Do they feel that they are being treated age-appropriately (e.g. Gorard & See, 2011; Kinder et al., 1996)?

- Does this student feel that their voice is heard and that their views really matter? (How would they know if this were the case?)

- Within broader school systems, to what extent are students involved in contributing towards school values, aims and priorities? Do students share the values espoused by the school system? Are these co-constructed or wholly professionally imposed?

- To what extent are students involved in planning systems of sanctions and rewards which they consider fair, proportionate and meaningful? Are these systems sufficiently flexible to allow individuals a voice and to take individual circumstances into account?

- Do school systems explicitly value individual skills and attributes other than straightforward academic achievement?

I suggest that future research in this area might include the area of family dynamics and relationships; as noted above, this did not really emerge in my study for a variety of possible reasons. A further suggestion for future researchers is to consider carefully the choice of methodology. It might be possible to find a natural, appropriate way to enable those participants who present as less confident and articulate to communicate their views and experiences more easily. It might be possible, for example, to supplement interview or focus group transcripts with more quantitative data or to use Q-methodology, which would enable a greater number of participants to engage with the research without the demands of having to take part in an interview. I

did not consider Q-methodology because I considered it too deductive for my research aims, hence my focus on exclusively qualitative methods in my Methodology chapter. However, perhaps this method and/or wholly quantitative methods (e.g. questionnaires, scaling activities) could be used in conjunction with qualitative methods in order to supplement research such as mine in the future. Based on my literature searching, I would also suggest that there is a lack of research into low-attending young people's values, priorities, motivations and experiences of control and agency within the educational system. Further research into these areas might perhaps help some professionals to approach and begin to understand some students' perspectives and experiences more meaningfully, perhaps better enabling them to intervene and offer support in a way which is genuinely consistent with the individual motivations, priorities and values of young people themselves.

Implications for professional practice

The implications of my research explored above relate very generally to the practice of a range of professionals, researchers and indeed anyone working with low-attending young people. In this final section, added as an amendment after my viva in June 2015, I will consider the implications of my work specifically for EP practice, both in terms of EPs' work with low-attending young people and also more broadly. I will refer to the work of EPs in general and also to my own learning and development as a soon-to-be-qualified EP.

The implications which I considered above could apply equally to the work of an EP as to the work of any other relevant professional. However, in addition to working with individual young people, EPs are uniquely placed to offer support and advice to school staff regarding psychologically informed and evidence-based systemic intervention approaches. Using the principles of self-determination theory (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000), for example, EPs might be well-placed to support other adults' understanding of young people's need for a sense of control, autonomy, social relatedness and personal competence and to work with school staff to evaluate the extent to which existing school systems may support or restrict these elements of students' experience. A paper by

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Wilding (2015), exploring the systemic applications of self-determination theory within education, was published shortly before my viva. Wilding observes that student disaffection (e.g. McNamara, 1998) has traditionally been understood as a within-person issue. She argues, however, that there are ways in which systemic and contextual factors can maintain disaffection, by reducing the competence, relatedness and autonomy experienced by students within the system. Wilding advocates for EPs to utilise person-centred thinking and consultation in order to support contextual and environmental changes to facilitate student self-determination. It seems to me that EPs are well-placed to initiate and support ongoing discussions with school staff about the potential impact of their systems on young people's motivation and engagement and, where appropriate, to work alongside school staff to implement systemic changes. In a similar way, EPs are ideally positioned to support school staff to reflect on the impact of systemic factors on young people's social inclusion and to evaluate and assess the efficacy of a range of systemic attempts to promote this (e.g. small-group social skills interventions, 'buddy' systems for new students around times of transition, and whole-school anti-bullying initiatives).

An important part of the EP role is to advocate for the views and perspectives of young people and to represent these in multi-disciplinary and other professional contexts. The experience of having undertaken this piece of research, and in particular gaining an insight into thinking phenomenologically, has given me additional ways of considering and communicating young people's views (or at least my interpretation of them) to other adults, hopefully in ways which are coherent and convincing and which allow others to empathise more readily with perspectives borne out of young people's lived experiences. Acknowledging the subjectivity of every individual's 'reality', rather than insisting that professional 'realities' are the only 'true' ones, can be a powerful starting point for conversations leading towards change for young people.

Linked with the above is the issue of the extent to which young people feel that their voices are heard more widely within school systems and the extent to which stated systemic values and priorities are either professionally imposed or

co-constructed with students. This point relates not only to low-attending young people but also to students' engagement and motivation much more broadly. Many schools operate systems such as 'school councils' whereby small groups of students are selected by their peers to represent student views to the school management team. While some school staff may argue that this system allows for sufficient representation of students' voices, my experience suggests that this kind of participation is too often tokenistic and can be dominated by discussion of what might be considered relatively trivial issues (e.g. school uniform requirements, recycling facilities, etc.). Most schools have a set of key values (perhaps including a 'Mission Statement' or motto) which may then be filtered down into school rules and policies. Sanctions are often quite rigid, with the expectation that 'one size fits all', and, in my experience, it can be difficult to convince school staff that it may be necessary to consider making individual adjustments if a young person is to respond positively, remain included and make progress. EPs have an appropriate skill set and are well-placed as 'critical friends', inhabiting a space within the LA but externally to individual schools, to support school staff to consider the extent to which schools' espoused priorities and values are genuinely co-constructed and whether young people are able to contribute meaningfully towards the creation and ongoing evaluation of espoused values, priorities and the ways in which transgressions from agreed behavioural standards are addressed. Being able to provide a psychological evidence base to give weight to this type of conversation, alongside the ability to advocate for young people's views and perspectives, may also place EPs in the ideal position to facilitate this type of change.

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Appendix I: Participant information sheets and consent forms

Title of Project: Exploring the experiences and perspectives of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low.

Name of Researcher: Karen How

Participant Identification Number for this project: **Please initial**
                                                                 (student)

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

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw, without giving any reason, by contacting Karen How (07412 158541, e-mail edp12kdh@sheffield.ac.uk).

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Participant's Parent/Carer   Date   Signature

Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature
(*if different from lead researcher*)
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Lead Researcher   Date   Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title
Exploring the experiences and perspectives of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low.
 - What are their experiences of becoming low attenders, and how do they understand and give meaning to these experiences?
 - What are their perceptions of the barriers to regular attendance?
 - What are their experiences of school transition?
 - What are their educational goals and priorities?

Introduction
You are invited to take part in this project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important you understand why the research is happening and what it will involve. Please read this information and discuss it with others if you want to. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?
The aim is to explore the experiences of young people whose school attendance was low during the last academic year. I am hoping to understand what can lead to lower attendance and what young people feel might be getting in the way of them going to school full-time. This project will last until Spring 2015 but I would only need to meet you once, in the Autumn of 2014.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are in Year 11 and your school attendance during the last academic year was below 90%. I am hoping at least six young people in your position will take part in the research.

Do I have to take part?
No, you don't have to take part. If you think it might be upsetting to talk about your life and your history, you might prefer not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You and a parent/carer will be asked to sign a consent form and you will also be given a copy of this to keep. If you agree to take part, you can still opt out if you change your mind - you wouldn't be in any trouble and you wouldn't have to give a reason.

What will happen if I take part?
You will be invited to have an interview with me. This should take between 30 and 60 minutes. I will meet you either at school or in your home (a parent/carer would need to be there too) at a time we arrange during normal working hours (Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm).

What do I have to do?
All you'll need to do is be there at the agreed time. You won't need to prepare anything in advance. The interview will be a conversation about your past and present experiences of school, your views about yourself and your situation, and your hopes for the future.

What are the possible risks of taking part?
It is possible that talking about some of these things could be upsetting for some people. Before we start the interview we will talk about what you might do if this

happens - we will make sure there is someone you can talk to after the interview if you need to. I won't expect you to talk about anything you don't feel comfortable talking about.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There are no particular benefits to taking part in this study, although some people enjoy having the chance to tell their story and have someone listen to their points of view. I hope my work will lead to a better understanding of the experiences of young people whose school attendance is low and help this school and others to understand their needs and support them better.

What if something goes wrong?
If you are unhappy with the way this research has been done and want to make a complaint, please contact Dr Sahaja Davis, who is supervising the project: his e-mail address is t.s.davis@sheffield.ac.uk. He will then investigate the problem. If, after this, you are still not happy with the outcome, you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary at the University of Sheffield, Firth Court, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN, (0114) 222 1101.

What if I change my mind?
If, after the interview, you decide you don't want what you told me to be included in my project, please let me know. E-mail me before 1st December 2014 and I will take out your information. After this date it may be too late because I will already be writing it up. If you change your mind during the interview, we can stop at any time. If you change your mind before the interview, e-mail me and we will cancel the interview.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
Mrs Summers and Mrs Dennis are helping me to organise my research; they will know who is involved. This will not go against you in any way. Only I will have access to the consent forms; these will be stored securely at my house.

I won't use your real name when I write up my research, and I won't tell anyone what you personally have told me. Although school staff will be able to see my finished piece of research, they will not know who has said what. Your name will not be linked with what you have told me.

The only reason I would have to tell school staff or other professionals what you tell me is if it shows that you or someone else is in danger. I have a 'duty of care'; I have to do all I can to keep you and others safe. If you tell me a crime has been committed, I will also have to pass this on.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
This project will be written up and submitted to the University of Sheffield as part of the course requirements for my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. After I finish this qualification, a shorter version of my project may be published as an article in a journal. Copies of the full project write-up will be available to school and Local Authority staff. It will also be available online. You will not be identifiable in any of my written work, and the name of the school and the county where the research took place will not be included.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
Our interview will be audio-recorded so that I can listen to it, write down what was said and analyse the information in it. Once I have finished my training (Summer 2015) I

will destroy the recording. The recording will be stored securely on my computer and no-one else will have access to it. Parts of the interviews (written down, not the audio recordings) will be shared in meetings with my university tutor and in presentations to my colleagues, but your name will not be on these. These may be submitted to the University of Sheffield with my finished project, but again your name will not be on these. If my work is published, quotations from the interview transcripts might be included (again, without your name on them).

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield's School of Education Ethics Review Procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee makes sure that all research done by students at the University of Sheffield meets their ethical standards.

Contact for further information
For further information please contact Karen How: e-mail edp12kdh@sheffield.ac.uk or karen.how@leics.gov.uk, or telephone 07412 158541.

Appendix II: Emerging themes grouped into subordinate themes (Eden)

Relationships and social experience	Presenting the self positively (to me and others)	The self as 'in control'	Personal goals and motivations
Social world of school Friendships as a buffer to make negative experience more tolerable Social experience Influence of peers Peer influence on behaviour Shared behaviour with peers Staff-student relationships	Desire to distance the self from onset of 'deviant' behaviour Impression management, need for deception Impression management - need to minimise 'deviant' behaviour Distancing self from behaviour and consequences Self as distant/removed from school experiences Need to minimise 'deviant' behaviour - impression management Shame/embarrassment Negative feelings about others' perceptions of behaviour? Awareness of others' disappointment in his behaviour Reluctance to acknowledge consequences of behaviour Reluctance to acknowledge behaviour and its consequences	Reluctance to be seen to accept sanctions as effective - reluctance to be seen as being controlled by others Self as responsible for own decision-making, own behaviour Self as active, in control of own behaviour Self as actively choosing own behaviour Others as lacking power to alter his behaviour Resistance of being in passive position Taking responsibility for own future Resistance to being controlled/restricted Self as resisting being controlled/being seen to be effectively sanctioned Self as agent of own destiny, self in control of own choices Motivation to be free to make own choices Impression management - unwillingness to be seen to be controlled/effectively sanctioned Unwillingness to allow others' views/priorities to (be seen to) affect	Motivation to achieve academically Priorities - desire to achieve transcends boredom Desire to gain specific skills Importance of academic side of school life School as a positive, as a vehicle to academic success Change in personal perspective and priorities Self as intrinsically motivated to achieve Interest in learning itself Long-term goals Motivation towards financial gain Motivation towards enjoyment Academic aspiration as means of ensuring future high income Motivation from prospect of future financial wealth Subject-specific interest Motivation to avoid bad lessons Impact of promised future sanction/reward vs. influence of immediate desire Knowledge of future educational options Identification of specific academic goals

		his behaviour	

External locus of control/others as responsible	Negative holistic experience of school	Personal competence and limitations	
External cause for absentee behaviour Teachers as responsible for giving sanction School as responsible for making his experience more positive (and knowing how to do so) Being controlled by authority within school Impact of school-imposed sanctions	School as predominantly a negative/unfulfilling experience School as negative experience over long period of time Reluctance to acknowledge positives within school experience Subject-based dislike of school Academic difficulties	Experience of learning about self - meta-cognition Acknowledgement of own limitations Having realistic goals	

Emerging themes grouped into subordinate themes (George)

Temporal elements of experience	Teacher behaviour/ relationships with teachers	Minimising/distancing self from behaviours	Self as competent and in control of future
Time-scale of change as a salient feature Behaviour as gradually changing over time Experience of gradual grinding down, loss of motivation over time New school as different, distinct experience from old school Old school as homogeneously positive experience	Impact of teachers' behaviours and attitudes on experience of school Teacher behaviour as having negative impact on experience Teacher 'strictness' impacting on enjoyment of lessons Importance of staff-student relationships to make positive school experience Not being listened to Subject-specific absence	Impact/importance of own 'deviant' behaviour minimised Minimising impact of own behaviour Minimising own behaviours Minimising own behaviours as a recurrent theme Impression management, reticence Vagueness distances self from experience?	Self as in control and responsible for own actions Others as largely impotent to change his situation Self as needing to change - has agency and control Self as confident in own ability to achieve Self as taking responsibility, in control of own behaviour Sense of identity independent of school experience

Values and motivations	Self as passive/ helpless within system	The social world	School systems as negative/ineffective
Motivation to remain included at school Full attendance as positive, desirable Enjoyment of lessons as important factor Academic aspiration Career goal as driving academic aspiration Clear future plans Self as motivated to change behaviour Self as slightly aware of impact of	Inevitability of sanctions; passive/helpless within school systems Inevitability of sanctions, helpless/passive within school systems Entering lessons with expectation that sanctions will follow - helpless to change this Others as responsible for contributing to behaviours	Impact of friends/social group on behaviour	School systems/sanctions as ineffective Sanctions as ineffective deterrent Sanctions system as counter-productive? Sanctions system as disproportionately harsh/rigid Lack of support systems in place in school (as compared with previous school)

current behaviours on possible future outcomes	Self as needing others to remove expectations on him			

Emerging themes grouped into subordinate themes (Michael)

The competent self	Self as distant/separate from the establishment	Inevitability, lack of power/lack of conscious control	Individual control/agency
Self as a learner Negative portrayal of self as a learner Self as learner - negative view His impression of himself as a learner Wisdom/hindsight gained over time Self as competent at helping others Self as aware of own strengths/limitations Lack of confidence in own choices/decision-making Self as insightful/clear view of own limitations Self as able to achieve academically Self as competent learner (subject-specific) Self as competently providing a service for others Importance of educational qualifications Need for qualifications for future Ambiguity in concept of self as academically competent Self as capable/ powerful in solving others' problems High expectations of self Self as competent	Self as distant from establishment Lack of ownership/sense of belonging within school systems Sanctions system as ineffective/meaning less School rewards/sanctions systems as ineffective/ meaningless (others' values) Self as disengaged from system Rejection of externally-imposed values Self as distant/separate from system Motivation to 'beat the system' External locus of control - systems as operating around him, rather than him being part of system Conflict - position of self outside of system vs. wanting to be liked by those in system Self as outside of school system and its values Externalisation of others' values/views of school and its purpose Ineffectiveness of	Self as helpless, passive Self as lacking in agency/responsibili ty Inevitability of negative behaviour from peers Inevitability of bullying Resignation, lack of power 'Bullies' as unreachable Lack of agency/responsibili ty Behaviour as result of upbringing/ experience, not personal choice Negative social experience as inevitable Bullies as lacking responsibility for their actions Inevitability of difficulties in life Others taking control Inevitability of school-related stress Lack of power to change school stressors Impotence of others to change his behaviour Self as less responsible for own behaviour, dependent on mood - external locus of control	'Not caring' as conscious choice? Motivation to be individual and retain agency Sense of individual freedom Agency within own behaviour Self as capable of manipulating a situation for his own ends Enjoyment of control Agency and choice - self as in control Personal agency and responsibility Independent choices, expressions of individuality Sense of freedom Giving others what they want but retaining control Manipulating others' reactions/behaviour - enjoying that control 'Fun' as being in control Personal choice and agency Freedom Realisation of opportunity to make a choice Taking control Agency/choice Decision to take control of life 'Fun' as taking control Agency and choice despite stress Agency and control of own behaviour Avoidance of school

problem-solver Making the best of the system Conscious thought as barrier to easy learning Self as capable of dealing with pressure when necessary Self as making mistakes but capable of learning from them Awareness of personal skills and strengths (own and others) Self as good/moral Dealing with pressure Confidence in own competence Self as poor at social communication Self as reflective, insightful Social communication as problematic Self as mature, adult Self as too clever to be controlled Self as competent thinker Self as a learner impaired by too much conscious thought? Independent thought and maturity as direct result of social rejection Externalisation of perceived lack of competence (subject-specific) - others are to blame?	school sanctions systems Self as outside of proposed state system - not part of mainstream society Self as separate from proposed system Reluctance to be seen as complying with others' expectations School as predominantly negative Reluctance to acknowledge positives within school experience Difficulty in thinking positively within perceived social/ environmental reality Whole institution of school as a negative thing	Mental processes as external, beyond conscious control Externalising mental processes Externalising control of mood Anxiety as external force Lack of power to change school stress Lack of power to change system Inevitability of aspects of human nature/behaviour Inevitability of aspects of human nature/behaviour Externalisation of mental processes Physical brain as responsible for behaviour - lack of conscious control Inevitability of human nature Inevitability of school-related stress Human nature as inescapable Inevitability of school-related stress for everyone Physical brain as agent of learning - inevitable physiological limitations Behaviour as inevitable result of 'getting away with it', lack of personal agency Self as malleable in response to life experiences Individual differences as result of	as only available coping strategy Need for personal choice/agency/control Desire for personal choice Impact of own choices School systems as limiting personal choices/freedoms Need to be individual rather than 'follow the crowd' Self as independent learner, rather than wanting to be told Need for individual privacy/agency Importance of understanding consequences of actions Importance of children being given enough knowledge to have agency Impact of taking control on behaviour towards others Children more knowledgeable/ experienced than parents think

		upbringing/specific life experiences	
The future	Desire for positive regard	Impact of life experiences on personality and behaviour	
Inability to construct/imagine a future beyond school Difficulty conceiving of a clear future Awareness of possible future	Impression management Impression management Impression management Impression management - wants to be seen as 'good' Desire for positive regard	Impact of social exclusion on personality development Key role of upbringing in shaping personality/behavioural traits Inevitability of missing school - self as passive	
The role/purpose of school	Impression management Importance of creating positive impression of self on others	Child as lacking agency/control Children as vulnerable to basic behaviourist conditioning	
School as responsible for providing education and social opportunities/ development School as central part of life School as increasing social capacity/ experience		Children as animal-like in learning/cognition Children as passive and malleable to other social influences besides parents Individuals as vulnerable to manipulation by social forces External locus of control - inevitability of life not being easy Self as inevitably hating control because of age/'teenage rebellious phase' Frustration linked with impotence Children as blank slates, passive absorbers of information Children as ignored/dismissed	

		part of general population Children as vulnerable/passive - needing protection from malevolent social forces Inevitability of teenage rebellious phase Impact of sanctions - effective to a point?	

The social/relational world as positive/beneficial	The social/relational world as negative/complex	The emotional self, stress and anxiety	Personal values/beliefs
Need for friendships for emotional well-being Social experience as positive Value of positive peer relationships Importance of positive regard from friends Value of maintaining friendships despite adversity Positive relationships with teachers as salient feature Desire to talk Central importance of social world/friendships Friendship as most important aspect of life Shared experience/hardships as reinforcing social bonds Friends as highest	Bullying, peer difficulties Negative impact of staff attitude/behaviour Peer difficulties/loss of friendships Impact of bullying Fear of social rejection Feeling socially excluded/un-cared for Avoidance of social contact Feeling 'hated' by teacher Avoidance of others Ambivalence about social contact Deliberate isolation of self from others Desire to avoid attention Doubt about whether to trust others' judgement Adult attention as undesirable	Importance of positive emotional experience - relief of stress School-related stress Importance of making others happy (for own happiness) 'Fun' as finding purpose and gaining sense of achievement Enjoyment and satisfaction from social role Emotional impact of responsibility on self and others Impact of his emotional state on behaviour Sense of control/agency as leading to happiness Negative emotional impact of being with others Negative emotional	Self as good/moral Disregard for school rules/systems - values 'Caring' as externally imposed - represents others' values Self as good/moral - own values system 'Caring' as externally imposed Caring about others Disregard for school rules - not part of his own values Relaxed approach to life as desirable 'Chilled' vs. 'stress' Fairness/justice Moral conflict/dilemma Conflict with own values Social responsibility leading to lack of choice - his values, priorities 'Fun' as fulfilling social role, doing something in line with his values/priorities

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priority - shared values? Central value of friendships Value of others, value of positive relationships Incidental social benefits of school as a positive Sense of belonging within own small social group Basic human need for friendship - self and others share this Sense of belonging in small friendship group Need for friendship to maintain positive personality/behaviour Self as benefiting from others' time and efforts Self as needing to talk Value of opportunities to talk Talking as a necessary way to process thoughts		impact of being around others Impact of feeling disliked Social anxiety Anxiety linked with talking Anxiety around social communication Impact of anxiety on physical well-being Impact of anxiety on school attendance 'Stress' as a result of responsibility towards others Anxiety/stress linked with academic achievement 'Stress' as result of systemic expectations Separation of 'stress' and 'anxiety' Impact of anxiety on social behaviour/ communication Sense of gradual decline of emotional well-being over time School experience as 'stress' Behaviour in response to anxiety Social anxiety self-defined as severe Stress as result of future consequences of what happens at school Anxiety arising from others' demands/expectations School as source	Weight of responsibility towards others - important to him Putting others first Putting others first Conscious disregard for own well-being Altruism (but limited) Selfish altruism? Acceptance of others' values (educational qualifications) Self as responsible towards others Sense of duty - no choice Motivation to help others Value of cooperation between individuals Wider values system - mutual support/cooperation Value of giving to others Value of people/friendships over material goods Need to fulfil duty/responsibility 'Real' happiness as deriving from social relationships rather than material goods Internalisation of others' values 'Chilled' as approachable, open to conversation Motivation to learn in order to fulfil chosen purpose/values (to understand and support friends more effectively) Personal desire to have positive impact on society 'Correct' way of thinking/being Some morality as absolute

| 143 | | | of stress
Stress viewed as 'sickness'
Stress as ever-present
Stress as the result of knowing long-term importance of school
Social anxiety - impact of crowds
Stress as a result of the importance of school for future life
Stress as universal experience
Impact of loneliness
Physiological response to anxiety
Importance of children's own feelings
School as most important factor in defining future life (this idea leading to stress)
Stress as result of burden of knowledge (at young age)
Inevitability of stress as result of knowledge
Stress as result of inevitability of consequences of actions
Mental health services
Different (inferior?) ways of stress manifesting/being expressed | Society as dysfunctional
Motivation/purpose - universal happiness
Society as dysfunctional, profit-driven
Self as responsible for understanding others' behaviour/emotions
Perceptions of others' expectations of his priorities
Desire to have constructive purpose in life
Purpose in life
Willingness to internalise others' priorities
Life as having limited purpose
Impact of chosen social responsibility on school attendance
School absenteeism as a side-effect of greater purpose
Burden of responsibility
Social influences
Social influences on non-attendance behaviour
'Getting in trouble' as important
Importance of others' views
Individual experiences and personalities as diverse
Behaviour as agent for shaping personality (not vice versa) |

Self as sharing experiences/ commonalities with peers	Self as distant/different from peers	Externally imposed 'control' vs. freedom	Impact of parenting/upbringing
Universal inevitability of making friends in school Universality of his own paradoxical experience Self as child? Significance of being 'in trouble' (self and others) Parallels between own and others' school experiences Self and others as caring about future Knock-on effect of behaviour from one person to the next Commonality of experience between self and out-group Casting others as not caring about system	Self as different from peers Self as above/superior to peers Self as different, more intelligent/responsible than peers Self as different, more insightful than peers Self as powerful over peers Self as distant from peers Self as separate/ different from peers Self as more insightful/ thoughtful than peers Self as superior in intelligence Self as distinct from 'other' social groups Dislike of the 'other' Self as above peers - more mature/superior Self as being in line with adult views of peers? Out-group as inferior to self Self as different and excluded from social mainstream Identity as 'outcast' Self as more mature than peers, more able to learn Self as different, more communicative than peers Own social in-group as 'different' from	Control as leading to greater social good, despite discomfort 'Control' as a negative force 'Control' as threat to individual freedom Freedom as a dialectic Control relating to social behaviour Self as having needed more assertive parenting? Need for parents to set boundaries for children Need for control and rules relating to parenting Parents as controlling children's personality development Children's freedom outside the home 'Getting away with it' as reinforcement for behaviour Avoidance behaviour reinforced by 'getting away with it' Lack of physical barriers to leaving school site Impact on future behaviour of 'getting away with it' 'Getting away with it'	Importance of early life experiences Importance of early life Importance of parenting Importance of very early life in shaping future personality Direct impact of parenting on personality and thinking Parents as irresponsible School as secondary to home environment in shaping personality
			Conflict and contradiction
			Contradiction within social experience - anxiety but also importance of friendships Paradoxical situation - hating school (stress) but its social experiences are central to life Making sense of conflicting ideas Social experience of school as positive influence on life and personality development (contradiction with view of school in general) Conflict between own desires/values and inevitable need to

145	mainstream Self as separate from 'children' Self as above/separate from majority social hierarchies Self as more than a child, above peers 'Control' as something for lesser young people Other social groups as largely homogeneous Self as different from many other groups Self as socially rejected by majority/mainstream Others as categories, not individuals Self as transcending attempts to control him 'Others'/out-group as distinct but homogeneous entities Self as competent independent learner; others as needing explicit teaching Experiential commonalities between adults and himself	Ease of leaving site and 'getting away with it' as reinforcement of behaviour Conflict between belief in a need for social control but not wanting to advocate censorship Parents as needing state supervision/monitoring - not to be automatically trusted with responsibility Conflict - need to ensure good parenting vs. individual privacy Legal powers to enforce parenting standards (although dismissive of law) Overseeing parenting quality as the responsibility of the state ('they'), not individuals Parents as being in need of guidance/oversight	meet social expectations

Emerging themes grouped into subordinate themes (Rosie)

Bullying and social difficulties	Personal competence and agency	Self as passive victim of others' actions/ inaction	Expectations of school systems and staff
Physical bullying Multiple reasons for bullying Fear Fear of bullying as barrier to school attendance Widespread bullying from many different people Verbal bullying around bereavement Friendship difficulties, loss of friendships Social isolation Bullying and friendship difficulties as one-sided problems Impact of single peer on well-being and other social relationships Single peer as responsible for causing arguments, upset etc. Impact of single peer on her ability to be in school full-time Single peer as sole/primary reason for wanting to avoid school Impact of bullying on her behaviour Direct link - social/friendship problems and low attendance Social isolation, being an outcast/seen as outcast	Sense of taking control of own life/future Self as in control, developing coping strategies Self as taking control Self as more powerful now Success of own strategy to stop bullying Self as capable of solving own peer difficulties Self as in control now, able to develop own coping strategies Self as taking responsibility, developing own strategy for coping with bullying Self as powerful in peer's absence Self as initiating new friendship Impression management - minimising of 'deviant' behaviour Self changed in response to difficulties Self as more focused academically Self as stronger, more able to rise above bullying Self as in control of own choices	Self as passive victim Self as passive, innocent victim Self as lacking power/agency Self as needing adult intervention to solve friendship/bullying problems Peer as all-powerful over self and her friendships Self as passive victim of others falling out with her Power of single peer to control her other social interactions Power of peer to control her other relationships Self as powerless in presence of peer Self and family as victims of 'fall-out' Unclear how to reach future goal (Unclear about academic qualifications being studied) Individual control/agency uncertain in terms of absenteeism	School staff failed to protect her from bullying School as potentially powerful but ineffective School as responsible for solving friendship difficulties Faith in school system's ability to solve problems - school as powerful but inept Failure of school systems to act/intervene when asked Self as betrayed/let down by system Loss of faith/trust in school systems Feeling dismissed by school staff Feeling dismissed, betrayed by school staff/system Teachers failing to stand up for her School systems as responsible for tackling bullying Sense of injustice - bullies were not held accountable School as responsible for intervening but failed to do so Holistic rating of school is contingent on efficacy of systems at dealing with bullying Past experience of bullying being dealt with effectively (primary school) Importance of school staff dealing with problems quickly - most

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Emotional impact of bullying in the past Avoidance of particular lessons because of certain peers Social problems as sole reason for non-attendance Bullying as key factor in making school experience negative Social problems as most salient (negative) feature of school Physical bullying	Self as competent in chosen skill area Parents and brother see her as skilled Making use of existing skills and experience Need to increase own power Learning as a positive Positive towards school as a result of social difficulties being resolved	Holistic experience of school as negative School as wholly negative experience 'Black and white' view of negative aspects of experience - all bad Temporal aspects of experience Temporal aspect - contrasts present with past	salient way to improve school experience

Social world as positive	Aspiration and priorities	Life experiences beyond school	Support/influence from family
Friendships as buffer to negative school experience Importance of friendships/positive social experiences Importance of social world Making friends Value of maintaining a friendship Value of 'keeping the peace' Positive experience of a close friendship Potential to recover lost friendship	Academic aspiration Academic aspirations over-riding bullying experience Shift in individual priorities Motivation to avoid (further) social problems Clear goal for future Clear plans for future Value of academic learning and ability to succeed Internalisation of systemic priorities Long-standing aim for future	Loss, bereavement Negative changes in life experience Loss and bereavement Emotional impact of loss 'Fall-outs' as ordinary part of life (own and others')	Positive benefit of parental intervention Influence of parental views on plans for future

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Emerging themes grouped into subordinate themes (Sarah)

Fear	Importance of friendships and positive social experience	Self as passive/ resigned to a situation	Self as distant from behaviour/experience
Anxiety around school transition Social anxiety Fear of the unknown Anticipation worse than actual experience	Friendships as most salient feature of positive school experience Importance of friends to make whole experience more positive Friends as buffer to negative experiences Impact of satisfaction with social circle Friends as major (only salient) factor in school experience Friends remove former barriers to attendance Role of other people, as well as friends, as part of positive experience Very significant impact of changes to friendships/ social experience Friends as only salient feature of changed experience	Within-person situation? Others as helpless to effect change Self as passive, resigned to situation Situation as impervious to external influence Self as passive in school context Self as passive within social circle	Distancing self from behaviour Reluctance to divulge details relating to behaviour Reluctance to share - attempt to minimise 'deviant' behaviour? Reticence Self as distant from school experience/ absenteeism Impression management? Reluctance to talk about 'deviant' behaviour Lack of perspective on others' views on absenteeism

Negative social experience	Lesson-related issues	Temporal element	The future
Social isolation Direct link - social isolation and missing school	Pattern to absences Patterns of absence Lesson-specific change Lesson/subject-specific issues Expectation/desire for 'fun' lessons	Historic school experience as wholly positive - 'rose-tinted spectacles'? 'Rose-tinted' view?	Future goal Limited knowledge about how to attain future goals

Appendix III: Superordinate themes
(and the subordinate themes which comprise them)

Subordinate themes from the transcripts of: **Michael Rosie Eden Sarah George**

Personal competence, agency and control The competent self Personal competence and agency The self as 'in control' Self as competent and in control of future Individual control/agency Personal competence and limitations Externally imposed 'control' vs. freedom	**Passivity and lack of control** Self as passive victim of others' actions/inaction Inevitability, lack of power/lack of conscious control External locus of control/others as responsible Self as passive/resigned to a situation Self as passive/helpless within system
Social and relational experience The social/relational world as positive/beneficial The social/relational world as negative/complex Bullying and social difficulties Social world as positive Relationships and social experience The social world Importance of friendships and positive social experience Negative social experience Teacher behaviour/ relationships with teachers Self as sharing experiences/ commonalities with peers Self as distant/different from peers Lesson-related issues [linked with relationships] Impact of parenting/upbringing Support/influence from family Life experiences beyond school	**The emotional self** The emotional self, stress and anxiety Fear
School as a holistically negative experience* School as predominantly negative Holistic experience of school as negative Negative holistic experience of school	**School systems and the establishment** School systems as negative/ineffective Expectations of school systems and staff Self as distant/separate from the establishment
Values, beliefs, motivations and priorities Personal values/beliefs Aspiration and priorities Personal goals and motivations Values and motivations The future The future	**Temporal aspects of experience*** Temporal aspects of experience Temporal element Temporal elements of experience
Impression management and positive self-presentation* Presenting the self positively (to me and others) Minimising/distancing self from behaviours Self as distant from behaviour/experience Desire for positive regard	Conflict and contradiction The role/purpose of school (These subordinate themes did not fit comfortably into any superordinate theme)

*Themes which were created predominantly out of participants' use of language.

Appendix IV: Semi-structured interview schedule

(Possible prompt questions are in italics)

(Possible visual support strategies are underlined)

1. Could you tell me a bit about your school history - which schools you've attended in the past, and when? (Opportunity to draw and label a time-line together if appropriate)

> *How did you find it, moving from one school to the next?*

2. Has there been a time when you were attending school full-time? How was school for you, at this time? How was life in general? (Could offer scaling activity to support this)

> *What was going well for you at this time?*
> *Was there anything that wasn't going so well?*
> *How was life similar to, or different from, now?*

3. Can you remember when you stopped attending school full-time? What changed?

> (Refer back to time-line if used)
> *Was there a specific incident or change?*
> *How did you feel about those changes?*
> *Are there specific times of day/lessons/activities which are particularly difficult for you?*
> (Could draw out timetable or spatial map of school day/week and annotate)
> *How much control or choice did/do you feel you have about your school attendance?*

4. Thinking back to that time, then, what might have helped you to get back into school full-time?

> *Could the school have supported you more effectively?*
> *Could anyone else have made a difference? (Who? How?)*

5. How do you feel about school now? (Could use scaling activity here)

> *What is going well for you?*
> *Is there anything that isn't going so well? What would help?*

6. Has your experience with school changed the way you see yourself?

> *How does that feel?*

7. What is getting in the way of you going to school full-time now?

Would something need to change to enable that to happen?

What would need to be different?

(<u>Opportunity to use solution-focused scaling-type activity</u>)

8. What are your best hopes for the rest of your time at school/in education? (Are these hopes linked with future ambitions/plans for after you've left school?)

How could your hopes be made possible? (<u>Could use visual time-line for this if appropriate</u>)

The development of the interview schedule:

How the interview questions relate back to my research questions

Original research questions	Interview questions which relate (directly or indirectly) to these
1. What are participants' experiences of becoming low attenders, and how do they understand and give meaning to these experiences?	(2), 3, 4, 6. Question 2 also served to set a context for the rest of the interview.
2. What are their perceptions of the barriers to regular attendance?	4, 5, 7.
3. What are participants' experiences of school transition?	1. (This was also included as an easy, non-threatening 'way in' to the interview)
4. What are their goals and priorities?	8.

Appendix V: Positionality
(written before carrying out my interviews)

In using myself as a subjective, reflexive part of the analytical process, it is necessary to consider the assumptions, biases, knowledge and experiences I might bring to the task. I have no first-hand experience of the phenomenon I am researching; I hardly ever missed a day of school myself and would not have dreamed of doing so unless I was physically really ill. I will consider here my experience and the values which I held (and perhaps still hold) relating to the school experience, particularly regarding secondary school.

I attended a large, very average comprehensive school, in a different geographical area and within different contemporary systems from my participants. I am eighteen academic years older than my participants, who will complete their GCSEs in 2015; I completed mine in 1997. During my time at school, levels of aspiration and attainment amongst my peers varied widely, although my perception of the dominant student culture was that academic achievement was not valued, outwardly at least. I did not feel much of a sense of belonging within school and I found the social side of school life difficult. Although I had a few friends, I tended to feel that I was on the edge of any social group and felt like an outsider through most of my time at school. I was also on the receiving end of quite a lot of verbal bullying. My time at secondary school was not particularly happy. Nevertheless, I was motivated to attend and to work hard because I was desperate to succeed academically. I had clear aspirations: I wanted to study music at university or music college and to make a career in music. I did not really see why I should have to study certain subjects (e.g. maths) but nevertheless tried my best because I could not bear to risk perceived failure.

I grew up in a family with high expectations, not in terms of specific achievements but certainly in terms of attitude, effort and behaviour. There was no specific expectation that I would go to to university, for example (my parents themselves did not). There was a strong expectation, however, that I would take education seriously, work hard and achieve the best that I could. My parents valued education very highly (despite not always agreeing with the approach taken by individual teachers) and would never have allowed me not to attend school. They took an active interest in my school work and checked regularly that I had completed homework. As someone who lacked in social skills and social acceptance, academic success enabled me to feel more positive about

myself. I progressed from school to sixth-form college and then to the University of Cambridge to study music. Being a state-educated Oxbridge graduate has given me a certain confidence which I did not have as a teenager; at that time I was aware that I was academically able but was constantly anxious about failure. I put a great deal of pressure on myself to achieve throughout school and university.

My childhood was very sheltered and I experienced no real trauma or loss. I lived with both parents and my family life was very stable, dependable and predictable throughout my school years. Boundaries were clear and consistently maintained. I was brought up with a strong set of (non-religious) moral values, many of which I have retained in my own way but some of which have caused me some difficulties over the years. Nevertheless, I was always encouraged to question and to think independently rather than merely to assimilate others' opinions without question.

Given my own background, I have reflected on how this might impact on my beliefs, values, priorities and assumptions relating to my research. These are some of the notions which I need consciously to set aside when approaching my interviews and analysis: I cannot assume, for example, that my participants will value academic learning and achievement to the extent I did, if at all. I cannot assume that they will have aspirations for the future or what any aspirations might be. I cannot assume that my participants will come from stable family situations (nor should I assume that this is automatically a positive, though), that their parents or carers value education or that there are clear boundaries in place around them. I need to try to take a non-judgemental approach to those who may not take education as seriously as I did, and to families where clear boundaries and high expectations are not necessarily maintained. It seems possible, perhaps likely, that many young people may place a greater importance on peer support and friendship groups and a lesser value on academic achievement than I did at that age. I cannot assume any particular family belief or values system, nor can I assume that a young person subscribes (or does not subscribe) to this. At this stage I cannot know which, if any, parts of all this will be relevant, but I can try, at least, to approach my interviews with some awareness of the assumptions and prior experiences which I will bring to them.

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Appendix VI: Background information, Newton School

I have given my participants' school the pseudonym Newton School. It is also referred to on occasions in my transcripts as 'the Grammar'; it was the local grammar school before the grammar school system was abolished within the LA. Newton School is now a 14 - 19 co-educational academy of over 2200 students. Students transfer to Newton at the beginning of Year 10 from several different 11 - 14 schools, known locally as high schools. All five of my interview participants, coincidentally, arrived at Newton having attended the same high school (which I have named St Peter's), which is the largest and geographically closest feeder high school to Newton School. Newton School is academically one of the highest-achieving upper schools in the LA.

Newton School has a house system; students are placed into a form group upon arrival in Year 10 and that form will belong to one of eight houses. The houses form the pastoral structure of the school, with each house having a pastoral Head of House and several house tutors. The house staffing structure is organised independently of curriculum areas, although most house tutors and Heads of House also teach academic subjects.

Newton School and St Peter's School are located within a small market town. Newton School is spread across two sites. The demographics of the area are quite mixed; some parts of the town and its surrounding villages are relatively affluent, whereas other parts of the area are more deprived.

Students' attendance at Newton School is monitored using computer software designed for the purpose. All students are kept aware of their own cumulative attendance figure (expressed as a percentage) for the year so far. This figure is updated weekly. Students are encouraged to be familiar with this system and to take ownership and responsibility for maintaining and/or increasing their attendance.

My research has been supported by the school's EWO (referred to as Mrs Summers), who until quite recently worked for a number of schools in the area. She is now employed as a full-time Head of House at Newton School (but maintaining specific responsibility for student attendance).

The School Of Education.

Karen How
c/o DEdCPsy Programme
2012 Cohort

6th May 2014

Head of School
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Dear Karen

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Exploring the experiences and perceptions of Key Stage 4 students whose school attendance is persistently low.

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

We recommend you refer to the reviewers' additional comments (please see attached). You should discuss how you are going to respond to these comments with your supervisor BEFORE you proceed with your research.

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

Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

Enc   Ethical Review Feedback Sheet(s)

Interview 1 - Eden (and Mum)			
Emerging themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33	*Right, I think we're going. So, we've been through all the paperwork, we've been through all the background information. Are you still happy to, to go ahead and talk to me?* Yeah. *Brilliant, thank you. I thought we could start with something fairly straightforward - could you just tell me a little bit about your school history, which schools you've been to in the past, and when?* Erm... I went to Westley, then I went to St Peter's, then I went to Newton School. *Ok, so that's fairly straightforward then, isn't it, that's sort of a standard pattern. How did you find the experience of moving from one school to the next, each time?* Er... it was alright. *Alright?* Yeah. *No particular difficulties, then, with that?* No. *Ok, ok. So, I know that during the last year your attendance was... we talked, didn't we, you said it was somewhere in the 70s, 80s, percent... But just try and think back, further back than that - has there been a time when you were in school properly full-time?* Yeah.	

	34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58	*Have a think, when would that have been, when you were last properly full-time?* Erm, at St Peter's, and Westley [indistinct] *At Westley?* And St Peter's. *And St Peter's?* Yeah. *Ok. What year, roughly, do you think? ...Year 7, Year 8?* Every year. [Mum holds up nine fingers] *Mum says Year 9! Year 9? So, at St Peter's, in... up to Year 9 you were going in every day?* Yeah. *Ok. Ok, so what was school like for you at that time, when you were attending full-time?*	
School as predominantly a negative/unfulfilling experience	59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69	Just, like, a bit boring. *A bit boring?* Yeah. *But you were still going in every day?* Yeah. *Ok. What was going well at school for you, at that time?*	*School reduced to 'just... a bit boring'* - boredom as most salient feature What kept him there, at that time?

Social world of school	70 71 72 73	Er, dunno. I just... had friends and stuff. *You had friends?*	Importance of social world of school
Friendships as a buffer to make negative experience more tolerable	74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85	Yeah, so I used to go in all the time. I didn't like the school really. *Ok... You didn't like school but you did have friends there.* Yeah. *Ok. What else was going well?* Er... don't know. The school work... [indistinct] *Sorry, say that again?*	Reluctance to talk about school in positive light? <u>Friends were a buffer to the negative aspects</u> - made school tolerable, despite boredom
Reluctance to acknowledge positives within school experience Academic difficulties	86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105	The school work wasn't very good. *Your work wasn't that good?* No. *Ok. And that was St Peter's you're talking about?* Yeah. *But you were still there every day though.* Yeah. *Ok, ok. Thinking about life in general, how similar was it to now?* *Or how different was it to now?* Er... kind of the same. *No major changes really?*	Has turned positive question into a negative - doesn't want to acknowledge positives about past school experience

	106	No.	Lack of significant life events/changes
	107		
	108	*Ok, ok. So work wasn't brilliant but you had friends and you were*	
	109	*going in every day. So, can you remember when you stopped*	
	110	*going to school full-time, then? When would that be?*	
	111		
Desire to distance the self from onset of 'deviant' behaviour	112	Er... (pause) It was like, a few months into Newton School, I think.	*'I think' - vagueness, distancing himself?*
	113		
	114	*So, during Year 10?*	
	115		
	116	Yeah.	
	117		
	118	*Ok. What changed, then, do you think?*	
	119		
Shame/embarrassment Negative feelings about others' perceptions of behaviour?	120	Erm... (Pause) I don't know. (Pause.)	Hesitant, reticent? Is there some shame/embarrassment here? (Particularly in front of Mum?)
	121		
	122	*Hmmm. So you started off going... you started Newton at the*	
	123	*beginning of Year 10, yeah? And you were full-time for a little*	
	124	*while, then, at first, is that right?*	
	125		
	126	Yeah	
	127		
	128	*And then your attendance dropped off during Year 10, is that*	
	129	*right?*	
	130		
	131	Yeah	
	132		
	133	*I'm just wondering what changed at that time, then?*	
	134		
External cause for absentee behaviour	135	Dunno... I think... I think it's 'cos I got a new game.	External attribution - specific event
	136		
	137	*You got a new game?*	
	138		
	139	Yeah.	
	140		
	141	*At home?*	

Impression management, need for deception	142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167	Yeah. *What was that then? Tell me about that.* It was FIFA. *Right... go on...* I think I used to just, like, pretend I was going to go to school and then come home, when my Mum had gone to work, to play FIFA. Ah... Does Mum know about this? Yeah! *Ok.* Yeah (all laugh). *Right, ok. So Mum would be at work, you'd come home when she was at work and you'd play your FIFA game.* Yeah. *Ok, I see. What happened? Did, did school pick up on that? Or...*	Desire to deceive Mum - felt the need to maintain certain impression on her at that time (Mum is able to laugh about this now - no outward sign of anger, negativity etc.)
Reluctance to acknowledge consequences of behaviour	168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177	Yeah. Yeah, I thought they did. *Did they?* Grandma Jean came round in the middle of the day to drop something off and caught him. *Who did, sorry?* His Grandma.	*'I thought they did' - vague, non-committal* Doesn't Eden want to tell me this himself? Is he ashamed?

Distancing self from behaviour and consequences	178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186	*Oh right.* She came round in the middle of the day, caught him here, playing FIFA when he should have been at school. *Ah, I see. So, Eden, what happened after that, then?* Erm... I think I went back to school [indistinct].	*Vagueness again - 'I think I went back...'*
	187 188 189 190 191 192	*What, that day, you mean?* Yeah. *Or for a little while after that as well?*	
Reluctance to acknowledge behaviour and its consequences	193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200	Yeah, I went back to school. *Yeah?* For a little while. *Ok, ok. But then... then what?*	*Seems reluctant to talk much about this whole incident - very brief answers, telling me a bare minimum.*
Impression management - need to minimise 'deviant' behaviour	201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213	Erm... I just started skiving a few lessons a day. *Ok, ok. So was it specific lessons, or specific times of day that you tended to miss?* Just specific lessons. *Which ones?* Maths. Erm... (pause) I can't remember what it was called now...	

Self as distant/removed from school experiences	214 215 216 217	*Maths...* Oh, Performing Arts.	Could he not remember the name of this? (Presumably he chose it as a GCSE option)
	218 219 220	*Oh, right, ok. What is that, like drama, dance and music, stuff like that?*	
	221 222 223	Erm, I think, like, I was one of the people that did the stage lights and stuff.	*'I think'... Seems to be distancing himself from his school experience*
	224 225	*Oh right...*	
Being controlled by authority within school	226 227	We had to do the lights and stuff. I didn't like it, so...	*'We had to' - no choice in taking this role?*
	228 229	*You didn't like that?*	
	230 231	No.	
	232 233 234 235	*Ok. So you missed Maths, Performing Arts... Was that because of the subject itself, or was there other reasons why you wanted to miss those particular sessions?*	
Subject-based dislike of school	236 237	I just didn't like the subject.	Subject-related reason for wanting to avoid certain lessons
	238 239 240	*Right, ok. So what, what happened, then? You started to miss those lessons... quite frequently, did you? Or...*	
	241 242	Yeah.	
	243 244	*Ok. And was there any consequences for that?*	
Teachers as responsible for giving sanction	245 246 247	Yeah. I, like... well, one of my teachers took my XBox. They had it for, like, a month or something.	Attributes this sanction to a teacher...
	248 249	*One of your teachers took your XBox? How come your XBox was in school?*	

	250	Er... Mum... (pause).	Reluctant to explain full story?
	251		
	252	Mum took it in, as punishment, and put it in the school safe.	This was Mum's doing, but perhaps
	253		he doesn't want to frame it this way
	254	*Ah...*	in front of her?
	255		
	256	And he wasn't allowed it back until he'd done a full week at school.	
	257		
	258	*Right.*	
	259		
	260	...Which took a month.	
	261		
	262	*I see, I see. Do you think that was effective?*	
	263		
Reluctance to be seen to accept sanctions as effective - reluctance to be seen as being controlled by others	264	Yeah, kind of.	Qualifies this - it wasn't fully effective.
	265		
	266	*Kind of? (Laughs) So you did end up doing a full week in school*	
	267	*again after that?*	
	268		
	269	Yeah.	Is still reluctant to expand on what
	270		he's saying.
	271	*Yeah. I see. This might be a strange question, but... when you*	
	272	*were missing lessons, and missing school, how much did you feel*	
	273	*that that was your choice and that you were in control of that? Or*	
	274	*how much did you feel you didn't have that much choice?*	
	275		
Self as responsible for own decision-making, own behaviour	276	Erm... my choice.	<u>Takes responsibility, control, agency</u> <u>over own behaviour.</u>
	277		
	278	*It was your choice?*	
	279		
	280	Yeah.	
	281		
	282	*Ok. You felt it was your decision, you were making that decision?*	
	283		Very certain and clear on this point.
Self as active, in control of own behaviour	284	Yeah.	No hesitation.
	285		

Need to minimise 'deviant' behaviour - impression management	286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297	*Ok. So for you then, it was this, it was the FIFA game that started it all off, then, was it?* Yeah. *And then the XBox thing was a way of getting you back into school. But then what happened? Tell me about what happened after that, then, after that month...* Erm... I think I, like, went to lessons for, like, two weeks and then I just started skiving a few lessons again.	He does remember what happened. *'I started skiving' - active verb form, he was in control. But minimising behaviour - it was only 'a few lessons'.*
	298 299 300 301 302	*I see, I see. So at that time, then, which was sort of fairly early on, when you started missing school, fairly early on in that process in Year 10, what would have helped you to get back into school full-time? What would have made a difference, do you think?*	
School as responsible for making his experience more positive (and knowing how to do so)	303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321	Erm... uh... Like, making some of the lessons more fun. *Ok... ok. So you weren't enjoying some of the lessons that much, clearly...* Yeah. *Can you think of anything specifically about the lessons that would have made them more fun, and more appealing, to you?* (Pause) No... I can't think of anything. *Not sure specifically... but more fun?* Yeah. *Ok. What about the people around you, either Mum, or people at home, or people at school, or anyone around you, what could... is there anything they could have done to change the situation?*	Expectation that lessons should be 'fun' or enjoyable, and that it's the school's responsibility to ensure 'fun' is had

Others as lacking power to alter his behaviour	322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331	Hmmm... No, I don't think so. *You don't think that would have made any difference, what people did?* No. *Ok, ok. So thinking about school now,then, what's the situation now with your attendance?*	Because his behaviour is his choice - wants to retain his own decision-making and control?
Self as actively choosing own behaviour	332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354	I go to, like, all the lessons. *You do?* Yeah. *Oh ok, that's good, so you're back properly full-time now.* Yeah. *When did that start?* In Year 11. And, like, near the end of Year 10. *Oh ok, ok. So I wonder what, what enabled that to happen? What changed again that made you think, "Actually, I'm going to go to school"?* I just wanted to get good grades. *Ok, ok. So that's your motivation, you want to get good grades, what, in your GCSEs?*	*Active form again - taking responsibility? His choice to attend?* Clearer and less vague on this point - happier to share this information? New motivation - academic success
Motivation to achieve academically	355 356 357	Yeah. *Ok. Does that seem kind of more real now you're in Year 11?*	Clear and unambiguous Academic side of school seems now

	358	Yeah.	to be more salient and important for him.
	359		
	360	*Ok. So tell me about what's going well for you at school now,*	
	361	*then.*	
	362		
Importance of academic side of school life	363	Erm... my work's better.	
	364		
	365	*Ok...*	
	366		
	367	[indistinct] that's it.	
	368		
	369	*That's it? You said some lessons used to be boring, are they still?*	
	370		
	371	Some are still boring.	
	372		
	373	*But, whereas you used to choose to skip the boring ones, now*	
	374	*you're choosing to go to them, it seems?*	
	375		He is choosing to attend now, despite boredom
	376	Yeah.	
	377		
	378	*Because?...*	
	379		Motivation to achieve now over-rides
Priorities - desire to achieve transcends boredom	380	Erm, dunno... 'Cos I want to get, like, good at maths and stuff.	the desire to avoid boredom
	381		
	382	*Ok. You want to gain those skills, and be good at it.*	
	383		
Desire to gain specific skills	384	Yeah.	
Change in personal perspective and priorities	385		
	386	*Ok. Is there anything in school now that still isn't going too well for*	
	387	*you?*	
	388		Nothing negative now. But nothing
	389	No.	has objectively changed. <u>Perhaps</u>
	390		<u>this is because of a shift in his own</u>
	391	*No? You mentioned earlier on, you know when you were talking*	<u>thinking and priorities that he now</u>
	392	*about, erm, primary school and then St Peter's, you mentioned*	<u>perceives school more positively.</u>
	393	*about... although, erm, school wasn't brilliant in terms of lessons,*	

Social experience	394	*you had friends there, that was a positive.*	
	395		
	396	Yeah.	
	397		
	398	*What about that now? Have you got friends now in school?*	Friends have been a constant for him, apparently no changes to that social experience... Didn't impact on absenteeism?
	399		
	400	Yeah, I still have friends.	
	401		
	402	*Ok, and did... what about during Year 10, what was that like,*	
	403	*friends-wise, in Year 10?*	
	404		
	405	I had friends as well.	
	406		
	407	*So you've always had friends through school?*	
	408		
	409	Yeah.	
	410		
School as a positive (as a vehicle to academic success?)	411	*Ok, ok. That's good. So now, then, in school now, is there*	
	412	*anything you would want to do to change it, or to improve it, do*	
	413	*you think?*	
	414		
	415	Hmmm... No.	Still a positive view of school now
	416		
	417	*No?*	
	418		
	419	No.	
	420		
	421	*How would you rate school, if '1' is 'rubbish' and '10' is 'brilliant',*	
	422	*how would you rate your experience of school now, then?*	
	423		Quite positive rating
	424	(Pause) Six.	
	425		
	426	*Six?*	
	427		
	428	Yeah.	
	429		

Codes		Transcript	Notes
	430	*That's not bad, is it? That's fairly good? Ok, so school's a six out*	
School as negative experience over	431	*of ten right now, and you're saying it's alright, you're going in every*	
long period of time	432	*day and getting on with it... What would need to change to make*	
	433	*it, say, a seven? Just a little bit better?*	
	434		But he's never really liked it...
	435	I don't know. I just never really liked school.	Seems that he sees more purpose to
	436		it now, though, and is more willing to
	437	*You've never really liked it?*	set aside his dislike for the end goal
	438		of academic achievement
Resistance of being in passive	439	No.	
position	440		
	441	*Ah, ok. I wonder why that is?*	
	442		*Doesn't like being in passive*
Staff-student relationships	443	Erm... I just don't like being educated!	*position, having something done to*
	444		*him? - could have said 'I don't like*
	445	*(both laugh) You don't like being educated?*	*learning', but he didn't.*
	446		Issues with staff-student
	447	...and I don't like some teachers.	relationships
Resistance of being	448		
controlled/restricted	449	*Oh ok, fair enough... you don't like some teachers... is that... tell*	
	450	*me more about that. What's that about?*	
	451		Doesn't like being
	452	I dunno. I just... some are like really, like, strict and stuff. They	controlled/restricted - having
	453	don't let you talk or anything.	freedoms limited
	454		
	455	*Ok, so it's not just about the subject, it's about the way the*	
	456	*teachers are with you, as well, then, sometimes...*	
	457		
	458	Yeah.	
	459		
	460	*...that you're not so happy with?*	
	461		
	462	Yeah.	
	463		
	464	*And what else did you just say? You don't like being educated,*	
	465	*you said, didn't you... tell me what you mean by that.*	
			Issue of control/being controlled.

	466	Like, I just don't like having to be told what to do, and stuff.	Resists being controlled by others
	467		
	468	*Ah, you don't like being told what to do.*	
	469		
	470	Yeah.	
	471		
	472	*Ok. I guess that's probably not that unusual, is it, not liking being*	
	473	*told what to do?*	
	474		
	475	Hmmm.	
	476		
	477	*So, is it about not wanting to learn, or is it more about not wanting*	
	478	*to be told what to do?*	
	479		<u>He doesn't object to learning - it is</u>
	480	Not wanting to be told what to do.	<u>about being controlled/restricted</u>
Interest in learning itself	481		
	482	*Ok. Are there things in school that you are interested in learning*	
	483	*about?*	
	484		Intrinsic interest in learning?
Subject-specific interest	485	Yeah. Engineering.	
	486		
	487	*Oh right...*	
	488		
	489	Yeah, that's really it, engineering.	
	490		
	491	*Engineering. Ok, do you do that sort of thing in school now then?*	
	492		
	493	Yeah, that's one of my subjects.	
	494		
	495	*Ah ok, I didn't know you could do that in school. Is that a GCSE,*	
	496	*or a BTEC, or something?*	
	497		
	498	I think it's like three GCSEs overall.	
	499		
	500	*Oh right, ok. That sounds good, something positive, something*	
	501	*that you're interested in doing.*	

Self as intrinsically motivated to achieve	502	Yeah.	
	503		
	504	*That's good. So... Sorry, I'm just... I'm looking at this 'cos it's just*	
	505	*a sort of guide to the sorts of questions and areas to talk about,*	
	506	*really, so I'm just glancing at it to see what we've covered and if*	
	507	*there are still things I'd like to, to ask you about. Erm, some of it's*	
	508	*not, not entirely relevant to you, but, erm, most of it is. I was going*	
	509	*to ask you what's getting in the way of you going to school full-*	
	510	*time now, but actually you are going to school full-time now. Erm,*	
	511	*I could ask you about... has your experience with school in Year*	
	512	*10 changed the way you see yourself as a person, do you think?*	
	513		Acknowledgement of learning from his experience - <u>finding his own motivation</u>
	514	Erm... I think it's made me realise I want to get good grades, and	
	515	stuff.	
	516		
	517	*Ok... well that's a useful learning experience, I guess, isn't it, that*	
	518	*it's made you think, "Actually, I do want to do well," after all? Did*	
	519	*you not think you were that bothered about it, earlier on, then?*	
	520		
	521	Yeah, I used to think I wasn't bothered, like.	
Experience of learning about self - meta-cognition	522		
	523	*Ok. How does that feel, to have... to have learnt that about*	
	524	*yourself?*	
	525		What does this mean?
	526	Erm... hmmm... a bit weird.	
	527		
	528	*Yeah? How so?*	
	529		
	530	(Pause) I don't know. It's just a bit weird.	
	531		
	532	*Ok. That's something that you didn't used to think about yourself,*	
	533	*and now you do...*	
	534		
	535	Yeah.	
	536		
	537	*Ok. You talked about engineering, and that's something that*	
Long-term goals	538	*you're quite into, quite interested in, erm... Is that something that*	

Taking responsibility for own future	539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574	*you're hoping to carry on with next year, or... what are your aims,* *educationally, what do you hope to do in the future?* Be a plumber. *Ok. Have you got plans for how you're going to do that?* Erm... No. *Do you know what you need to do, to...* I, I looked it up on the internet, at, like, what grades you need, and stuff. *Ok...* Have you? Yeah! I didn't know that! *That's good...* I always look at what grades you need for jobs. *Yeah?* I looked at what grades you need to be a dentist, but I'm not clever enough to be a dentist. *Do you think you'd like to be?* Yeah, 'cos I think they get paid a lot. *Ah... is that, erm, is that a big motivation for you?*	Clear aim for the future. Has done this independently - taking an interest and starting to plan for his future - taking control (Mum clearly hasn't been involved in this) Is interested and motivated to find out this kind of information Self-limiting? Or realistic? Motivated by earning potential

Identification of specific academic goals	575	Yeah.	
	576		
	577	*Yeah, earning lots of money?*	Very clear - money is a major motivator for him.
	578		
	579	Yeah.	
	580		
	581	*Do plumbers get paid quite a lot?*	
	582		He has done his research
	583	Yeah.	
	584		
	585	*Ok. So you're in Year 11 now, GCSEs coming up in the Spring,*	
	586	*Summer time... What are your best hopes, then, for the rest of this*	
	587	*year, for the rest of Year 11?*	
	588		Clear, specific targets
	589	To get, like, a 'B' in maths and English.	
	590		
	591	*Yeah? Ok. And what about for... looking ahead, then, the rest of*	
	592	*your education? Whatever that might be, after you finish at*	
	593	*Newton?*	
	594		Is unclear about precise route - it's more of a hypothetical plan, rather than a detailed and immediate plan
	595	Erm... (Pause) I don't know.	
	596		
	597	*No? (Pause) Would you need to do an apprenticeship, or*	
	598	*something, if you're going to be a plumber?*	
	599		
	600	Yeah.	
	601		
	602	*Would that be something to look into?*	
	603		
	604	Yeah.	
	605		
	606	I think that's the route you'd rather go than college, isn't it?	
	607		
	608	Yeah.	
	609		
	610	*Yeah? Like, training on the job?*	

Motivation towards enjoyment	611	Can you go university, to be a plumber?	
	612		
	613	No! You don't need to go to university to be a plumber.	
	614		Motivated by having 'fun' too
	615	Yeah, but everyone says it's like really fun at university!	
	616		
	617	(Karen and Mum laugh)	
	618		
	619	I'm at university and I'm not having fun.	
	620		
	621	*I'm at university as well.*	
	622		Sees himself and his experience as
	623	Yeah, but you're not young!	different from ours as adults!
	624		
	625	(Karen and Mum laugh)	
	626		
	627	Thanks!	
	628		
	629	Yeah, 'cos when you're like, eighteen and that, you just like get	
	630	drunk and stuff.	
	631		
	632	*(Laughs) Would that make you want to go to university, then, the*	
	633	*thought of having a bit of fun and getting drunk?*	
	634		Hedonistic motivations
Motivation to be free to make own choices	635	Yeah.	
	636		
	637	But is that the freedom that you'd have?	
	638		And being free to make his own
	639	Yeah.	choices
	640		
	641	*Do you think you'd want to, then? You'd want to go to university?*	
	642		
	643	Yeah.	
	644		
	645	*What would you do if you went to university, rather than doing*	
	646	*plumbing?*	

Knowledge of future educational options	647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667	Dunno... dunno. What was always your main aim, when you were younger, what, what did you really want to be when you were younger? Oh, a vet. *Ah... would you still be interested in that?* Er, I dunno. Dunno. I don't think I'm clever enough. *Hmmm?* And you have to go university for like five years. *Mmmm.* And I think that's too long. *It's a long course, isn't it.*	Realistic, or self-limiting? Has done some research
Having realistic goals	668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682	Yeah. *So you think you'll probably do...* Erm, probably, I want to be a plumber. *Yeah. And you think that's... is that likely to work out, based on what you're likely to get in your GCSEs and so on, the qualifications you're working towards now, is that something that's achievable for you, that you'll be able to do?* Yeah, yeah. *Brilliant, that's great. Ok, so when it comes to your experience of, erm, of not, not attending school as much last year, then, we've*	Is clear about this aim, despite not having planned in detail how to achieve this Has considered how realistic this is

	683	*talked a bit about how a FIFA game seemed to be the, er, the thing*
	684	*that started that off, and was your motivation for coming home.*
	685	*And then that sort of pattern continued with certain subjects,*
	686	*certain lessons, when you realised that you could choose to... to*
	687	*not be there.*
	688	
	689	Yeah.
	690	
	691	*But then actually you've got back into going to school full-time,*
	692	*now that you're a bit more motivated towards getting good grades*
	693	*in your GCSEs, and towards the future.*
	694	
	695	Yeah.
	696	
	697	*Ok. Is there anything else that I should have asked you, that I*
	698	*haven't asked you, about your experiences of not being in school*
	699	*so much last year?*
	700	
	701	Mmm, no.
	702	
	703	*Can you think of anything?*
	704	
	705	No, I can't.
	706	
	707	*No? Ok.*
	708	
	709	(Pause) And also, he did go from skiving and coming home to not
	710	having a key to get into the house to come home.
	711	
	712	*Ah...*
	713	
	714	So then he would skive with his friends wherever.
	715	
	716	*I see.*
	717	
	718	So it didn't always revolve around coming home for FIFA...

Motivation to avoid bad lessons	719	*Ok.*	
Peer influence on behaviour	720		
	721	... You know, the first instance of him skiving, his key was taken,	
	722	so it very quickly went to... not because of that.	
	723		
	724	*So actually, you knew you couldn't get in the house anyway, then?*	
	725		
	726	Yeah.	
	727		
	728	*So then... tell me a bit about that then... What happened then?*	
	729	*You haven't got a door key, so you knew you couldn't come home,*	
	730	*but you still ended up going out of school during the day, is that it?*	
	731		
	732	Yeah.	
	733		
	734	*What was your motivation there, then, what was... what made you*	
	735	*choose that?*	
	736		Influence of friends? Influence of
	737	Just when I had a bad lesson, like, I'd just go out of school with my	'bad lesson'? Were both motivating
	738	mates.	factors?
	739		
	740	*Right, with your mates? I see. So would you... would you then go*	
	741	*back to school for other lessons and just miss, just like the odd*	
Shared behaviour with peers	742	*lesson?*	
	743		
	744	Yeah, yeah.	
	745		
	746	*I see. What about your mates, did... are they, are they still missing*	
	747	*a lot of school now, or have you all started going in more?*	
	748		Peer group influence/shared
	749	Some... some miss lessons, and some just go to all their lessons.	behaviour
	750		
	751	*I see. So was there, like, was it the same group of you that often*	
	752	*went off together, then?*	
	753		
	754	Yeah.	

	755 756 757	*Ok. And then what did you do, then, during that time when you were out of school?*	Having 'fun', and freedom to choose what to do
	758 759	Just like messed about and stuff.	
	760 761	*Where did you go?*	
	762 763	Like, erm, Subway and stuff.	
	764 765	*What, down into town?*	
	766 767	Yeah.	
	768 769 770	*I see. So, is it just that that was a better option than going to maths, then, or whatever?*	
Impact of school-imposed sanctions	771 772	Yeah.	
	773 774	*I see. Were there consequences, from that?*	
	775 776	Yeah.	
	777 778	*Did school staff get onto you about that?*	
	779 780	Yeah.	*'just' got after-schools - minimising impact of detentions*
	781 782	*So then what happened?*	
	783 784	Erm... I think I just got after-schools and stuff.	
	785 786	*What, detentions?*	
	787 788	Yeah.	
	789 790	You had isolations, didn't you?	He didn't mention this - minimising impact, or trying to avoid talking about it?

| Impression management - unwillingness to be seen to be controlled/effectively sanctioned | 791
792
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817
818
819
820
821
822
823
824
825
826 | *Yeah?*

His XBox ended up going back into school again...

Again?

This was six, was it six weeks it ended up in school?

Yeah? Was that a way of getting you to do a full week then, the XBox disappearing into school again?

Yeah.

I see. And did that work?

Erm...

It did, until the six weeks one, and then he didn't get it back until the summer holidays.

Right.

But two weeks of that was because I forgot to pick it up!

(Laughs) Right! I see, so you should have got it back sooner, really.

Yeah.

Ok, I see. Did that motivate you, then, knowing that your XBox was locked away at school somewhere and you could only have it back if you went into school and did a full week... Did that motivate you, then, to want to do a full week?

Yeah. | *(Mum seems to be trying to abdicate responsibility for this event - passive way of talking about it, as though it was inevitable)*

Isn't keen to acknowledge effectiveness, or perhaps it wasn't at all effective. He doesn't want to be controlled, or be seen to be controlled.

It did, hypothetically... |

Impact of promised future sanction/reward vs. influence of immediate desire	827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836	*But it still took a few weeks for you to actually manage a full week?* Yeah. *I wonder what was getting in the way there...* I don't know. (Pause) Like... I think I just wanted to skive, with my friends.	But his immediate desire to 'skive' over-ruled longer-term desire to get XBox back at the end of the week.
Academic aspiration as means of ensuring future high income	837 838 839 840 841	*Yeah... And that outweighed wanting to get your XBox back, at the time, I guess?* Yeah.	
Motivation from prospect of future financial wealth	842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861	*Ok. So is there anything that's kind of made you think more about wanting to get good grades? 'Cos it seems like your priorities have maybe changed - you've gone from not really being bothered about grades, and then you said that the experience had made you think, actually, you are bothered about getting good grades. I wonder what made that change happen?* Er, I just thought, like... when I'm older I'd be, like, poor, if I didn't get good grades and stuff. *Ah...* So I wanted to do good at school so I can, like, try and become rich. *I see. So it's about getting good grades, to get a good job, to be able to earn lots of money?* Yeah.	Academic aspiration is based on fear of poverty/motivation to earn high income
Awareness of others' disappointment in his behaviour	862	*And that's what made you think, actually, you are going to go to*	

	863	*school.*	
	864		
	865	Yeah.	
	866		
	867	*I see, I see. What do you think other people think, or thought, of*	
	868	*your situation, you know, when you were missing quite a lot of*	
Unwillingness to allow others'	869	*school? What did your family, or your friends, or the people*	I wonder who? Mum? School staff?
views/priorities to (be seen to)	870	*around you think about that?*	
affect his behaviour	871		
	872	Er... dunno. Dunno. Just, like, disappointed...	
	873		
	874	*You think?*	
	875		
Influence of peers	876	Yeah.	
	877		
	878	*Ok. Did... If you felt people were disappointed, did that bother*	Doesn't want to be affected by
	879	*you? Or...*	others' views of his behaviour
	880		
	881	Hmmm, not really.	
	882		
	883	*Not really, at that time? Ok. What about anyone else? What*	
	884	*about, erm, friends at school, or teachers at school, or anyone like*	Friends were not encouraging him to
Self as resisting being	885	*that? What did they think?*	be in school
controlled/being seen to be	886		
effectively sanctioned	887	My friends weren't really bothered.	
	888		
	889	*No...*	
	890		
	891	The teachers just used to, like, have a go at me and stuff...	
	892		
	893	*Mmm... Ok. Did that bother you, that teachers were having a go*	Doesn't like attempts to
	894	*at you?*	control/change his behaviour?
	895		Doesn't want to respond to these
	896	Hmmm, yeah. I don't like being, like, shouted at and stuff.	attempts
	897		
	898	*No, no. Do you think that changed your behaviour at all?*	

| Self as agent of own destiny, self in control of own choices | 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 | Erm... I'm not sure if it did.

No... So if you had to give a reason why, erm, you changed your, erm, your way of thinking about it, you know, when you became more motivated and started to think about earning money in the future and that kind of thing...

Yeah

...was that down to other people telling you things like that, or was it down to, just, within your own mind? Your decision?

In my own mind.

It was your own, coming around to that decision?

Yeah.

Ok, ok. Is there anything else, anything else we need to mention?

Er, no, I don't think so.

Don't think so? It sounds like, from what you've said, that you've felt very much in control of the whole thing, it was your choice to miss school and it was your choice to go back to school...

Yeah.

Is that how you see it?

Yeah.

Fair enough, ok. I think we're probably about done really, aren't we... shall I stop it?

Yeah. | Is clear that this change of perspective was his own, and not influenced by others' views |

	935	*Nothing else you think I should have asked you?*
	936	
	937	No.
	938	
	939	*Ok, well, thank you very much (turns off Dictaphone).*

Interview 5 - George (and Mum)			
Emerging themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	*Ok, we seem to be going... So, you've had all the background information and so on. Are you still happy to go ahead?* Yeah. *Yeah? Fab. Ok, I thought we could start with a fairly simple question, really - perhaps you could just tell me a bit about your school history, erm, which schools you've attended in the past, and when.* What, from, like, primary school? *Yeah.* Erm, I went to Westley Primary, then to St Peter's, and now I'm at the Grammar. *That's it? That's fairly straightforward. Ok, think about, erm, when you moved from one school to the next, like when you went from Westley into St Peter's, and St Peter's to Newton... What was that like, the transition process, for you?*	
New school as different, distinct experience from old school	23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33	Er, it was a bit weird, just more people. *Bit weird 'cos there was more people? Ok, what did that, what did that feel like for you?* Just felt a little bit weird. *Ok. Was it difficult in any way, or...?* Not really, no.	Strangeness of move, more people around him, new experience. No difficulties associated with the 'weirdness' of extra people

	34	*Ok, so a bit weird but no particular problems?*	
	35		
	36	Mmm.	
	37		
	38	*Ok, ok. So, I know that in the last year or so your school*	
	39	*attendance has been relatively low, but has there been a time in*	
	40	*the past when your school attendance was more or less 100%,*	
	41	*when you were there full-time?*	
	42		
	43	Er, yeah. That was, that'd be at St Peter's.	Clear about when he was in full-time.
	44		<u>Clear distinction between old school</u>
	45	*Oh right, ok. What, right through till Year 9?*	<u>and now.</u>
	46		
	47	Er, yeah, mainly.	
	48		
	49	*Ok. So, thinking back to that time at St Peter's, then, how was*	
	50	*school for you at that time, when you were there full-time?*	
	51		
Old school as homogeneously positive experience	52	It was alright.	Fairly positive view of experience at old school
	53		
	54	*Alright? Go on...*	
	55		
	56	That's it, it was alright.	School experience summed up as a homogeneous whole
	57		
	58	*What was, what was going well, then, at that time?*	
	59		
Full attendance as positive, desirable	60	Er, I was just attending all my lessons and everything.	<u>Full attendance seen as a positive</u>
	61		
	62	*Ok. Were you happy there?*	
	63		
	64	Yeah.	Positive emotional wellbeing - was satisfied with experience at old school
	65		
	66	*What, what else was life like, that was, that was going well?*	
	67		
	68	Dunno. Er... (laughs) dunno.	
	69		

	70	*You went to all your lessons... what was good at St Peter's, then?*	
	71		
	72	The teachers were better.	'Better' in what sense?
	73		
	74	*Right, ok... What else?*	
	75		
Enjoyment of lessons as important factor	76	I just enjoyed the classes more.	Enjoyment of lessons is important factor for him
	77		
	78	*The teachers were better, you enjoyed the classes more...*	
	79		
	80	(Pause)	
	81		
	82	*Is that to do with the subjects, or the teachers, or is that to do with,*	
	83	*erm, who else was around, or... what do you think made them*	
	84	*good?*	
	85		
Impact of teachers' behaviours and attitudes on experience of school	86	Er, probably just the teachers were better then.	<u>Importance of teacher behaviour to make the experience positive</u>
	87		
	88	*Ok. Was there anything at that time, at St Peter's, that wasn't*	
	89	*going so well for you?*	
	90		
	91	Hmm, no, not really.	Wholly positive experience
	92		
	93	*Everything was pretty good, was it?*	
	94		
	95	Yeah.	
	96		
	97	*Ok. What about life more generally, not just in school? How, how*	
	98	*similar or how different was life then to now, do you think?*	
	99		
	100	It was about the same.	
	101		
	102	*Pretty much the same?*	
	103		
	104	Yeah.	
	105		

	106	*Like, at home and everything?*	
	107		
	108	Yeah.	No significant life changes
	109		
	110	*Ok. So can you remember, then, at what point did you stop going*	
	111	*in full-time?*	
	112		
Time-scale of change as a salient feature	113	About three weeks after I started the Grammar.	Very soon after transition - sudden change in behaviour. <u>Very specific about the time-scale - does this time stand out for him? Why?</u>
	114		
	115	*Right, ok. So what changed?*	
	116		
	117	I just didn't like the lessons, or half the teachers.	
	118		
	119	*Didn't like the lessons, didn't like the teachers... What was*	
	120	*different about them from St Peter's, then?*	
	121		
Teacher behaviour as having negative impact on experience	122	They was... a lot more strict.	Is this what 'better' meant earlier? Less 'strict'?
	123		
	124	*Hmmm, ok. So, can you give me any examples of what that was*	
	125	*like, then, what did they do, or...*	
	126		
Impact/importance of own 'deviant' behaviour minimised	127	Just pick on you more for, like, little things. Like talking and stuff.	*'little things' - minimising own behaviours. Felt victimised/'picked on'* <u>Teachers' expectations</u> and behaviour towards him - negative experience
	128		
	129	*Ok. So more strict in lessons. Was there anything else that*	
	130	*changed, as well as that?*	
	131		
	132	No.	
	133		
	134	*Ok. How did you feel about that, then, about the teachers being*	
	135	*more strict?*	
	136		
Teacher 'strictness' impacting on enjoyment of lessons	137	It's made the lessons boring and everything.	Lessons less enjoyable - less 'strict' teachers made them more enjoyable at old school?
	138		
	139	*Ok. So you didn't want to be there?*	
	140		
	141	No.	

	142 *Was there any specific lessons, or specific, erm, teachers, or*	
	143 *times of day, that were particularly bad for you?*	
	144	
	145 Er... French.	
	146	
	147 *French was bad? Because...*	
	148	
Importance of staff-student relationships to make positive school experience	149 I just didn't like the teacher.	Enjoyment of subject is dependent on relationship with teacher. Importance of staff-student relationships for positive experience
	150	
	151 *Because of the teacher again? Ok. So when it came to missing*	
	152 *school, then, did it start off with just certain lessons, or was it like*	
	153 *whole days, or...?*	
	154	
Behaviour as gradually changing over time	155 It started with just certain lessons, then went into whole days.	Sense of time-scale, long-term issue which developed over time
	156	
	157 *Oh, I see. So it started with missing, what, French, was it?*	Gradual change in behaviour over time - what facilitated this?
	158	
Subject-specific absence	159 Er, yeah.	Subject-specific absenteeism
	160	
	161 *Anything else?*	
	162	
	163 P.E., sometimes.	
	164	
	165 *Ok...*	
	166	
	167 Er...	
	168	
	169 *French, P.E....*	
	170	
	171 That's about it.	
	172	
	173 *But then you say, erm, it ended up being more whole days as*	
	174 *well, then, after that.*	
	175	
	176 Mmm.	How did this come to be?
	177	

Self as in control and responsible for own actions	178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189	*Ok, ok. This might be a bit of, erm, a weird question, I don't know, but, you know when you started to miss school, how much did you feel that was your choice, and that you were in control of that, or how much did you feel like you had to, there wasn't really any choice? Do you know what I mean?* It was my choice. *Your choice?* Yeah.	Clearly takes responsibility for his own actions - <u>agency and choice</u>
	190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198	*Ok, fair enough, ok. So, thinking back to that time, when you first started to, to miss lessons and to miss days, what do you think might have helped you to get back into school full-time?* Erm, dunno. *Is there anything anyone could have done, either anyone in school... Anyone in school could have done, first of all?*	
Self as needing others to remove expectations on him	199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213	Could have got me out of French! *So if you'd been able to just go to school but not have to do French, do you think that would have helped?* Yeah. *Ok. Presumably you chose French, did you?* Yeah. (both laugh) *Was that a poor choice?* Hmm (laughs).	Removal of others' expectations on him, external pressures Regret?

Others as largely impotent to change his situation	214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249	*Right, ok. So that might have actually made a difference, then, if you'd managed to drop French?* Yeah. *Ok. Erm, anything else that anyone in school, do you think, could have done to improve the situation?* Erm... no. *Just French? What about at home, could Mum have done anything, or anyone else outside of school done anything to change the situation?* Probably not, no. *You don't think?... Ok, ok. So, thinking about school now, then, as it is now - which is Year 11, isn't it - what's going well for you in school at the moment?* I'm going to the lessons. *Ok. Are you... is your attendance better now than it was in Year 10, then?* Er, dunno. *Ok (laughs). But you are going to lessons?* Yeah. *Even French?* Yeah. *Ok. How's that going?*	<u>Impotence of others to change his situation</u> Is now attending - what has changed?

Inevitability of sanctions; passive/helpless within school systems Minimising impact of own behaviour	250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285	Not very well. I get sent out. *Do you? What happens, then, what's that all about?* I dunno. Just... I just start talking and then get sent out. *Ok, ok. So you... you're going in for the beginning of the lesson, then... But then you don't always stay in. Ok, how does that feel to you, that situation?* I dunno. Er... dunno. *Dunno? Ok. So French isn't going so well, but you are in school more, or at least you're going to lessons... Erm, what else is going well for you at school now?* Er... dunno. *Have a think... there must be some stuff?* Er... dunno (laughs). *It could be lessons, it could be to do with, I dunno, friendship groups, or relationships with adults, or... anything really.* It's all the same really. *All the same?* (Pause) *So nothing really has changed, particularly?* Not really.	Is attending despite being sent out Almost passive in this scenario? As though it's an inevitability? *'Just' - minimising seriousness of behaviour* Seems to be struggling to articulate Nothing in life has changed

	286	*But you are going to lessons more now?*	
	287		
	288	(Pause)	
	289		
	290	*So I wonder what changed that's made that happen?*	
	291		
	292	Er... dunno.	
	293		
	294	I know (laughs).	
	295		
	296	*Is Mum allowed to say?*	
	297		
	298	Yeah.	
	299		
	300	Because they threatened to kick him out of the school.	Why didn't he tell me this himself?
	301		
	302	*Oh, really?*	
	303		
	304	Yeah! (Laughs)	
	305		
	306	*(to George) Were you aware of that?...*	
	307		
	308	Yeah.	He was aware of situation
	309		
	310	*...You must have been aware of that!*	
	311		
	312	Yeah	
	313		
	314	Because of his attendance he was on a warning...	
	315		
	316	*I see...*	
	317		
	318	Which meant if he didn't buck his ideas up they're kicking him out,	
	319	and putting him in High Leys.	
	320		
	321	*Ah...*	

Motivation to remain included at school	322	Which is why he's started attending.	
	323		
	324	*I see. So, a sort of final warning, threat, was it?*	
	325		
	326	Yeah.	
	327		
	328	*And that's got you back in there? I see. So presumably you didn't*	
	329	*want kicking out, then?*	
	330		
	331	No.	Motivation to remain at Newton, despite not liking various aspects of life there
	332		
	333	*Ok. So has that been enough to motivate you to get back in there,*	
	334	*then, that threat?*	
	335		
	336	Yeah.	Motivation is sufficient to boost his attendance
	337		
	338	*Ok. How did it feel then, when you got that threat of... 'Buck your*	
	339	*ideas up or else you're going to be out?' What did that feel like,*	
	340	*for you?*	
	341		
	342	Erm, dunno.	
	343		
	344	(Laughs)	
	345		
	346	(to Mum) What?	
	347		
	348	You must know!	
	349		
	350	I dunno!	
	351		
	352	We've had these conversations!	
	353		
	354	*Were you worried? Were you bothered?*	Didn't want to feed him ideas...
	355		
	356	I was a little bit worried.	Was worried about prospect of
	357		exclusion, having to move school again...

	358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393	*Yeah? What would it have been like, do you think, if they had gone through with that and kicked you out?* I didn't really want to go to High Leys, no. *Ok. What's... I've not heard of that, what is that like?* It's a school in [name of town]. *Is it just a different upper school?* Yeah, a different grammar school, in [other town], which obviously [other town] children go to, not [this town] children. *Oh right, so you wouldn't have known anyone, I guess?* No. *I see. You didn't fancy that option?* No. *I see. So has that made a difference, then? That's people in school that have made a difference, by threatening you with that?* (Pause) *Ok. So, we were talking about what was going well, and actually you are in there more now, even in French... Is there anything that still isn't going so well for you in school, though?* I'm still, like, getting sent out of some lessons. *Yeah? Oh yeah, you said about French, and talking in French, and things... What else is going on with that, then, with being sent out of lessons?*	Wonder why he didn't want to move? Friendships, familiarity? Geographical proximity? Lack of change in this aspect of school experience
Inevitability of sanctions,			

helpless/passive within school systems	394 395 396	I just get... I end up put in isolation.	*'I end up'... passivity here?*
	397	*Do you? Does that happen a lot, then?*	
School systems/sanctions as ineffective	398 399 400	Yeah.	Frequent occurrence - clearly isn't proving an effective deterrent!
	401	*What for?*	
Minimising own behaviours	402 403	Just, getting sent out of lessons, getting caught off-site.	*Use of 'just' - minimising behaviour*
	404 405 406 407	*Ah, you get caught wandering about when you're supposed to be in school? Ok... and then, what, they put you in isolation for that?*	
	408 409	Yeah.	
	410 411	*Ok. What's with the getting sent out of lessons, what do you do to, to cause that?*	
Minimising own behaviours as a recurrent theme	412 413 414	I just talk and mess about a little bit.	*Minimising behaviour again - 'a little bit'*
	415 416 417	*I see. Again, do you feel like that is, sort of, your choice, or do you feel like you can't really help it, or...? You know, to muck about in lessons and that?*	
Self as taking responsibility, in control of own behaviour	418 419 420	Well it's my choice to, like, speak, and mess around and that.	Takes responsibility for his actions
	421 422 423	*Yeah? Even though you know that you're gonna get... Or do you like to get sent out?*	
	424 425	If it's French I'm not really bothered.	Would rather not be in French. Is isolation preferable to French?
	426 427	*Right, ok. So I guess that's maybe not a particularly effective sanction for you, then...*	
Sanctions as ineffective deterrent	428 429	No	<u>School sanctions system isn't effective, isn't deterring the behaviour</u>

Impression management, reticence	430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450	*... if you're not actually that bothered about being in there anyway... is that a fair comment?* Yeah. *What about other lessons, not French?* Er... I get sent out of science sometimes. *Yeah? Ok. Is science a better lesson than French?* Er, well, I have three different teachers for science. *Oh right... are you doing three separate sciences?* Yeah. *Oh right. So how are they, how are they going?* Two of them are alright, but I don't like one of them.	Opening up a little at a time - reluctant to share details of negative experiences? <u>Is this about impression management?</u>
Entering lessons with expectation that sanctions will follow - helpless to change this Vagueness distances self from experience?	451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465	*Right, ok. So do you tend to get sent out of the not-to-good one, or...?* 'Cos I have one of them like once every two weeks, that I always get sent out of. *Right, ok. Which one's that then?* Er... physics, I think it is. *Physics, ok. So, what else... biology and chemistry, the other two?* Yeah.	*'I always get sent out'... Goes in with this expectation? Black and white view of situation.* *'I think' - vague, maintaining distance?*

	466	*And are they better than... you get on better with those, do you,*	
	467	*than physics?*	
	468		
	469		
	470	Yeah.	
	471		
	472	*Ok, ok. Do you think there's anything at the moment, in the*	
	473	*current situation, that would help you to... not get sent out, to*	
	474	*spend more time in school when you're supposed to be in*	
	475	*school... What could make a difference now, do you think?*	
Self as needing to change - has	476		
agency and control	477	I dunno, I just need to stop messing about in lessons.	*'I just need to' - places the onus on*
	478		*himself to change his behaviour, not on*
	479	*Ok... and could you do that, if you wanted to?*	*anyone else*
	480		
	481	Er, yeah, probably.	Could choose this - is in control
	482		
	483	*Do you want to?*	
Self as motivated to change	484		
behaviour	485	Yeah.	Is motivated to change own behaviour.
	486		What is stopping him?
	487	*You do? Ok. So what's... I wonder what's getting in the way of*	
	488	*that, if you say, actually, you could stop messing about, and you'd*	
	489	*like to stop messing about, I wonder what's getting in the way of*	
	490	*you stopping messing about.*	
Others as responsible for	491		
contributing to behaviours	492	Just people in my lessons, I just get distracted.	Others are partially responsible - he is
	493		distracted by peers and this impacts on
	494	*Ah, ok. People distract you, you end up messing about, I see.*	his behaviour
	495	*People like your friends, or other people, or...*	
Impact of friends/social group on	496		
behaviour	497	Just my mates.	<u>Influence of friendship/social group</u>
	498		
	499	*Your mates... Ok. What do they do, then, that distracts you?*	
	500		
	501	Starts talking to me, then... just mess around.	Same behaviours as he reports himself.
			Is dragged along by the crowd?

Sense of identity independent of school experience	502 *I see. So you kind of get dragged into conversations and silliness* 503 *and whatever?* 504 505 Yeah. 506 507 *Ok. I was just wondering, in terms of the last year or so, when* 508 *your attendance has been quite low, and you've had Mrs* 509 *Summers involved, haven't you, and you've had all this stuff going* 510 *on in the systems around you within school... Do you think all of* 511 *that experience has changed the way you see* 512 *yourself as a person?* 513 514 Er, dunno... not really. 515 516 *Not really? Ok, ok. So, what now, then, in the current situation,* 517 *what's getting in the way of you being in school full-time, fully,* 518 *now?* 519 520 Er, dunno. (Pause). 521 522 *What would need to change in order for you to be there full-time?* 523 524 I am there full-time now. 525 526 *You are?* 527 528 Yeah. 529 530 *Oh ok, ok, fair enough. So there isn't really anything getting in the* 531 *way now... Ok. Think about the rest of this academic year, then,* 532 *the rest of Year 11 - erm, what are your best hopes for that time,* 533 *the rest of that time?* 534	Not fundamental to his sense of identity.
Academic aspiration	535 Er.. to get GCSEs. 536 537 *Yeah? Tell me more about that, then - what do you want to* *achieve there?*	Academic aspiration

Career goal as driving academic aspiration Clear future plans	538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573	Er, to get a GCSE in construction. *Ah ok, is that your main focus, is it, construction?* Yeah. *So what are you planning to do after Year 11, then, next year?* Er, get an apprenticeship, with my Dad. *Oh right. What does Dad do?* Er, builder. *So you're going to do an apprenticeship with him and... with the intention of being a builder?* Yeah. *Ok. So what would you need, you'd need your GCSE in construction, would you, for that?* I think so, yeah. *Yeah? Would you need anything else as well?* Er, think I'd need maths and English. *Ok, ok. So getting those GCSEs is a priority for you, then?* Yeah. *Is that, is that gonna happen? Is that, are you on target for achieving those things that you want to achieve?*	Subject-specific aspiration Career-driven reasons for academic motivation. Clear plans for future. Academic aspiration for more general subjects too, but still essentially career-driven

Self as confident in own ability to achieve	574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609	Er, I dunno... You're not, are you? Yeah, I'm on target. *You think that you're likely to get the grades that you need, or that you're hoping to get?* Er, should do, yeah. *You should do... What do you need, Cs?* Yeah. *Ok. So you've got a clear plan, haven't you, for next year and beyond, then, you know what you need to get in order to get there. Do you think that's affected your motivation for being in school, you know, your plans for the future?* Er, yeah, think so... dunno. *I just wondered, how much are you thinking, when you're in school, or not in school, you know, during Year 10 and Year 11, how much you're thinking about the future, and thinking, "Ooh, I ought to be in school because I need to do this, I need to get these grades," or whether that isn't really something that comes into it...* Er... *Do you know what I mean?* Yeah (pause). *What do you think, is it something that you think about, that*	Reasonably confident in own abilities? Knows what he needs to achieve (This was probably an unfair question! I didn't intend to push it to this extent - I had hoped that he would respond more fully above.)
Self as slightly aware of impact of			

| current behaviours on possible future outcomes | 610
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645 | *motivates you to be in school, or is it not really in your mind?*

Er, yeah, it does a bit.

A bit? Ok.

She means, when you're messing about, are you actually thinking, "I should be in class, working towards getting my GCSEs," or is it that you don't think about that at all, you're just messing about, and it's not in the back of your mind?

(Laughs) I dunno.

So you're not thinking about your GCSEs and your future...

Not when I'm messing around.

Not at that specific point. Is that what you meant?

I see. Yeah, yeah. Maybe I didn't express that very clearly, but yeah, that's kind of what I meant.

So when you're messing about, in the back of your head you're not thinking, "If I mess about I'm not going to get my GCSEs, 'cos I'm not getting the work, to work towards my GCSEs." You're not thinking about it at all, are you?

No, not when I'm messing about.

Right, ok, it's not always in mind particularly, that, sort of, future planning.

No.

Ok, ok. So, from what you've said, then, it sounds like it's been about the teachers at Newton School, that's what started off the | Some awareness of the impact of his behaviours/current educational experience on the future?

Limited amount of awareness of possible impact of behaviours |

Experience of gradual grinding down, loss of motivation over time	646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681	*problem... Not liking the teachers and their approach, is that right?* Yeah *Just thinking back to earlier, what you said... They were strict and you didn't like that, and that's when you started to miss French in particular, and maybe a bit of P.E. as well... And then it escalated to missing full days and so on. Was there anything that...* ...I just got to the point where I couldn't be bothered to even go to school. *Couldn't be bothered to go at all? I see... (Pause) What was your attendance last year, do you know?* Er, I dunno, last year. *Oh right. Do you know what it is this year, now?* Think it's like 69 [%]. 69 at the moment? 61. *Is it? Ok. So you've still got a little way to go?* *(Both laugh) Yeah.* Yeah. *But you said that you're in a lot more now. They monitor it every week, don't they, on their computer system?* *Yeah.* Yeah. *Ok. Is there anything else that I should have asked you, that I haven't asked you, about your experiences of going from*	*'I just got to the point where...' - a gradual grinding down, gradual decline in motivation over time.* But he said he was in school full-time...? Is this about creating the 'right' impression on me? (Or trying to avoid questions?)

	682	*attending school full-time to your attendance dropping off, and*	
	683	*what was going on for you around that time, and so on? Is there*	
	684	*anything else I should have asked you about?*	
	685		
	686	I don't think so.	
	687		
	688	*No? Or anything else you want to say about the stuff you've told*	
	689	*me?*	
	690		
	691	No.	
	692		
	693	*No? Ok. Ok, I think we've probably about done all the things I'd*	
	694	*got down to ask you, so if... unless you can think of anything you'd*	
	695	*like to add, I think we're probably about there, aren't we?*	This is the end of the main interview with George - the remainder is dominated by his Mum. I will use this as contextual information but not analyse it fully; it does not directly represent George's own lived experience.
	696		
	697	Yeah.	
	698		
	699	*Is that ok then? Yeah?*	
	700		
	701	What, what was it you was specifically sort of trying to find out, if	
	702	you like? Or just generally the life of a 15-year-old who doesn't go	
	703	to school?	
	704		
	705	*I haven't got a specific agenda, I haven't got any specific theories*	
	706	*I'm trying to prove, or anything like that...*	
	707		
	708	No, no	
	709		
	710	*...at all, it's just, it's purely just about, erm, your experiences*	
	711	*[looking at George] and the sense that you make of your*	
	712	*experiences. It's very broad and general.*	
	713		
	714	I think that you could have added a lot to that, George,	
	715	personally...	
	716		
	717	*Do you think? [directed towards both George and Mum]*	

	718	Yeah, I personally could have added loads to it!	
	719		
	720	*Could you?*	
	721		
	722	...as to where it's gone wrong for George.	
	723		
	724	*Yeah?*	
	725		
	726	Erm... but it's not my interview. I can.. tell you what I think, what I	
	727	know, 'cos I've seen... George don't hide a lot from me, I know...	
	728	When he gets into trouble at school I know about it, 'cos he tells	
	729	me first before the school do.	
	730		
	731	*Right (laughs)...*	
	732		
	733	You know, we've got that kind of relationship.	
	734		
	735	*Yeah*	
	736		
	737	But I, a lot of the time, I believe, when he was not going to school -	
	738	yeah, it did start off with French, and he should never have took	
	739	French - er, but they made him take French, erm, and P.E.	
	740		
	741	*Yeah?*	
	742		
	743	But the school did try to help him.	
	744		
	745	*Yeah?*	
	746		
	747	But what they tend to do is when they've messed about, been off-	
	748	site - and a lot of it was to do with smoking in breaks and lunch -	
	749	so he'd be going to lesson but then going off site for a cigarette.	
	750	So therefore he'd get caught and he'd be pulled out of a lesson	
	751	and put into isolation.	
	752		
	753		
		For smoking?	

754	
755	For smoking, off-site, in lunch and break. So when he'd go to a
756	class, they put him in isolation. Which is, you sit in a room and do
757	absolutely nothing for six hours.
758	
759	*Wow, that's pretty boring, isn't it...*
760	
761	So when, then, they tell him, "When you come into school
762	tomorrow you're in isolation," in his head - "I'm not going to sit
763	there for six hours!" so therefore he wouldn't go to school.
764	
765	*I see...*
766	
767	And then that would be a vicious circle for that week, because if
768	you didn't go to school you'd get put in isolation, but you'd still owe
769	them the isolation from being caught smoking.
770	
771	*Yeah...*
772	
773	So then it would top it up and he'd end up owing five isolations, so
774	then he'd go, "I'm not doing this!" and go. And then he'd go and
775	we'd have a meeting, they'd go, "Ok, go to class," and he'd go to
776	class, and they'd pull him out of class again and put him in
777	isolation. So he'd got to the point where he thought, "Well, what's
778	the point in this? I'm going to class..." and they kept pulling him
779	out of class. And because yeah, we know he's no angel, and he
780	was messing about in class, so sometimes some of the teachers...
781	He'd walk into a class, maybe do whatever it is he'd do, where a
782	lot of students would get a Step 1, because it was George he'd get
783	a Step 4, get put in isolation. And so it was always a constant
784	vicious circle.
785	
786	*I see.*
787	
788	And that's where the missing the days, and not even bothering
789	
	going, has stemmed from. [To George] That's right, isn't it?

	790		
	791	Yeah.	
	792		
	793	*Is that all fair, what Mum's saying?*	
	794		
	795	(Pause) Yeah.	
	796		
	797	*I'm not here to tell you off! I'm not going to pass judgement.*	
	798		
	799	That's exactly what it is. They dealt with him, I believe - I mean, I	
	800	know they're got to, they've got rules and regulations that they	
	801	have to deal with things - but they dealt with George not in the	
	802	correct way for the person that he is. And the friends that he	
	803	knocks about with. Because a lot of his friends don't even attend	
	804	school either.	
	805		
	806	*Right...*	
	807		
	808	They can miss months at a time, can't they?	
	809		
	810	*Really?*	
	811		
	812	I mean, they're George's friends, that he is good friends with,	
	813	they're not every parent's choice of friends that he'd be with	
	814	(George laughs) ...but they're not bad lads, but they don't go to	
	815	school. So the pressure George has got on him - the fact that	
	816	George is in school at all - is quite good, 'cos none of his friends	
	817	are there anyway.	
	818		
	819	*I see.*	
	820		
	821	A lot of his friends are down the skate park, so if you're saying to	
	822	this child, "Right, you're going to sit in isolation for six hours and do	
	823	absolutely nothing," or, in his head, ,"I could go down the park	
	824	actually, go and mess about down the skate park with my mates,"	
	825	what's he going to do?	
	826		

	827	*Yeah... So they've set up this vicious circle, then, because you*
	828	*know that the next time you go in you're forced to spend the day in*
	829	*isolation, and no-one wants to do that...*
	830	
	831	Yeah, and that's what's happened, and because he's now got to
	832	the point where he's missed so much, and he's even... even when
	833	he turns it around for a week to try and attend, there'll be
	834	something... Yes, he didn't like.. he's been put in isolation today
	835	because he's, he's back-chatted to a teacher. Which they do -
	836	he's a lad, he's fifteen. And I know they shouldn't back-chat
	837	teachers, but... you're in isolation all day tomorrow, aren't you?
	838	
	839	*Oh no...*
	840	
	841	And so my position is, I've got to make sure he does it, because if
	842	he doesn't, and he skives for the day, there is this threat that he'll...
	843	that they'll kick him out. And it's just a constant vicious circle.
	844	That's why... that's where the skiving and truancy stems from.
	845	
	846	*I see, I see.*
	847	
	848	[To George] See, you could have done that!
	849	
	850	*You could, couldn't you!*
	851	
	852	[To George] That's right, isn't it?
	853	
	854	Yeah.
	855	
	856	And it's not, it's... I personally, I don't think it's the fact that the
	857	teachers are horrible, it's the fact they won't put up with anything,
	858	they won't, whereas at St Peter's they had a good Student
	859	Support. And they were brilliant at St Peter's.
	860	
	861	*Yeah?*
	862	
		Absolutely brilliant, Student Support. They don't have Student

	863	Support at the Grammar, they have isolation.	
	864		
	865	*Right... It seems a bit harsh, just making you sit and do nothing*	
	866		
	867	*for a whole day, I mean, what's the point in that?*	
	868		
	869	No point whatsoever. They are supposed to set work...	
	870		
	871	*Right...*	
	872		
	873	...But I think you came home, you came back and you'd watched	
	874	two films.	
	875		
	876	*Yeah?*	
	877		
	878	I don't see the... But they have to punish them in some way. But I	
	879	can think of better ways of making him do his work, but...	
	880		
	881	*You'd think they'd at least give you something useful to do, if*	
	882	*they're gonna send you somewhere...*	
	883		
	884	I mean, don't get me... the school have tried, they've got him out of	
	885	P.E., they've changed his whole timetable to support George. But	
	886	there are... like I say, he only has to go in class and they go,	
	887	"Right, I don't want you in here, you're on a Step 4."	
	888		
	889	*Isolation?*	
	890		
	891	Isolation, when he's barely done anything, 'cos of who he is. And	
	892	as I say, the fact he's there at all is a miracle, 'cos none of his	
	893	friends are.	
	894		
	895	*Yeah... None of them at all?*	
	896		
	897	It's very rare.	
	898		
		[To George] Does that make it harder for you to stick it, then?	

	899		
	900	A little bit, yeah.	
	901		
	902	It's only because of the relationship that George and I have, I	
	903	think, that he sort of does it remotely at all, isn't it...	
	904		
	905	*Yeah...*	
	906		
	907	(Laughs) Is that still on? [indicating Dictaphone]	
	908		
	909	*Oh yeah, it's still recording! I was just thinking, 'cos, erm, you*	
	910	*know, this is supposed to be about young people's experiences*	
	911	*and what...*	
	912		
	913	Sorry!	
	914		
	915	*...What they...* [indistinct] *No, no, it's ok... What I was going to*	
	916	*say is, probably what you've said, I won't analyse in the same way,*	
	917	*but if... would it be ok with both of you if I do, you know, take some*	
	918	*bits from it to comment on when I write up?*	
	919		
	920	Absolutely fine, because I've only said, really, what he should have	
	921	said, 'cos that's exactly what it is, isn't it?	
	922		
	923	*Yeah, yeah...*	
	924		
	925	...Just trying to get a lad to put that, vocalise that in a conversation	
	926	isn't the easiest thing to do, is it?	
	927		
	928	*Hmmm. It's hard, 'cos I'm trying not to feed you ideas, I want*	
	929	*them to be your ideas, so I'm kind of trying not to go, "Well was it*	
	930	*this, or was it that?" and put ideas there for you, you know what I*	
	931	*mean?*	
	932		
	933	Yeah, yeah.	
	934		
		I'm trying for it to be from you, your, your perspectives on it, but...	

	935	
	936	I don't think I've made any of that up, have I? That's not from a
	937	parent's perspective, that's how... I think you think that's where it's
	938	all come from, as well...
	939	
	940	*Yeah?*
	941	
	942	Yeah.
	943	
	944	*Tell me then George, why did you not tell me that, did you not feel*
	945	*comfortable talking about it, or...*
	946	
	947	I dunno, dunno. Didn't think of saying it.
	948	
	949	*You didn't think of saying it? Ok. Is it ok for me to use some of*
	950	*what your Mum's said, though, and for me to sort of write a bit*
	951	*about that as well as about what you've said?*
	952	
	953	Yeah.
	954	
	955	*Just to comment on, you know, that extra information that helps*
	956	*me understand your situation, really.*
	957	
	958	Yeah.
	959	
	960	*Ok, ok, thank you. I can see why it's hard, though, when you've*
	961	*got this constant isolation thing to deal with, and your friends*
	962	*aren't there - that must make it quite hard for you, dealing with*
	963	*that.*
	964	
	965	As it is from a 15-year-old's perspective, you would actually think,
	966	"What's the point of all this? Why am I even bothering?"...
	967	personally.
	968	
	969	*Yeah, yeah...*
	970	
		I know I would've done at fifteen.

	971	
	972	*Yeah.*
	973	
	974	Er, and it's hard. It's hard enough for him as it is, I think, and...
	975	There aren't many 15-year-old lads that would see further than
	976	their nose, you know, to think of their future, to think of things like,
	977	"I need to do this and this and this, so when I'm twenty-five I'm
	978	doing this..."
	979	
	980	*Yeah, yeah.*
	981	
	982	...they don't do that, do they? And trying to drill that into them is, is
	983	quite hard. But I think in some situations a lot of things can, and
	984	should, be dealt with differently in school.
	985	
	986	*Yeah.*
	987	
	988	A different... 'cos every child's different.
	989	
	990	*Course.*
	991	
	992	I mean, I know they're not allowed to smoke in school, but I know
	993	he smokes.
	994	
	995	*Yeah.*
	996	
	997	So... I think... to penalise him and take him out of all his lessons
	998	because of a habit that he's got...
	999	
	1000	*It's kind of making the situation worse, isn't it?*
	1001	
	1002	Yeah, I think, personally, but...
	1003	
	1004	*So do you think, then, that if this had been dealt with differently, if*
	1005	*they'd sort of gone, "Right, we know you're smoking at break*
	1006	
		times, and you shouldn't be, but actually the best thing for you is

Sanctions system as counter-productive?	1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042	*going to be to keep you in lessons because you need to learn and you need to get on with stuff"... Would that have helped, do you think, would that have led to a better situation?* Yeah. *And would you have ended up staying in school more, do you think, if they hadn't just kept sending you to isolation?* Yeah, probably. *Yeah? Ok. So if it had just been dealt with differently... I bet loads of 15-year-olds smoke?* (Laughs) Yeah. About half the school smoke. *Yeah (laughs), probably. Which they can't condone, obviously...* No, they can't condone it, but... *But it's not that unusual then, is it?* No. I mean, when I was at school half the school were smoking. It's not an unusual thing. And with the... presumably you've been to the Grammar? *Oh yeah.* It's so easy to get off-site. *Yeah, it is, isn't it - you can just walk...* ...Just walk out. It's not like it's in an isolated place. So the temptation just to walk out and go and have a cigarette... I don't know why they don't just leave them to it. He's nearly sixteen -	

1043 he'll be legal anyway soon. Just let him get on with it! If it means
1044 he's coming back and going to class...
1045
1046 *Yeah, yeah...*
1047
1048 'Cos you can bet your life, I bet some of the teachers smoke.
1049
1050 *I bet they do...*
1051
1052 (George and Mum laugh) You know, they get to go off and have a
1053 cigarette and go back to class (laughs).
1054
1055 *Hmmm...*
1056
1057 But that's not my place... that's got nothing to do with it. But that's
1058 where it all stems from, with the, with the truancy. It's got nothing
1059 to do with [indistinct] [to George] you can tell me if I'm wrong, but I
1060 don't think it's anything to do with his home life, or me, or... you're
1061 not disturbed or anything, are you?
1062
1063 *(Laughs)*
1064
1065 It... it all stems from that.
1066
1067 *[To George] So when you talked about the teachers being strict,*
1068 *then, earlier on, is that kind of what you were meaning? About*
1069 *them sending you to isolation at the slightest thing?*
1070
1071 Yeah.
1072
1073 *Sending you out a lot, that kind of stuff?*
1074
1075 Yeah.
1076
1077 *And their response to the smoking issue, is that what you meant*
1078 *by them being really strict?*

1079 Yeah, yeah.

1080

1081 *Ok. It's interesting, that, isn't it - I wonder if that sort of relates to*
1082 *treating you a bit more like an adult, almost... You know what I*
1083 *mean? You know, you're fifteen, you must be going on sixteen, is*
1084 *it about being treated a bit more like a responsible person who can*
1085 *make decisions for yourself?*

1086

1087 Yeah

1088

1089 *Rather than just punishing everything in a blanket way, maybe?*

1090

1091 Well, for example, today - from what I gather's happened today - a
1092 teacher... George has flipped at a student messing about with a
1093 ruler on the back of his legs.

1094

1095 *Right...*

1096

1097 And as far as I gather, the teacher's said, "After class, you'll stay
1098 behind, I want a word with you." And George's response was,
1099 "You can have a word with me next week mate!" and walked out.

1100

1101 *Right...*

1102

1103 Which isn't very respectful and he shouldn't speak to a teacher like
1104 that, but he's just got in two days isolation for that.

1105

1106 *Two days for that?*

1107

1108 And he's going to miss, now, two days worth of education.

1109

1110 *Yeah, yeah. So that's tomorrow and...*

1111

1112

1113 Monday.

1114

Yeah. I mean, I can see why it didn't go down particularly well,

	1115	*that comment...*	
	1116		
	1117	So can I! But I also think the teacher should then have either the	
	1118	authority or, or the... to be able to turn around and... 'cos if he said	
	1119	that to me, I'd go, "Hang on a minute, get back here now!"	
	1120		
	1121	*Yeah*	
	1122		
	1123	And sort it out there and then, and not go, [in effeminate voice]	
	1124	"Right, off to isolation!" Because, to me, that's not dealing with it.	
	1125	All they're doing is sticking him... that he's losing two days. You	
	1126	deal with it there and then, I think.	
	1127		
	1128	*Yeah*	
	1129		
	1130	I mean, he... he says... he's cheeky to me. I don't stick him in his	
	1131	room for two days and not do anything, do I? (All laugh) That's,	
	1132	that's what I mean about... I don't think they've got it right, but,	
	1133	er... that's my opinion.	
	1134		
	1135	*Have you got any ideas, George, for what would be a better way*	
	1136	*of dealing with this kind of stuff?*	
	1137		
	1138	No.	
	1139		
	1140	*What would you like to see happen?*	
	1141		
	1142	I dunno!	
	1143		
	1144	*I mean, do you think that there's any need for any kind of a*	
	1145	*sanction for anything that you do, or, if so, what would be an*	
	1146	*appropriate sanction?*	
	1147		
	1148		
	1149	Not to put me in isolation.	
	1150		
		Not that? Ok. Have you got any ideas for what would be fairer, or	

Sanctions system as disproportionately harsh/rigid	1151	*more effective?*
	1152	
	1153	Erm, no.
	1154	
	1155	*No particular thoughts on that?*
	1156	
	1157	No.
	1158	
	1159	*Do you think that you should just... get away with it completely?*
	1160	
	1161	Well no, but... not to put me in isolation for, like, little things.
	1162	
	1163	*Yeah, ok. Something a bit less, er, extreme... Ok.*
	1164	
	1165	Like, when I was... we used to lose our lunch hour, or breaks, we
	1166	used to lose them. They'd never take us out of class, to miss
	1167	other classes.
	1168	
	1169	*No...*
	1170	
	1171	You'd lose your free, your personal time, but you get let out for
	1172	break and lunch, don't you, in isolation?
	1173	
	1174	No.
	1175	
	1176	Do you not? Er... (sighs) I dunno.
	1177	
	1178	*[To George] Do you think you'll be glad to leave Newton School?*
	1179	
	1180	Yeah.
	1181	
	1182	*You will?*
	1183	
	1184	
	1185	Yeah.
	1186	
		Yeah, I'll be glad when he's left as well.

	1187	
	1188	*Yeah, yeah.*
	1189	
	1190	When he's done his GCSEs and gone, erm, you know, and he's
	1191	working. That's all you want to do, isn't it, get out and work.
	1192	
	1193	*[To George] Are you, are you looking forward to that?*
	1194	
	1195	Hmmm, not really, but... [Mum laughs] ...it's better than school.
	1196	
	1197	*Better than school? Ok.*
	1198	
	1199	[George and Mum laugh]
	1200	
	1201	*Well, thank you for that, that's really really helpful. If you're happy*
	1202	*for me to use anything that your Mum's said as well, George...*
	1203	
	1204	Yeah
	1205	
	1206	*I won't, kind of, analyse it as part of the interview, but it's extra*
	1207	*information, you know, to feed into that, if you're happy for me to*
	1208	*do that. It's interesting, why you didn't think of some of that stuff to*
	1209	*tell me in the first place...*
	1210	
	1211	It is really, 'cos you and I have had those conversations numerous
	1212	times!
	1213	
	1214	*So it's not like you've got to hide it from Mum or anything...*
	1215	
	1216	There's not a lot you hide from me, is there...
	1217	
	1218	*[Laughs] That's a good thing in itself, isn't it?*
	1219	
	1220	
	1221	Well, there'd best not be, anyway... [all laugh]
	1222	
		Well, I hope the rest of Year 11 goes alright for you, anyway, I

	1223	*hope it goes as smoothly as it can.*
	1224	
	1225	The next two days would just be good to get through, won't they?
	1226	
	1227	*Can you do homework or something when you're in isolation?*
	1228	
	1229	Er... you can, but I don't do it.
	1230	
	1231	*Right.*
	1232	
	1233	George hasn't done a piece of homework since Year 7!
	1234	
	1235	*Really? How have you got away with that?*
	1236	
	1237	Dunno.
	1238	
	1239	I think they just got fed up of giving it to him.
	1240	
	1241	*Do they get bored of nagging?*
	1242	
	1243	Mmm.
	1244	
	1245	*Ok. So even though you were in school all the time at St Peter's,*
	1246	*you still didn't do homework or anything?*
	1247	
	1248	No.
	1249	
	1250	*Ok.*
	1251	
	1252	He did the classes, he did the work... You never skived at St
	1253	Peter's, did you?
	1254	
	1255	No.
	1256	
	1257	Not once. It wasn't till he got to the Grammar...
	1258	
		Yeah.

	1259	
	1260	...and I don't know, like I say, I don't know whether it was because
	1261	of the easy access of how to get out the school...
	1262	
	1263	*Hmmm. Is St Peter's harder to get out of?*
	1264	
	1265	Erm, a little bit.
	1266	
	1267	Yeah, it is, yeah. There's a... I mean, there's so many different
	1268	exits on the Grammar. You've got the two separate schools,
	1269	you've got the main road, you can just walk out. But St Peter's...
	1270	like I say, St Peter's were brilliant, erm, Student Support. Erm,
	1271	they actually listened to the kids and Student Support would get on
	1272	the kids' level, if you like, and understand and talk to them.
	1273	
	1274	*Don't you get that at Newton then?*
	1275	
	1276	Not really, no.
	1277	
Not being listened to	1278	*Don't you feel like they listen?*
Lack of support systems in place	1279	
in school (as compared with	1280	No. I don't think so, not as... They do try... Sorry, I'm speaking for
previous school)	1281	you! [all laugh] I'm good at that. [laughter]
	1282	
	1283	*It's interesting, that contrast, though, isn't it, between the two, erm,*
	1284	*systems, the two environments. 'Cos in most local authorities,*
	1285	*you'd go to secondary school in Year 7 and that's it till Year 11,*
	1286	*you're in one school. It's quite unusual in this county that you*
	1287	*change in Year 10. That's one thing I was wondering - I wonder if*
	1288	*that affects people's experiences of, or their secondary education,*
	1289	*that change, that having to move for Key Stage 4 - I don't know*
	1290	*really, whether that's something that's significant. For you it*
	1291	*seemed to, didn't it - that change seems to have affected the way*
	1292	*you've experienced school... Different approaches, different staff*
	1293	*attitudes and stuff...*
	1294	
		I suppose you're right, because if you stay in one school you get

	1295 used to the staff when you're in Year 7 and you, you get used to 1296 the rules and the staff... everybody knows everybody and then it's 1297 like, it's already installed there so you continue it right through. 1298 Whereas it's all different, learning it all again, at a different 1299 school... 1300 1301 *Yeah... all different systems and so on, different people... Hmmm,* 1302 *I dunno, it is an unusual system though, in this county.* 1303 1304 It's only us that do it, isn't it? 1305 1306 *That I'm aware of... I don't know if there's others...* 1307 1308 There aren't many. 1309 1310 *No, there aren't many. (Pause) Ok. Well thank you, thank you* 1311 *very much, I'll turn this off [indicates Dictaphone].* 1312 1313 1314	

Interview 1 - Michael			
Emerging themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33	*So, we've been through all the paperwork, and we've... you've had the opportunity to ask any questions. Is there anything else you want to ask before we start?`* Not really. *And are you still happy, still happy to go ahead?* Yeah. *Ok, well shall we start with something fairly straightforward then... I just wondered if you could tell me a bit about, about your school history, which schools you've attended in the past, and when?* Erm... Westley was my primary school, then St Peter's was my secondary school, then Newton School is my school now. *Oh ok...* ...whatever school you call that. *Yeah... what is it, an upper school, or something?* No idea, just a school that you go to for two years or something. *Yeah, ok. So, Westley, then St Peter's, then where you are now, Newton. So you've not actually had many changes of school, really, have you?* Not really. *Ok, ok. Do you remember, you know when you were moving from one school to the next, that, sort of, transition process, do you*
			'Whatever school you call that'... *'No idea'...* <u>A bit dismissive of school system? Distancing himself from it?</u>

Self as distant from establishment

	34	*remember how that was for you?*	
	35		
Self as good/moral	36	Well, isn't it... Isn't it, sort of, just like... I don't know, like... Because	Not making a big deal of transition -
Impression management	37	it was still just like, after a certain point, you still have to move up	inevitability.
	38	school, like. I'm just going to make that clear, it's not 'cos I was a	Keen to create/maintain positive
	39	naughty kid or anything that I moved schools...	impression of himself, despite current
	40		situation. Doesn't want to be judged
	41	*Oh, no, course not...*	
	42		
	43	I just, you know, stayed in Westley till Year 6, then three years in St	
	44	Peter's, then two years in Newton.	
	45		
	46	*Yeah, that's pretty standard, isn't it...*	
	47		
Self as helpless, passive	48	Yeah. And... I don't, I don't remember, 'cos by the time I got to St	*Everyone had changed...* They
	49	Peter's, like, everyone had changed, at least most of my old friends,	changed, not him; he was
	50	apart from like one or two of them.	passive/helpless in this situation.
	51		
	52	*Hmmm?*	
	53		
Need for friendships for	54	So I just had like no friends till Year 8 or 9, and I was really sad.	Sadness directly related to lack of
emotional well-being	55		friends.
	56	*Oh, you didn't have a good time at St Peter's then?*	
	57		
Bullying, peer difficulties	58	No, it was horrible. There were so many bullies there, and it was	*So many bullies... Horrible school...*
	59	just horrible, it was a horrible school in general.	Direct link between lack of friends and
	60		bullying and school as 'horrible'.
	61	*Oh dear...*	Sweeping statement - *horrible school*
	62		*in general. Repetitions of 'horrible'.*
Negative impact of staff	63	And the teachers, the teachers are strict, and... it's horrible. I just	Teacher behaviour added to 'horrible'
attitude/behaviour	64	didn't like it.	experience. *More repetitions of*
	65		*'horrible' - emphatic.*
	66	*It sounds like you had some friends in primary school, though, is*	
	67	*that right?*	
	68		
Peer difficulties/loss of	69	Yeah, but most of them turned out to be, like, the kind of people like	
friendships			

Self as a learner?	70 71 72 73 74	snobs... Just people that just stopped talking to me, for no reason. Probably because I was a stupid kid. *You think you were?*	Old friends changed; deserted him for no reason. *Because I was a stupid kid.* Something about him pushed them away? Blaming self? Conflicting thoughts on agency?
Negative portrayal of self as a learner	75 76 77 78 79	Yeah. *Oh, so you think they sort of moved away from you, and didn't want to talk to you any more?*	Doesn't elaborate. What does this mean?
Social experience as positive	80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87	Yeah, because... Well, I know they don't talk to me now. Most of them, like... I still talk to one of them, just rarely, 'cos he's in one of my lessons, so... I don't know. We still, like... We messed about throughout the whole of Year 9 and that was a really fun year, actually. *Oh right?*	A redeeming feature of time at 'horrible' school - *'a really fun year, actually'.* Linked with social experience.
Value of positive peer relationships	88 89 90 91 92 93 94	When I do see this old primary school friend, he's, like, awesome, and we chill in lessons, and like mess about and stuff. It's actually pretty funny. *Right... So he's someone you'd still class as a friend, now, then, is he?*	Value of shared social experience, value of this individual (*'awesome'*).
Reluctance to acknowledge positives within school experience	95 96 97 98 99 100 101	Er, I guess so, I just don't, I just don't talk to him outside of school that often. *Ah, ok. So when it comes to moving between schools, then, it sounds like moving to St Peter's was not a good experience for you, but then by Year 9 it had got a bit better?*	Trying to pull back from the *'pretty funny'* times in Year 9? (<u>Attempt to cast himself as 'different', as socially isolated?</u> - links with later in interview)
Self as lacking in agency/responsibility	102 103 104 105	Erm... Yeah, I think so. I remember that, like, most of Year 9 I didn't actually go, and then the skiving carried on until Year 10. *Right...*	*Use of 'skiving' - implied agency? But then externalises this - 'the skiving carried on', rather than 'I carried on skiving'.* Year 9 - was it *'pretty funny'* because he wasn't there for most of it?

	106	Which was alright I guess, like... The first time I skived was in Year	No problem with not being in school
	107	8 and I remember this, because, like, me and a mate and then this	
	108	other kid he knew, we went down to the skate park that's, like, right	
	109	next to St Peter's, and we just like sat in the... what do you call it,	
	110	it's like water, and there's like trees and stuff around it, it's like a	
	111	bank, and we just, like, sat under a bridge in there. By the end of	
	112	school the teachers had came to take us back to our lessons, there	
Disregard for school	113	were like ten minutes left of the lesson. I got into maths, sat down,	Disregard of authority within school.
rules/systems - values	114	Miss was like, "Where you been?" and I was just like, "I been	Aiming to create an impression to her,
Impression management	115	skiving."	or to me?
	116		
	117	*You said that?*	
	118		
Lack of ownership/sense of	119	Yeah, I said it like that! And at the time I was, like... I don't know, I	Positive experience - no regret.
belonging within school	120	guess I was happy that I did it, then she like... she gave me, erm,	Again, distancing self from system -
systems	121	she probably gave me negative whatever-it-is, the system is there.	lack of ownership, little sense of
Sanctions system as	122	'Cos they have, like, most schools have like a points system, don't	belonging? Highlighting
ineffective/meaningless	123	they?	ineffectiveness of sanctions system for
	124		him.
	125	*I guess...*	
	126		
Perceptions of others'	127	Yeah, so, like, she probably gave me negative whatever-it-was they	Disregard for system - *repetition,*
expectations of his priorities	128	had there, that I don't remember. Because I'd forgot I was	*emphasising this point.* 'Caring' as
'Caring' as externally imposed -	129	supposed to care at that point.	something others try to impose, rather
represents others' values	130		than something within him - he's aware
	131	*You forgot you were supposed to care?*	of the expectation that he 'should' care
	132		but doesn't internalise this.
	133	Yeah (both laugh). It happens at Newton as well. I have, like,	Doesn't elaborate on the 'supposed to
	134	minus twenty-something negative points, and they like, get it so...	care' point.
	135	they get it so they're negative and the positive, and they like, they	Despite rejection of system, he's very
	136	work them out, they work the difference out, so you've got a net	aware of how it works.
Self as good/moral - own	137	points, I guess. And mine is usually at minus twenty. And that's just	Still wants to assure me he's *'not a bad*
values system	138	for being late. I'm not a bad kid, I'm just late a lot.	*kid'.*
Impression management -	139		
wants to be seen as 'good'	140	*Right... So those points, then, is that for attendance, or for how*	
	141	*punctual you are, or is it for other stuff as well?*	

School rewards/sanctions systems as ineffective/ meaningless (others' values)	142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149	Well, the points are usually for other stuff... just anything, really. 'Cos... in Year 10 you can get positives for anything, but in Year 11 you get negatives for anything - it's very weird, how it works. But I just, I just don't care because it's a false reward system, so I just don't care. *So it's not meaningful to you, that system, really?*	. Changes in staff expectations, strictness. Again highlights how meaningless the system is to him, *repeats 'I just don't care'. System is 'weird' but black and white - 'you can get negatives for anything.'*
Self as disengaged from system 'Caring' as externally imposed	150 151 152 153 154	No, but they make it out to be something that you're supposed to care about but I just... Sometimes I just forget I'm supposed to. *I see.*	*Repetition of 'supposed to care' - externalising of these expectations, other people's/society's? Unclear who expects him to care.*
Rejection of externally-imposed values	155 156 157 158	Yeah, I don't care about a lot of things. *No?*	Sees himself as broadly outside the system? Disengaged with *'a lot of things'*.
Caring about others	159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169	No, apart from, like, people. But I just... I dunno. *Ok, so we've talked a bit about past experiences, then, you say it was about Year 8 when you first started to miss time at school...* Yeah *...And then it's gone on since that time. Let's just think back to a time when you were attending school full-time, then, when would that have been?*	Does care about people. *But... there's a qualifier which he can't/won't express?*
Self as distant/separate from system	170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177	Er... Probably from whatever year it is that you start school until, like, Year 7 that would have been. *Yeah... so you were in school full-time in Year 7?* Yeah *Ok. So thinking back to, erm, school at that time then, in Year 7, I*	Distancing himself from the system - emphasising how he's not a part of it.

	178 179 180	*wonder what was school like for you, at that time, when you were in there full-time?*	
Self as learner - negative view	181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190	Er... It was, it was probably bad, because, like, I was a stupid kid, so like... at the time I was a lot stupider than I am now. So, like, I... The term the teachers would call me is 'bright', but I think that's a bad word, because it's sort of like saying, 'Oh, here's a stupid child - he has potential but he's just a stupid child,' so like... I got called 'bright' a lot by the teachers. I got called 'fat' a lot, I remember that. That was horrible. And I got called a lot of names. Until, like, until Year 9 - that was the point when I just stopped caring. But, like, for seven years it was very horrible.	*Repetition of 'stupid kid'* - what does this mean? Misunderstanding of 'bright'? Seeing it on a par with being called 'fat', a negative for him - being called names - *'horrible'.* *'stopped caring'* - then it became less horrible? Conscious act, deciding not to care? Or just happened?
Impact of bullying			
	191 192 193	*For seven years? So is that, like, all the way through since you started school?*	
Inevitability of negative behaviour from peers 'Not caring' as conscious choice?	194 195 196 197 198 199	Er... From what I can remember, I've always had bullies. And you can't stop bullies. Like, even if you have anti-bullying things where they have in some schools, where you have to sign a thing to say that you won't bully someone... There's somewhere, there is a school in America that I heard that did that.	Inevitability of bullying - *'you can't stop bullies'.* Lack of faith in school system, lack of power in system to stop bullying. Seems resigned to it.
	200 201	*Oh yeah?*	
Casting others as not caring about system Inevitability of bullying	202 203 204	But it doesn't stop bullying, they still do it. Like, they don't care. But, I dunno...	Bullies don't care about systemic attempts to stop them. *(But - qualified?)*
	205 206	*You don't think there's really anything they can do about that, then?*	
Resignation, lack of power 'Bullies' as unreachable Lack of agency/responsibility Behaviour as result of upbringing/experience, not personal choice	207 208 209 210 211 212 213	No, it's just... er... It's something to do with, er, just how kids are brought up to be, and that. Because, like, you know, some people have horrible upbringings, and it makes them into a horrible person, which is... it is pretty bad, but, like, because I hate those kinds of people, I still have those people, I just... I just have them less often, but I still have them. And, er...	Not the bullies' fault - it's how they were brought up. Lack of personal agency on their part. Their personalities and actions are inevitable.

Negative social experience as inevitable	214 215	*At school now, you mean?*	Inevitable part of his experience - resigned.
Bullies as lacking responsibility for their actions	216 217 218 219 220	Yeah. And, like, there will always be people who pick on you, but that's like... I think it's at the point where... they can't *not* be like that, like, you never see them being nice to people. It's really weird, but they... you know.	They can't help it - not their fault.
	221 222 223 224	*I was just thinking, with... are you kind of saying that they can't help it, almost, because it's just their own lives, their own upbringing that's made them like that, is that kind of what you're saying?*	
	225 226 227	That's what I was thinking, but I don't know if I wanted to say it because I don't know if I think it's true or not.	But he's not sure? Cautious because it's an opinion rather than something he can prove?
	228 229	*Ok...*	
	230 231	But it is possible that that's how it is.	
Difficulty in thinking positively within perceived social/environmental reality	232 233	*Ok, but you're not sure you really want to believe that?*	
	234 235	Er, well, I want to be optimistic, but I just can't be.	*'Not a bad kid'* (see earlier), wants to create good impression, but the system/external factors lead to inability to be optimistic?
	236 237	*Ok, that's fair enough.*	
	238 239	Yeah (both laugh).	
	240 241 242	*So it sounds like school, even when you were in school full-time, was still pretty tough for you.*	
	243 244	Yeah, it was pretty... pretty bad.	
	245 246 247 248	*I wonder what changed, then... Did anything change, at that point in Year 8 when you started to... what was the word you used? - you said, 'skive', didn't you?*	
	249	Yeah	

Social influences	250	*... When that started to happen? Was there a change?*	Influence of friendship on behaviour at
	251		the time, although he negates that
	252	Er, well, at the time there was a friend that I liked hanging around	influence now.
Disregard for school rules - not	253	with, who I hate now, because he is a bit of a douche, but, like, at	
part of his own values	254	the time I was like, "Oh, this is a person I like hanging around with,	*'Chilled' as positive - relaxed approach*
Motivation to 'beat the system'	255	'cos he's chilled," so we just hung around for a few more hours and	*desirable*
Motivation to be individual and	256	then got caught, but... getting caught's irrelevant. But, like, hanging	*'Irrelevant'* - but he mentioned it!
retain agency	257	around with him for a few hours was fun. It was, like... I remember	Caught between 'forgetting he's
Sense of individual freedom	258	St Peter's saying they had really good security, but like... we just	supposed to care' and
	259	walked out the front gates. And it felt really good at the time, it was	remembering/caring?
	260	very funny actually.	*'felt really good'* , *'very funny'* - getting
	261		one over on the system? Personal
	262	*Getting away with it?*	freedom.
	263		
	264	Yeah. Well, almost getting away with it. Very close!	
	265		
	266	*Yeah (both laugh).*	
	267		
	268	Yeah, it was great actually. It was... I don't know why it was so	
Importance of positive	269	great, but it was just great. It just felt great, to get out of the school,	Getting away with it, yes, but also
emotional experience - relief of	270	'cos... I dunno... There's a lot of stress involved with school that I	removal of *'stress'*.
stress	271	don't particularly enjoy, so...	
	272		
	273	*Is that ongoing now, then, still, the stress that's associated with*	
	274	*school?*	
	275		
	276	God, I have way more stress now than I did back then, but yeah,	
School-related stress	277	there is lots of stress.	Emphasis on *'stress'* - *lots of repetition*.
	278		
	279	*Ok, so... You were talking earlier - I was going to pick up on this,*	
	280	*and then we sort of moved on - but you were talking about how you*	
	281	*felt like you were a 'stupid kid'...*	
	282		
	283	Yeah...	
	284		
	285	*That was the word you used, although the teachers described you*	

	286	*as 'bright'.*	
	287		
	288	Yes...	
	289		
	290	*I just wondered... I wasn't quite sure what you meant by that really.*	
	291		
	292	Well, what would you define 'bright' as? Because I've never been	
	293	told a definition of it.	
	294		
	295	*Hmmm. I suppose... I guess most teachers would use the word*	
	296	*'bright' to mean someone who was clever, intelligent, someone who*	
	297	*was quite capable, who was good at learning, maybe? Quite good*	
	298	*academically?*	
	299		
His impression of himself as a learner?	300	I've always made the connection that it's been like, er, they're smart,	Qualifying his definition with a negative.
	301	they just don't show it, something like that.	
	302		
	303	*Ah, ok.*	
	304		
Agency within own behaviour	305	I mean, I don't... I do that intentionally now, I be stupid so I get out of	Sense that he's no longer
Self as capable of manipulating	306	a lot of trouble, but...	unintentionally 'stupid' - he has
a situation for his own ends	307		progressed (see earlier too). He
Enjoyment of control	308	*What, on purpose?*	chooses own behaviour to manipulate
Significance of being 'in	309		others' behaviour towards him.
trouble' (self and others)	310	Yeah, I just do it so I can get less punishments, or get other people	
	311	less punishments and me more punishments. Anyway that's... I like	What does he like? The control?
	312	doing that.	Getting self/others out of trouble?
	313		<u>Does he care about being in</u>
	314	*Can you think of an example of that, erm, something that's*	<u>trouble/seeing others in trouble, after</u>
	315	*happened where you've done that?*	<u>all?</u>
	316		
	317	Oh... Hmmmm. Well, it's... I can think of one, but I don't know if I	
	318	can say it out loud.	(Is aware of Mum in next room)
	319		
	320	*Ok.*	
	321		

	322	I did that [lifts t-shirt sleeve and indicates tattoo of tree on upper arm].	
	323		
	324		
	325	*Oh...*	
	326		
	327	Yeah, a friend did it for me outside of school, and after school.	
	328		
	329	*Yeah?*	
	330		
Agency and choice - self as in control	331	She got in a lot of trouble for it, and I had to, like, I had to get my parents to tell the school that, like, erm, that it was my choice, instead of hers. And then I had to get, er... I had to also be... I had to act very remorseful whilst I was in the isolation room, and be all like, you know, "Don't give her too much of a punishment, 'cos like it was my fault that it happened, it was my choice." She gave me the choice and I was like, "Yeah!"	Issues of control and agency - he's in control, he's choosing how to act/handle the situation in order to minimise trouble for his friend. He chose to have the tattoo. But he *'had to'* act in certain ways - sense of others' expectations, or knowing that he had no choice if he wanted to achieve certain outcomes?
	332		
	333		
	334		
	335		
	336		
	337		
	338		
	339	*I see...*	
	340		
	341	Like, I asked for one, so she did it, and she got a lot worse punishment than I did, but, like, I tried to get her out of the most, but... I dunno, that was a really horrible week actually. Like, the Monday was really good, and we just like chilled, and I got told that, oh, what was it? My best... One of my best friends told me that I have a good atmosphere around me, meaning that it's impossible to be depressed around me. And that made me really happy, because the night before I had nightmares about him telling me that I'm annoying. So that, that was a fun time. And then I also got shouted at by the one who did it, on Monday, I got shouted at over the phone and by text as well, which wasn't fun but it sort of needed to happen, because otherwise it would've just built up and that wouldn't have been fun, so I had to ring her, and then she like shouted at me for a bit, and then I felt bad but... rather have that than it, like, build up or anything.	Limited success in managing the trouble.
	342		
	343		
	344		
	345		Importance of friendships, positive social relationships, <u>fear of social rejection</u>.
Importance of positive regard from friends	346		
	347		
	348		
Fear of social rejection	349		
	350		
	351		
	352		Inevitability of friendship difficulties - sees need to resolve difficulties, even if unpleasant. *'Had to'* ring her - whose expectations?
Value of maintaining friendships despite adversity	353		
	354		
	355		
	356		
	357	*Yeah...*	

Inevitability of difficulties in life	358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366	Yeah. *So it was kind of necessary, even though it was unpleasant, then?* Yeah. *I see.* That's how some things are, so...	Inevitability - nothing you can do about it, some things are difficult.
	367 368 369 370 371 372 373	*But you tried to take the blame, a bit, for the whole incident then?* Yeah *Yeah... I mean, was it your choice, then?*	His idea, his choice - he takes responsibility.
Personal agency and responsibility	374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382	Yeah, it was, like, she was messing around with the practice stuff for it, and I was just kind of like, "Oh, can I have one?" and she was like, "Yeah, sure!", cos she like... it's of a tree, she just draws, er, huge trees down my arm, and I like the design, I like the way they look, so I just thought I'd have one. There's a reason for it, I just don't tell a lot of people when they ask. *Ok.*	Meaningful to him - individual, personal choice.
Relaxed approach to life as desirable 'Chilled' vs. 'stress'	383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393	And... my funniest reason, my funniest reason is, er, they say, "What's the reason for it?" and I'm just like, "You know why? Because I like wood," and it makes everyone laugh, because it's funny. (Both laugh.) Because, like, I dunno, I'm not going to tell people the reason, it's just one of those reasons where, like, 'cos the person who did it is chilled, anyway. She's awesome. She's an awesome person, so... I also like the tree design, that's why I had it as a tree. But I got it because the person is awesome. So, kind of like a memento thing. I want something to remember them by, I guess.	Motivation to make others laugh, <u>motivation to be seen positively?</u> Repetition of *'chilled'* as positive attribute - opposite of 'stress'? Value of relaxed approach?

Independent choices, expressions of individuality Sense of freedom	394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402	*Yeah, yeah... I see.* I'll probably regret it, at some point, as I have done, but... it's what I said back then, I said, "I'm probably going to regret it, but I'll have it anyway." She's like, "You sure? You really sure?" and I'm like, "Yes, I'm sure." *Yeah?*	Ambivalence? Knows he may regret things but does them anyway, in spite of this. Isn't ignoring future consequences, but is consciously choosing to ignore them?
	403 404 405 406	Yeah. That was fun, actually. *Yeah? Ok.*	Refers to numerous things as 'fun' - what does this mean? Personal triumphs, expressions of individuality?
Others taking control Giving others what they want but retaining control Manipulating others' reactions/behaviour - enjoying that control Impression management	407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420	I still do get, like, people asking me to show it to them, and in lesson I've had people try to lift my... the arm of my shirt up to see it, so I've had to go in school wearing a jumper or a coat jacket or something. That's... that's not been fun actually, but... there are still people that do that, and, like, when they go up to me they ask me, "Do you have one?" and I'm like, "Sure, if you want." Like, I don't answer what they say unless they say, "Can I see it," and I'll say no. But if they ask anything about it I'll just be like, "Yeah, sure, if you want." I don't like to answer directly. And it's, it's funny that way 'cos they're getting pee'd off with me... One of them told me to 'F off' and walked off, and I was laughing, 'cos it was very funny actually. *Yeah?*	Others forcing their will on him = *'not fun'* Giving people whatever they want to hear whilst brushing them off - letting them know he's only giving them what they want to hear.
Fairness/justice 'Fun' as being in control	421 422 423 424 425	Yeah, they hate me for it, and it's great. It's great to pee people off who've pee'd you off for so long. it's just... it's one of those things, it's quite fun. *Does that feel good, to do that?*	Amusement in others' reaction. <u>Does he care about being liked here? Or is this partly about impression management anyway?</u>
Moral conflict/dilemma Conflict with own values	426 427 428 429	It does feel good, to be honest. I don't, I don't think it should feel good, morally, but it feels good, so... I like it. (Both laugh.)	Sense of fairness, justice, getting his own back. 'Fun' as taking control of a situation? Awareness of moral

	430 431 432 433	*Ok, so thinking back to... we talked a bit about when you were in Year 8 and you first started to miss school, and about this friend of yours, at the time, who was involved in that as well, erm...*	dilemma - whose morals? Where do these conflicts come from?
	434 435	Yeah	
	436 437 438 439	*At that time, do you think anything would have made a difference, would have helped you to stay in school, and not decided to go off elsewhere? Would anything have made a difference?*	
Social influences on non-attendance behaviour	440 441 442	Er... If I realised that the dude I was skiving with was a bit of a prick then I probably wouldn't have gone with him.	Strong influence of social relationships on behaviour - view of other person at the time vs. now.
	443	*Right...*	
Wisdom/hindsight gained over time	444 445 446 447	But, you know, I just didn't know at the time, so... I can't really do anything to change that.	Hindsight - <u>sense that he has progressed/ developed over time - is now wiser</u>, no longer the 'stupid kid'.
	448 449	*No, no. It's just about what you know at the time, isn't it, really.*	
	450 451	Yeah.	
	452 453	*Ok, what about anyone else, maybe in school or at home, could anyone else have made a difference there, do you think?*	
Impotence of others to change his behaviour	454 455 456	Erm, no, not really. I don't think so.	No mention of family, school staff, or anyone else but school friends.
	457 458	*No?*	Relative influences on behaviour, expectations?
	459 460	No.	
	461 462 463 464 465	*Ok,back at that time then, when you first started to miss lessons and things, how much did it feel like it was a conscious choice? Did you feel like it was a choice to miss lessons, or did you feel you didn't have that much choice?*	
Personal choice and agency			

Freedom	466	Erm... I feel like there was a lot of choice in there. You either go to	<u>Clear sense of agency and personal</u>
Realisation of opportunity to	467	school or you go out of school, and when you're young like that	<u>choice.</u>
make a choice	468	you're like, "Woah, you can get out of school? That's awesome, I	First <u>realisation that there is a choice.</u>
Inevitability of school-related	469	want to do that!" But then, sort of after a while, it gets to a thing	Prior to that - hadn't occurred to him
stress	470	where you're like, "I want to do this more, because I don't like	that he could choose?
Lack of power to change	471	school." 'Cos it's, you know, it's stressful a lot, so I'd rather not go to	But there's an inevitability - that's just
school stressors	472	it. And that's just, sort of, how it is sometimes.	how it is.
	473		Only way to avoid stress is to miss
	474	*And is that, sort of, what's happened over time, then? That it's built*	school.
	475	*up more and more, that seems to be what you're saying?*	
External locus of control -	476		
systems as operating around	477	Yeah, I think that's actually what happened. I hadn't made this	*Passivity - 'that's what happened',*
him, rather than him being part	478	correlation before, but I think that's what happened.	*rather than 'that's what I did'.*
of system	479		
	480	*Yeah?*	
	481		
	482	Yeah.	
	483		
	484	*So you realised you could, to an extent, get away with it, quite a lot?*	
Impact on future behaviour of	485		
'getting away with it'	486	Yeah, so I did it more. I... n... no, I shouldn't say that.	Inhibiting himself - stops himself from
	487		saying something (due to Mum's
	488	*Ok, ok (laughs). What about now, though, you're Year 11 now,*	proximity?)
	489	*aren't you. Do you still feel that it's a choice, when you're not in*	
	490	*school?*	
	491		
	492	Yeah, definitely, it's...	Sense of agency and responsibility.
	493		
	494	*Yeah?*	
	495		
Self as competent at helping	496	I, er... Hmmm... Depends, because I've got this sort of thing where,	But not entirely? Qualifies this
others	497	do you know, I deal... I deal with people, like, people's problems,	responsibility.
	498	even though I'm told I'm not supposed to, because I have more	Choosing to disregard others' (whose?)
	499	problems... but I just like to help everyone else out. So I have the	advice.
	500	mentality of... when someone wants to leave school to get some	Wants to help others, <u>does care about</u>
	501	breathing space, I'd go with them, because, like, they want to be	<u>people</u>.

Social responsibility leading to lack of choice - his values, priorities Purpose in life	502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511	alone, but they don't want to be alone at all. So, like, they want to get rid of the sheep, if you know what I mean by that. I just sort of like to chill with people whenever they need to vent, or break down, or anything, and I'll just like sit there and chill with them, I guess. It's alright, like, I... When that happens I feel that there's no choice because it's sort of my duty now, it's sort of what I've, er... I just want to live to do that, instead of live for nothing. Because I've never had a reason to live, yeah? *Yeah?*	He's not a *'sheep'* - sees self as different from most. Feels responsible for supporting others - this removes personal choice/agency from situation. This role has given him purpose in life.
'Fun' as finding purpose and gaining sense of achievement Taking control	512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519	So I've finally chose something I want to do, and that's help people, and it's been... it's been fun, sometimes. Not when I screw up. But it's fun sometimes. *Oh, ok, so you've found yourself in that position of going off to support other people when they're needing some time out, then, or whatever...*	This purpose is a positive for him. He *'finally chose'* something he wants to do - sense of deliberately, consciously taking control, but as a result of that choice he no longer feels he has a choice about missing school.
Impact of chosen social responsibility on school attendance	520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528	Yeah, yeah *I see. And does that happen a lot nowadays, then?* Er... it happened a lot last week. *Ok...*	
School absenteeism as a side-effect of greater purpose Agency/choice?	529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537	But, I dunno, like... I dunno. It... when did it happen? It happened, it happened on Monday and Thursday, maybe I think it was just those two days. But both of those days it was the same person I was skiving with, and both of those times he had to leave school because he needed to talk about something. *Yeah?* So we just sat and talked for two hours, and then the second day	Use of *'skiving'* - wilfully missing school, but friend *'had to'* leave, he *'needed'* to talk.

'Fun' as fulfilling social role, doing something in line with his values/priorities	538 539 540 541 542	we left on third lesson, that would've been, that would've been three hours that we talked for then. On Monday he came round here, and on Thursday I went round his after school so we got to talk a lot more after that, it was actually pretty fun.	Enjoyment/satisfaction from this role.
Enjoyment and satisfaction from social role Feeling socially excluded/un-cared for

Importance of making others happy (for own happiness) Importance of creating positive impression of self on others 'Selfish altruism'? | 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 | *Yeah*

So, yeah, I dunno, I just kind of like helping people out, and I prioritise everyone else over myself, because I don't think there's that many people that, like, I care for that care back, so, like, I just show my caring-ness a lot more often to show that it's actually there... rather than some people that don't show it at all. They do care, but they just don't show it, or something like that. So... I like to show it, 'cos it, you know, it's nice to show it, and it makes people happy, and making people happy makes me happy.

Sounds like that's really important to you...

Yeah, definitely, I think it is, yeah. | Enjoyment/satisfaction - emphasis. Doesn't feel cared about by many others Really wants to show he cares, to those who do care about him - wants them to know he cares. <u>Impression management - it's important to him how others perceive him. Wants to be *'nice'.*</u> His happiness depends on making others happy, though - <u>important to him that others feel cared for (even though he often doesn't?)</u> |
| Life as having limited purpose | 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 | *...to help others, and to show that you do care about them, and for them to know that you do care about them. It's almost like that's given you a purpose in your own life, is that it?*

Yeah, that's like one of the only things I'm going to live for, 'cos there's nothing else to live for.

Really? | *'One of'* the only things? What else? Nothing at all? |
| Decision to take control of life Impact of taking control on behaviour towards others Sense of control/agency as leading to happiness | 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 | I, sort of... There was a point I got to... that wasn't good, but it's like... I sort of just went from that... Because I saw no point in life, and then there was a point I got to, really bad, but then I just thought I should probably try *making* a point in life. And then, from then, I was actually a lot nicer to people than I had been.

Yeah? | *More hesitant, doesn't quite know how to express this? Or is uncomfortable trying to?* Conscious turning point - definite change. |

Weight of responsibility towards others - important to him Emotional impact of responsibility on self and others Impact of his emotional state on behaviour Putting others first	574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609	A lot nicer to people. Helping at any opportunity that I can, but... It's the worst when I screw up, because it's like, it's like probably the only thing I do that I actually care about any more, so it's just sort of like, oh, I don't like, I don't like messing up. It makes me feel bad. And that makes other people feel bad, because it's also, like, you know, it's them that's asking for help, and you don't help properly, and... it's just not good at all, for anyone. But... I make a lot of stupid mistakes when I'm in a good mood, which isn't, which isn't necessarily a good thing. So I've just sort of got to try to be in a neutral mood all the time, instead of in a good mood, because... I'm getting off track here, but have you... have you ever heard of that thing where at one point in time of the day you'll use your brain more? Do you know what... I can't remember what it's called, but have you heard of something like that at all? *I'm not sure if I have... Go on, tell me more about that.* Like, well, I'm just going off what a teacher said once. But, like, she was sitting next to me and I was doing really good in maths, but I was really tired, like, I had no sleep for the past three days or something, so like I was sitting there doing maths, sort of like aceing it like a boss, and (both laugh) Miss was just like, "Is this your time of day that you're just good at everything?" and I'm just like, "Woah! I mean, sure, if you want!" But I've found that, er, if I sleep normally, which is going to bed at like somewhere past two am in the morning and waking up at seven, it's er... My usual time for having a good, er, a good train of thought would be like from nine till eleven pm, those are the times my brain works best. But it only works really good when I'm like really tired, or like... It could just be that, er, I'm thinking it could also be that the time of day could actually change it, because I have woken up at eleven and had really good thought processes, so I, er... It's either just when I'm really tired, or just at eleven my brain likes to work, but... I like the night, the night's nice, it's quiet, there's no people around, and that's good. *Yeah?*	Feels extremely responsible - means a lot to him. Very negative impact on himself when he *'screws up'*. Also considers impact on others - secondary to impact on self? Aware of impact of own mood on behaviour - seems punitive, self-effacing, trying to regulate own mood down in order not to make 'stupid mistakes'. <u>Importance of own well-being is less than that of others.</u> Again, giving others what they want to hear whilst not actually affirming it/committing to it. Wanting to avoid meeting others, need for solitude?
Avoidance of social contact Negative emotional impact of being with others			

	610	Yeah. Erm... What were we saying before?	
	611		
	612	*(Laughs) That's ok... I know what you're saying about different*	
	613	*times of day, I think there are, there are often times of day when*	
	614	*people find it easier to concentrate, or less easy to concentrate,*	
	615	*definitely, and it's probably to do with your sleep cycles and your*	
	616	*body clock and stuff like that, isn't it? I know what you're saying.*	
	617	*Ok... let me just have a quick look back at this again (looks at*	
	618	*interview schedule). So we've talked about when you first started to*	
	619	*miss school a bit, and what was going on for you then, we talked a*	
	620	*bit about choice and control... erm,we talked about whether anyone*	
	621	*else or anything might have helped you get back into school and,*	
	622	*you know, stick with it full-time at that point... We've talked a bit*	
	623	*about how you feel about school now, haven't we, and you talked*	
	624	*about your reasons why you often miss school now maybe being a*	
	625	*bit different from how they were in Year 8, how things have*	
	626	*developed over time. Erm... Can you think of anything that's going*	
Positive relationships with	627	*well for you at school at the moment, in general?*	
teachers as salient feature	628		
	629	Oh, hmmm... No, I can't actually. Apart from, like, being chilled with	First response - no. But then there are
Feeling 'hated' by teacher	630	most of my teachers, like... Some of, most of the teachers I have	(qualified) positives.
	631	are actually pretty chilled, apart from my Tech Graphics teacher,	
	632	who hates me... I'm not even, I'm not even going to sugar-coat it,	
	633	he hates me, because, apparently, when I'm not in the lesson for	Repetition of *'hates me'* - emphasis.
	634	Tech Graphics, he is a lot more calm, and he like shouts less and	
	635	stuff. So it's sort of obvious that he just hates me. And like, I	
	636	dunno, like, he was, er... I used to skive his lessons a lot because I	
	637	don't like Tech Graphics, it's actually really... It's a horrible lesson.	
Impact of feeling disliked	638	Right now we're doing Photoshop and I sit in the corner with a mate,	
Desire for positive regard	639	the same mate that I skive with, so it's... it's sort of fine. But, like, I	
	640	dunno, my teacher just hates me, and it's not nice to have teachers	Feeling 'hated' by his teacher bothers
Conflict - position of self	641	hate me.	him. <u>Positions himself on the</u>
outside of system vs. wanting	642		<u>edge/outside of the system but still</u>
to be liked by those in system	643	*No...*	<u>wants to be liked/thought of positively</u>
	644		<u>by those within the system.</u>
	645	But at the time I just, like, brush it off as though I don't care, but	

Self as less responsible for own behaviour, dependent on mood - external locus of control	646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655	sometimes I do care. It's just like... He was actually the first teacher to see the thing on my arm, because I didn't bandage it properly, so the bandage kept falling off, and then after a while I sort of realised that I was doing it wrong, because I was having like one strip over it, instead of, like, you know, around the whole thing, like you're supposed to. So I sort of, maybe screwed up a little there. But, I dunno, I was in a good mood, so I made stupid mistakes, that's just how it is. That's what I've learned from that, just don't be in a good mood, 'cos it's not good at all.	Evidence for earlier statement - good mood leads to 'stupid' mistakes. Inevitability, can't control this - *'that's just how it is'.* Learned from it - but not how to get around the problem whilst retaining good mood, just that he needs to avoids good moods.
	656 657	*Because you make silly mistakes?*	
Mental processes as external, beyond conscious control	658 659 660 661 662 663	Yeah, I just... yeah. Especially, especially in video games, just... if I'm playing a game and I'm all hyped and stuff, it's like, "Oh, it's a new game, it's all good," I'll play it, I'll probably be really bad at it. Then, like, after a while I'll desensitise and I'll be in a chilled mood and it's just like, "Right, I'll play this game now," and, like, my brain's a lot slower to do that than most people 'cos it took me a while. The	Can't change/control this tendency - it's his brain that takes longer to calm down than others' brains. Externalises this.
'Fun' as taking control	664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671	game I'm playing at the minute, it's Payday 2, where you... basically you rob banks. It's very fun. You wear, like, masks and stuff, and you can customise the weapons, the masks and the skills and everything, and it's quite grindy, like, you do play it a lot, and get a lot of level-ups, but you have to play it a lot to actually get the level-ups. But, like, it's fun, but it's just... it's really hard, 'cos I die a lot, so, you know, there's that, and just like after a while I just desensitise, but it... I'm actually really slow at doing that.	
Self as aware of own strengths/limitations	672 673	*Right, I see...*	*Repetition*
Lack of confidence in own choices/decision-making	674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681	But I've sort of gotten used to it, like. Whenever I start playing a new game, I'll probably... there's probably a chance that I'll reset my save at least twice, 'cos in Payday 2 I reset my save twice because I thought that I was making the wrong choices within, you know, skill development and stuff. So, yeah, it's really good though. It's pretty windy outside... Is it raining?	<u>Lack of confidence in own decision-making? Could this relate to other topics and ambivalence in terms of making choices/taking responsibility and being led by external forces/inevitability?</u>

	682	*It was earlier on.*	
	683		
	684	Oh, really?	
	685		
	686	*Yeah.*	
	687		
	688	Oh, I wasn't awake for that. I like the rain.	
	689		
	690	*Yeah?*	
Avoidance of others	691		
Negative emotional impact of being around others	692	Especially at night, 'cos it just feels nice to walk in the rain. And then when there's no people around it feels better because, like... I guess I'm just a loner, I don't like people at all, like. People make me anxious.	Desire to avoid social contact (unexpected/random, or any social contact?)
Social anxiety	693		
	694		
	695		
	696		
	697	*Yeah?*	
Ambivalence about social contact	698		
	699	So, like, yeah... There's a lot of stuff that I want to say, because I don't get to talk to a lot of people, which is probably a bad thing, but it's also... it also shows that I'm an introvert, like, I make myself out to be, but like... There's a thing where, if I'm in a group of more than two other people, my brain just ceases to work better, so like the more... If there's more than two people, my brain hurts a lot more, and it'll, like, it's harder to, er, it's harder to focus when there's more than two other people. So, like, me and two other people is fine, I'm fine with that, usually I'm fine with that... If I'm in a bad mood, probably not, because then I... The way I do it is I think about what I'm saying before I say it, and then there's also two people, so I have to think about what they think about what I'm going to say, and then like how I'm going to deliver what I'm saying. I... It's... I'm a lot better on one-to-one sessions which is why I had Mum leave the room, because talking about stuff just makes me anxious, 'cos then, if she was in the room - she probably is listening - but if she was in the room and I could see her listening... (pause) Is that rain? I can't tell if it's raining or not - that window has water on it and that one doesn't. That's weird. What was I saying? Er, so like, I just find	Would like to talk to more people? *'a bad thing'* in his opinion, or is it that others tell him he should talk to more people?
Desire to talk	700		
Externalising mental processes	701		
	702		
	703		Lack of agency - external locus of control (*'my brain'*).
	704		
	705		*'Brain hurts'* - anxiety?
Externalising control of mood	706		
	707		
	708		
	709		Very self-aware.
	710		Has consciously worked out strategies for dealing with conversational demands - a lot of thought.
Anxiety linked with talking	711		
	712		
	713		
	714		Anxious about social situations. <u>Is this part of the 'stress' of being at school, mentioned earlier? Having to deal with groups of others?</u>
	715		
	716		
	717		
Anxiety around social			

communication	718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737	that I'm better talking to people on a one-to-one session, but what you've probably noticed is that I'm horrible at making eye contact. I just can't do it. I don't know why, but it just makes me anxious to do it, and I just can't do it. *That's ok...* That's why I've been staring at the cup all this time. *Ok... and hiding under your hair!* Yeah, Yeah (laughs). *That's ok. It's kind of more intense, isn't it, when you've, when you're making eye contact...* Yeah, it is, yeah. *I know what you mean.*	(Changing subject to something less anxiety-provoking - deliberate tactic?) <u>Self-aware and very conscious of own social behaviour/mannerisms. He has clearly thought a lot about how he presents and behaves in social situations.</u> <u>Feels need to justify behaviour?</u>
Anxiety as external force Impact of anxiety on physical well-being Impact of anxiety on school attendance	738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747	But it kind of messes my head, but, with anxiety and everything, and all that kind of thing, I have thrown up before going to school. I did it on Friday, and then I didn't go to school on Friday, and then I got told off by a lot of people, so... *What, told off for not going in?* Yeah *Right.*	<u>Externalising the anxiety?</u> *What else?* Who?
Impact of anxiety on social behaviour/communication Agency and control of own behaviour	748 749 750 751 752 753	And, like, I threw up, then freaked out, then rang someone twenty times, then my phone battery died, then my Dad came to pick me up... That was a bad day. *Yeah... So, is this anxiety, is this also getting in the way of you*	*Active verb forms - he did this, not just 'it happened'.* Doesn't attribute blame/cause - it was *'a bad day'*

	754	*going to school now, then, sometimes?*	
	755		
	756	Well, it depends on how much... 'Cos Friday, there was a lot of	Stress derived from other people's
	757	stress as well, 'cos I had, you know, pupils, other pupils' problems	problems.
	758	were building up. Then also I had a French test to go to and to care	Stress derived from academic
	759	about, then, ah, I can't remember what else there was, but there	demands, and the feeling that he
	760	was probably a lesson that I hated, I just forgot, because I don't care	'should' care about these - where does
'Stress' as a result of	761	about that day any more. But, I just, there was probably lessons	that come from? Distancing self.
responsibility towards others	762	that I don't like, and they probably added more stress, because it's	Trying to diminish impact of that day.
Anxiety/stress linked with	763	like I have to go in and deal with this lesson, and choose to deal	Stress of lessons he doesn't like.
academic achievement	764	with this lesson, like, I dunno, I just... Sometimes it's more stress	Taking responsibility for being there,
'Stress' as result of systemic	765	than it has to be, but, I dunno.	even though it's stressful.
expectations	766		Why? What makes it so?
Agency and choice despite	767	*Ok, do you think... You talked about, er, being there to support other*	
stress	768	*people who might be having a hard time, and, you know, listening to*	
	769	*them and being there to support them, and going out of school with*	
	770	*them when they need some space. Do you think that taking on*	
	771	*board their problems, does that add to your stress, your anxiety, do*	
	772	*you think?*	
Separation of 'stress' and	773		
'anxiety'	774	Er... Probably to my stress, I wouldn't know about my anxiety.	Separates *stress* and *anxiety* - they're
Putting others first	775	Probably to my stress, yes to that. It's... but, I think it's fine,	clearly different things. (Is anxiety a
	776	because I don't... I prioritise myself under everyone else, like, you	clinical, externalised description, and
Conscious disregard for own	777	know... (pause) I just care more about other people. I've got to a	stress more of an experiential,
well-being	778	point in life where I don't care about myself any more, so I thought,	internalised one?)
	779	rather than not caring...	Why? Did he used to care about
	780		himself? What changed?
	781	(Interrupted by chimes of clock in room)	
	782		
	783	I've forgotten what I was saying now. Oops.	
	784		
	785	*You were talking about how you prioritise other people's needs*	
	786	*above your own, really.*	
Sense of gradual decline of	787		
emotional well-being over time	788	Yeah. I got to a point in life where I stopped caring about myself, so	*Repetition, emphasis*
	789	I thought I'd rather, I'd rather put my care into something that's	
Desire to have constructive			

purpose in life	790 791 792 793 794	better than dwelling on the fact that I don't care about myself any more. And it's, it's actually been working out a lot better. There was one day when I washed the dishes at home, and Mum was very happy. Only the one day though... (both laugh)	Positive change - turning point (see above).
	795	*Right...*	
Altruism (but limited)	796		
	797 798 799	Not all the time, that's too much. I can't do everything, I'm not a wizard! (both laugh)	There are limits to caring behaviour with some people/in some contexts, e.g. at home.
	800 801 802	*No. It sounds like that has given you some more purpose, though, thinking about other people and supporting them.*	
	803 804	Yeah.	
	805 806 807 808	*...And actually, to me, that does not sound like the action of someone who's stupid, that sounds like the action of someone who's insightful and caring, do you think?*	(Perhaps I shouldn't have said that - imposing my own sense-making on the conversation, adding too much of my own interpretation?)
	809 810	Hmmm, thanks, I guess...	
	811 812 813 814	*So, when you think about your experience of school in particular, about your school attendance, do you think that that issue itself has changed the way that you see yourself at all?*	
	815 816	Hmmm, explain that.	
	817 818	*Hmmm, that is a bit of an odd question, when I think about it.*	
	819 820	Yeah. (both laugh)	
	821 822 823 824 825	*I suppose, in terms of the way you think about yourself as a person, and the different things that might affect the way you see yourself as a person, do you think that your experience with having missed quite a lot of school, having had Mrs Summers involved, having had all that stuff going on... Has that changed the way you see yourself*	

Self as outside of school system and its values	826 827 828	*as a person?*	Internal values - emphasis?
	829	Er... Mmmm... Not really, because I've never really cared about school. So it's... I dunno. All school usually does is just add on	A negative experience - doesn't see any value in it. *'All it is' - school*
School experience as 'stress'	830	stress, so, not really... not really a stress reliever in any stretch of	*experience is reduced to stress alone.*
Lack of power to change school stress	831 832 833 834	the imagination, it's just like, all it is is just a pile-up of stress and it, it doesn't go down so you just have to sort of deal with it. And it's a pain, just, what you have to do, I guess.	But it's inevitable - can't beat the system.
	835 836 837	*Hmmm... On the one hand you think, well, it's just what I've got to do, but on the other hand you don't see any particular benefit in it for yourself, then?*	
Externalisation of others' values/views of school and its purpose	838 839 840 841 842	Er, well, there's the thing I've been told that, like, it can get me a job in the future and stuff, but that's like, I dunno, like... When people ask me the question of, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" or, "What do you see yourself as in the future?" I can never	*He's 'been told' - not his own view necessarily, not internalised*
	843	answer because I can't see the future. Like, even if I imagined me	Lack of imagination, too much anxiety?
Inability to construct/imagine a future beyond school	844 845 846 847	being in the future... I can't do it, I can only think of present or past. So it's like, I dunno, it's one of those things that I can't help having but I have. And I just can't, like, can't even fabricate the future because, like, I dunno, maybe I'm just, er, too - oh, what's it called?	Other reasons?
Self as insightful/clear view of own limitations	848 849 850 851	- too inversed in reality, or something like that, that I just can't even fabricate a future or anything like that. But, I dunno, I've just never been able to do it.	What does this mean?
	852 853 854 855 856	*Ok, ok. So... we might come back to that point, maybe, but just thinking about school as it is now, in the present then, erm, what would need to change for you to feel better about it, and for you to be more keen on going in?*	
Lack of power to change system	857 858	Er, well, I don't think there's a way to do that, actually, because when people have said how would you improve school I would have	No way to improve it apart from avoiding it. Bit like the point about
Avoidance of school as only available coping strategy	859 860 861	been like, "Have them let me have days off," and I would be fine with that. But, like, if I... I've been told if I have a day off I have to go in and then leave, because that way my parents don't get in trouble,	good moods - only way to solve the problem is by avoiding the situation completely. Again, can't change/beat
Making the best of the system			the system.

	862	so it just sort of...	
	863		
	864	*Ah...*	
	865		
	866	Yeah! It's a lot smarter though, because it's just, er, I dunno...	Playing the system, making the best of
	867	There's a lot of things that could happen, but I can't think of any	it within its confines.
Self as able to achieve	868	(both laugh). ...Oh, I'm trying to think now... Erm... There... I think	
academically	869	that, er, I don't know the legal things on school, so I don't know, but	
Need for personal	870	what would probably make it better, if I could actually, er, either	
choice/agency/control	871	choose everything, every lesson that I want, but that would only	Wants more personal choice, but at
Self as different from peers	872	work out for me because I know you need, like, English, Maths and	same time wouldn't trust peers to make
Self as above/superior to peers	873	Science, whereas other people, if they got a choice they wouldn't do	the right choices. <u>Sees himself as</u>
	874	it, and they wouldn't get the right qualifications, which would be a	<u>different from peers</u> - more sensible,
	875	bad thing. But for me, I would rather have a choice in everything	responsible, intelligent?
Impact of own choices	876	that I do rather than just a few things. We only got to chose a few	
	877	things, and when I chose those... I wasn't really very happy with my	Wants more freedom, more agency
	878	choices, and then it got... it was too late before I could change any	and control
	879	of them, and then I just sort of... I've had to deal with horrible	
	880	lessons, so...	
	881		
	882	*Right.*	
School systems as limiting	883		
personal choices/freedoms	884	They give us a choice of, like, five lessons and then they give us a	*'They' - the system, those in authority -*
	885	choice of Design. I regret most of those, er, I think, I dunno, like...	*the other - 'they' limit freedom and*
	886	One thing that did actually get me a bit stressed was in Art, er, I was	*choice.*
Anxiety arising from others'	887	asked to take pictures of myself, and I'm one of those photo-	
demands/expectations	888	phobes, I guess, so I just can't handle having my picture taken, and	
	889	when I was almost to the point of forced to have a picture taken of	
Behaviour in response to	890	myself, I sort of went into the bathroom and started crying, I was	
anxiety	891	very sad. But I was like texting people as well, so... Then I had to	
	892	go back into lesson. I can't remember what happened after that. I	
	893	remember wanting to leave, but I don't think I actually did it until	Despite stress and upset, chose to
	894	Friday. I guess, just that and other things brought up a lot of stress	stay in school. Cumulative effect of
	895	and it just didn't work out on Friday. Friday wasn't a good day.	stress led to missing school later.
	896		
	897	*Is this last Friday you're talking about?*	

	898	This was four days ago.	
	899		
	900	*Yeah, ok.*	
	901		
	902	Or five days ago, 'cos I'm thinking about Thursday now, I think,	
	903	actually.	
	904		
	905	*Right. So some of your subject choices, you wish were different...*	
Desire for personal choice	906		*Repetition* - setting himself apart as different and superior to peers.
	907	Er, yeah, I'd rather have, I'd just rather have a choice in everything	
Self as different, more	908	that I do, but I know that wouldn't be a good idea for a lot of people,	
intelligent/responsible than	909	because there are some people who are actually quite unintelligent	
peers	910	and think that, like, English, Maths and Science and whatever you	*'Supposed to care'* - repetition. *But he*
Importance of educational	911	need for qualifications isn't important, when they actually are. Or	*thinks it's 'bad' that they don't care.*
qualifications	912	they just don't care, and that's bad, because you're supposed to	Does he care? I think he does -
	913	care about that. But, like, I don't really see why I'm supposed to	acknowledges that achievement etc.
Acceptance of others' values	914	care yet, but I've been told I'm supposed to care so that's sort of	must be important to others, therefore
(educational qualifications)	915	what I'm doing. They rarely do that. I rarely care about what people	perhaps he 'should' care...
	916	tell me to care about, so... unless it's actually important to the	
Doubt about whether to trust	917	person, then it's sort of, you know... But I get told by a lot of people	Is trying to take advice on board -
others' judgement	918	that I'm supposed to care about school grades and stuff, so I have	putting some faith in others'
	919	been doing, but... you know, but there's a chance it could be, like, it	views/priorities
	920	could just all be rubbish, and, you know, everything could be easier	But... is not entirely convinced.
Self as different, more	921	than everyone makes it out to be, because people like doing that.	
insightful than peers	922	And I've learnt this a lot, from talking to a lot of different people, that,	Aware of this tendency in others and in
	923	like, people make things harder than they actually are. So, like, in	self, but thinks only he can see it.
	924	their heads - I know I do it a lot actually - in their heads they make it	Again, <u>sets himself apart - different,</u>
Inevitability of aspects of	925	out to be harder than it actually is, and... I don't know why, but, like,	<u>superior in his insight.</u>
human nature/behaviour	926	other people can't see it, but I see it a lot, actually, and I don't know	<u>Inevitability</u>
	927	why. It's just, sort of, one of those, one of those things, like a lot of	
	928	things I've said, yeah.	
	929		
	930	*Yeah... Stuff builds up in people's minds, maybe, is that kind of*	
	931	*what you mean? Like they end up worrying about it more than is*	
	932	*necessary, because it seems such a big, hard thing to do, and*	
	933	*actually it's not that bad?*	*Repetition* - inevitability - can't be
Inevitability of aspects of			*changed.*

human nature/behaviour	934 935 936	Yeah, yeah, and also the fact that people make things a bigger deal than they actually are sometimes. That's just how it is.	
	937 938 939 940	*Hmmm, yeah, I know what you mean. So, you've talked about not really caring about a lot of stuff to do with school, but then at the same time you did say something about needing English, Maths and Science... Tell me about that, what do you need them for?*	Thoughts of the future - feels he needs to have *at least something* in terms of qualifications
Self as competent learner (subject-specific) Need for qualifications for future	941 942 943 944 945 946	Well, for a job, so that like, so that when I leave school at least I'll have something. Because English... English is easy. Maths is easy because there's only one answer - that's the easiest thing about maths.	
	947 948	*Yeah...*	*I only do...* Diminishing own achievement/ability
Ambiguity in concept of self as academically competent	949 950 951 952 953 954	I only do, er, oh, what's it called? I only do the lower whatever-it's-called, so I can only get up to a C. But, like, I've seen Maths from people who are, like, in the top set, and they get their books out and show me and it's like, "Woah, that's a bit of a headache!" Like, so many letters and numbers, too much to comprehend.	
Externalisation of perceived lack of competence (subject-specific) - others are to blame?	955 956 957 958 959 960 961	*Yeah (laughs).* Like, there is a point I can get to in Maths where it's easy. I just haven't been taught that well, I don't think. Or... maybe it's just that I didn't care. And now, when I know that I'm supposed to care, I, like, I'm just bad. Or at least worse than other people...	But externalises perceived low attainment - poor teaching, or not caring - it's not his fault, not due to a lack of ability.
	962 963	*Do you genuinely care now, do you think, or is it more that you feel you ought to, because other people expect you to?*	Doesn't want to be seen to comply with others' expectations?
Willingness to internalise others' priorities Reluctance to be seen as complying with others' expectations Conflict between own	964 965 966 967 968 969	Er... It's not that they expect me to, it's just the fact that, like, I'm told it's important, so it must be important to some degree. If it isn't, well then, erm... I don't know what to say to that. But if it... I've been told by a lot of people it's important, so the chances are, it's probably important, so I should listen to those people instead of, you know, go with what I want, because if I go with what I want, then it's	Is willing to accept others' views/priorities - trusts their judgement to some extent, but it's his own choice to do so - <u>important to him to retain control/choice, not to be told what to</u>

desires/values and inevitable need to meet social expectations	970 971 972	not going to change anything, really, is it? You've just, you know, you've just got to deal with some things.	think and follow blindly, despite on this occasion choosing to accept their views
	973 974 975	*I was going to ask you a bit about your hopes for the future, and I know you've already talked a bit about that, and how you can't... you're struggling, really, to think about the future at all...*	
	976		Central importance of social experience, the social world, friendships
Friendship as most important aspect of life	977 978	Er, my hopes for the future? Er... to be alive, and still have all the people I care about still be my friends. Even, like, no matter what	
Shared experience/hardships as reinforcing social bonds	979 980 981 982	happens, I still want them to be friends, because we've just been through so much, it's sort of just like... It would be the worst to just throw it away for nothing. So, just that...	Throw what away? Implying that if he lost those friends, it would be his fault?
	983 984	*Yeah, yeah. That's really important to you?*	
	985 986	Yeah, definitely.	
	987 988 989	*Sure. Ok. What about in terms of, let's say this academic year, so till the end of Year 11, what are your best hopes for that time?*	
Central importance of social world/friendships	990 991 992 993	Er... Hmmm. (pause) To deal with something that someone is dealing with now, that I've actually been really... I wouldn't say bad at dealing with, I've just been... over the year, this has gone on, this thing has gone on since July, I've known them. This thing between	(I thought this would steer him towards academic aspiration - my own assumption based on my own experience?) Highlights again the central importance of the social world, much more important than any other
Self as capable/powerful in solving others' problems	994 995 996	two people, er... I want to get that solved. But the thing is, the more I go into it, the more information I get, and then it's sort of one of those things where I have to, er, I just have to, like, I have to do a lot	factor for him) I have to... (repeated several times). Feels very responsible for this situation
Self as responsible towards others	997 998	of work in terms of solving the problem. So I have to look at everything, and then I have to be like, "Right, is this information	- ties in strongly with his view of his purpose in life, his role
Sense of duty - no choice	999 1000	right, or wrong, or whatever?" and then I have to speculate upon those. But then, when I make an accusation, more information will	
Self as powerful over peers	1001	come in that'll go against that, literally just to defy what I just said.	Is casting himself in a position of power, removed from the social
Self as distant from peers	1002 1003 1004	So, I dunno, I just... I want to get some things solved between people, but I don't know if I can do it. But I'm there to, like, help, in case they need it.	situation itself, setting himself apart
	1005	*Sounds like it's quite a complex situation, is it?*	

	1006		
	1007	It actually is. Like, I can't tell if the person is - the other person, not	
	1008	my mate - 'cos there's my mate that I skived with last week, and	
	1009	then there's another person involved, but I don't know if they're	
	1010	doing it just for attention, I don't know if they're doing it just to be a	
Self as responsible for	1011	heart-breaker, I really can't tell, I can't tell if they're just - er, cos	
understanding others'	1012	they're a year below us - I can't tell if they're just being, er, really	
behaviour/emotions	1013	immature, I guess would be the word, or... I'd say naive, but I	
	1014	actually don't know what that word means, but it's been used a lot in	
	1015	English, so I just sort of went with that, but naive would probably be	
	1016	a word. But, I, I really can't tell what her deal is, like, I really can't.	
	1017	And it messes with my head a little, because like... she doesn't talk	
Frustration linked with	1018	that often, unless we go on Skype or something, because Skype is	Repetition of '*have to*'... But
impotence	1019	awesome. But, you know, it... I just have to deal with a lot of stuff,	acknowledges possibility that he may
	1020	er, in terms of other people's problems. So I just, I want to get at	not succeed.
Burden of responsibility	1021	least some of them solved, if not all of them, some of them solved.	
	1022	Some of them I can't solve, but...	
	1023		
	1024	*Do you feel quite responsible, then, for solving these problems?*	
	1025		High expectations of self?
High expectations of self	1026	Er, I feel responsible when I fail at solving the problem. But when I	
Self as competent problem-	1027	am actually solving the problem I feel, er, I dunno, I guess I feel	
solver	1028	chilled. Like, what's weird is that I am horrible at dealing with	
	1029	pressure or anything like that, but what I've come to find is that	
	1030	when I'm actually put in the situation where there's loads of	
	1031	pressure, there is a way... I don't know how I do it, but I... I manage	
Self as capable of dealing with	1032	to keep my shit together and just handle everything as it comes,	
pressure when necessary	1033	rather than like think... So... Or I actually think more, no... I	
	1034	probably think... (pause) Wait... I think more logically, rather than,	
	1035	er, rather than, you know, just thinking anything could happen. I'd	
	1036	rather think more logically because... It goes for getting in trouble	
	1037	as well. I'm really horrible at dealing with getting in trouble, but then	
	1038	there was one time - well, it's usually every time - where I could, I	
	1039	could say something... it's, er, it's not necessarily, like, it's (pause)...	
	1040	It's hard to explain. When put on the spot, I'm really horrible, but,	
	1041		
		like, for whatever reason when it's something important like getting	

Codes (left)	Line	Transcript	Notes (right)
'Getting in trouble' as important	1042	in trouble or anything like that, I'm actually really good. Like,	
	1043	something that actually matters to some degree, I'm actually really	
	1044	good at dealing with pressure on the spot, but then if it's something	
	1045	to do with friends, and they play Truth or Dare or some crap like	
	1046	that, I hate those games. If they play Truth or Dare or something	
	1047	like that, and they sort of ask me, like, to say something, I'll sort of	Some confidence in his abilities. Has
	1048	take ten minutes to think of something, 'cos I'm horrible being put on	clearly reflected on this, his response
Dealing with pressure	1049	the spot. But as soon as there's so much pressure to do stuff, then	to pressure in different situations.
Confidence in own competence	1050	it's just sort of like, "I can do this now," without even thinking twice	
	1051	about it.	
	1052		
	1053	*When it's something that matters...*	
	1054		
	1055	Yeah. It's a lot easier, well... 'Cos I always, er... I'm horrible at	
	1056	dealing with pressure so I always want to avoid trouble. So I think if	
	1057	I, if I did keep my shit together and I actually did, you know, stay	
	1058	cool and calm, I'd probably get in less trouble, I'd get less attention	
Adult attention as undesirable	1059	drawn to me, and that would be a good thing because I don't want	He's not like others... *'those people'*
	1060	attention really, I'm not one of those people. The only attention I	*Even more emphasis on this point*
Friends as highest priority -	1061	want is from my friends that I care about, so... That's really all I care	
shared values?	1062	about, is just friends.	
	1063		
	1064	*Yeah, yeah.*	
	1065		Some appreciation of possible future,
Awareness of possible future	1066	But that probably might change when I get older and have to get a	but almost acknowledges reluctance to
	1067	job, but, you know, at the minute, I want to keep it that way. I just	think about it?
Central value of friendships	1068	want to stay with friends and stuff... who are awesome. 'Cos	
	1069	awesome people are awesome, so that's why I want to hang around	Value of friendships
	1070	with awesome people, I just... I do so many bad things in terms of	
Social communication as	1071	communication with other people, and it's... I dunno. It's weird, but	Meta-cognition - reflecting on own
problematic	1072	it's been on my mind a lot. I'm actually really horrible at	mental processes
Self as reflective, insightful	1073	communicating with other people. So, like, for instance, there was	Diagnostic term he's been given?
	1074	one person I was talking to who has social anxiety - not as bad as I	Mental health/emotional well-being
Social anxiety self-defined as	1075	have it, not to the point of throwing up, just bad social anxiety - so I	issues
severe	1076	was like talking to them, and they didn't respond within a time span	
	1077		
		of 20 to 40 minutes, I can't remember exactly. But within then, I	

	1078	sent them like four paragraphs because they didn't reply, like, I... I	*Repetition of this point*
Self as poor at social communication	1079	just worry too much, and also I'm horrible at communication. And	
	1080	then with that same person - this was actually yesterday - I said	
	1081	something to them, and then they didn't reply within, like, less than	
	1082	ten minutes, and I was just like, "Oh, I guess you don't want to talk	
	1083	to me," and then she's sort of just like, "You've got to let me see	*Repetition of 'stupid mistakes' from earlier* - but this time makes a positive of this
	1084	your message first, man!" That's not, like, I dunno, I just do a lot of	
	1085	wrong things, I make a lot of stupid mistakes, but I'm learning from	
Self as making mistakes but capable of learning from them	1086	them. At least I hope I am. So, yeah. My throat hurts, I've been	
	1087	talking a lot.	
	1088		
	1089	*You have! (both laugh) Do you not normally talk this much?*	
	1090		
'Chilled' as approachable, open to conversation	1091	Erm, only when I get with, like, someone who's chilled to talk with,	
	1092	like a psychiatrist or something like that. Or, like, the person at	Mental health services involvement
	1093	CAMHS - I don't know what they would be, but they are a person at	
Mental health services	1094	CAMHS.	
	1095		
	1096	*Ok...*	
	1097		
	1098	And when I get put in a room with them I sort of just like talk for	
Self as needing to talk	1099	hours, and just don't stop. But my throat hurts! But, but it's nice to	Emphasis need to talk, despite feeling he is *'horrible at communicating'* - what does this really mean?
	1100	have those, it's nice to have those people, because I don't get to	
Value of opportunities to talk	1101	talk this much, apart from... No actually, that's sort of a lie, because	
	1102	on both Monday and Thursday my throat was hurting from talking	
	1103	for hours straight, so... It was, mmm, I dunno, like, I like talking but I	
	1104	don't get to talk to people as often as I want to. I have a lot of stuff	
Talking as a necessary way to process thoughts	1105	on my mind that I want to say, not to give people information, I just	
	1106	want to say it 'cos it's on my mind, then as soon as I've said it it's	Empathises with others - assumes their need is the same as his and therefore gives them opportunity
	1107	gone. That's why I like letting people talk to me, 'cos a lot of stuff on	
	1108	your mind, it doesn't go away till you've told someone. As soon as	
	1109	you've told someone it's easier to go away.	
	1110		
	1111	*Yeah, yeah.*	
	1112		Implication - he needs more opportunities to talk than he actually gets - others have more opportunity
	1113		
Self as competently providing a		I actually get it a lot, and other people get it probably less, because,	

service for others	1114 1115	you know, they actually have me to talk to. So, I dunno, like, they do the favour, they let me, er, send paragraphs to them or speak to	because of him
Self as benefiting from others' time and efforts	1116 1117 1118	them for hours, so... I don't think they mind when I vent to them, so...	
	1119 1120	*It works both ways, I guess?*	
Awareness of personal skills and strengths (own and others)	1121 1122 1123	Yeah, sometimes, depending on the person, depending on how good they are at dealing with it, or not.	
	1124 1125	*Yeah*	Emphasising his need to help others
Motivation to help others	1126 1127 1128 1129	There are some people that just can't, but, you know... I dunno, I like, I like to let people vent to me, it's helping in some way. If not a lot, then at least a little bit.	
	1130 1131	*And it feels good to know you're helping?*	
	1132 1133	Yeah, definitely.	
	1134 1135 1136 1137	*What about after the end of Year 11, then? Thinking ahead, once you've finished, erm, your GCSE year, have you got any plans at all as to what you, what you might do?*	
	1138 1139	(Pause) Nope. None at all.	
	1140 1141	*Right, right...*	Lack of clear future aspiration, even for short-term (i.e. next year)
Difficulty conceiving of a clear future	1142 1143	I don't know, it still goes with the thing of saying I have no idea. You know what, actually, we was sitting in the car and I was talking	
Motivation to learn in order to fulfil chosen purpose/values (to understand and support friends more effectively)	1144 1145 1146 1147 1148 1149	about getting something to do with psychology at college or something like that, and I wanted to do that, but then the thing about that is I'd prefer to have the information now rather than in a year or so. Because I need the information now. And if I don't get the information now, to help me deal with how people's brains work, I'm	Lack of relevance in future - focus is on what he feels he needs now. It's not about qualifications or work, it's purely about gaining knowledge. Aspirations feed into his role of helping others
Externalisation of mental		just, like... It's going to be a lot harder. So... and it has been hard,	Constructs physical brain as

processes	1150	really, to like deal with these things, because I don't know how their	responsible for behaviour, thoughts,
	1151	brain works. The one thing I need to do is figure out how their	actions
Self as separate/different from	1152	brains work, but then the fact is that they're also teenagers, so their	But he's also a teenager! Setting
peers	1153	brain's always changing, so it can change within any second, so I	himself apart again - casting self as the
Need to fulfil duty/responsibility	1154	have to keep onto that as well. And then I have to use that	expert, the helper, not as one amongst
	1155	information and see if it helps me any. It probably doesn't, it just	equals. *I have to...* Part of his self-
School as central part of life	1156	complicates things, but, like, I dunno... I just, er, I can't think of what	defined role, his duty
	1157	happens after school, I just... 'cos I just can't, like... What's weird is	
	1158	that I hate school so much, but it's actually a huge part of my life, I	
	1159	guess. Because when I'm not at school, all I do is sit at home and	
School as increasing social	1160	play video games and, like, murder people and rob banks, but, like,	Continues to distance himself -
capacity/experience	1161	when... when I'm at school I'm more sociable, and like when you're	*'whatever the hell they call it'*... But
	1162	forced - I say forced - you're meant to go out, er, to the playground	school is central to his life
	1163	or whatever the hell they call it, er, at break and lunch, so basically...	
	1164	The friend I skived with last week, he's on all my lunches, apart from	
	1165	next Thursday actually, at least if it's week two I think it's next	
Incidental social benefits of	1166	Thursday... But he's on all my lunches, so we get to chill and hang	
school as a positive	1167	out and stuff and it's actually pretty fun. But if there was no school,	Social benefits of school
	1168	there wouldn't be any of that. So, it's... I don't know. It's weird.	But - if this was aim, it wouldn't work
	1169	Like, school is more of, for me, school would be better as a social	for him. Social benefit has to be
	1170	event, but, you know... I wouldn't mind like sitting with Matt talking	incidental, otherwise he'd be even
Self as socially rejected by	1171	for a few hours, but then if it was a social event I'd probably be more	more marginalised
majority/mainstream	1172	outcasted than I have been within the past. However long it's been,	Effects of his own behaviour on others
	1173	eleven years I guess, probably more than that. But I've always	and on his social inclusion - wants to
	1174	been outcasted, so, so... Having people that care is nice, so I	retain *'people that care'* in his life
	1175	thought it was better to show my appreciation than to be a dick, and	
	1176	like dwell on bad stuff. I still dwell on bad stuff, I just kind of like, I	
	1177	be nicer to people, but...	
	1178		
	1179	*That's clearly a really important part of your life, though, isn't it - that*	
	1180	*social world, and supporting one another?*	
	1181		
	1182	Yeah. I'm a very big, I'm very big on humanism, I guess it's called,	
	1183	where like... Are you familiar with that term? I've heard people say	
Value of cooperation between	1184	it but I think it's like to do with how... the way you believe the world	Values - working cooperatively with
individuals	1185		others, mutual help/support
Wider values system - mutual		should work is like people, like, together working, rather than	

support/cooperation	1186 1187 1188	anything else. I'm big, I'm big on that, like, just supporting other people and having other people support me as well. It's nice when people support you but it's, it feels nicer, er, to give something than	Rather give than take
Value of giving to others	1189 1190	to take something, because I've found that if I take something, it's er, like... If I, if I take possession of something, like, as a gift of	Wants to maintain positive impression on me!
Self as good/moral Impression management	1191 1192 1193	course - I'm not going to steal anything, don't worry - er, if I receive a gift from someone, and it's like, the thing that's important to me would be, er, who it's from, not what it is. So, like, someone wrote	Values the person rather than the material item - people are important to him
Value of people/friendships over material goods	1194 1195 1196 1197 1198 1199	me a card, and then they also had, like, five, er, My Chemical Romance quotes that are actually stuck up on my wall, and they sent it me for my birthday. That person is also one of the people that I'm trying to figure out how to deal with, but like, they, they are pretty awesome, and like, er, it feels nice to have it stuck on my wall because it's important to keep those quotes in mind, and the fact	*Repetition - emphasis*
Value of others, value of positive relationships	1200 1201 1202	that like, erm, like... Like I said, it's, er, it's more about who it's from than what it is.	
	1203	*Yeah...*	
	1204 1205 1206 1207	Because if I think about what it is, after a while I'd be like, "Oh, it's just a thing," it's, it's how people's brains work, it's more like you get something, it's the first time you get it you'll be like, "Oh, that's	More about brains - physical brain constructed as responsible for behaviour etc. (see above)
Physical brain as responsible for behaviour - lack of conscious control	1208 1209 1210	awesome," but then after a while the hype, I guess you could call it, it's what people usually use for games, it'll die down, and everything will be less of quality. And that's... I don't like it, but it's just how it	*Repetition of this phrase numerous times* - resigned to inevitability of some situations
Inevitability of human nature	1211 1212 1213	is, and I hate it. It's, er, it feels, but it feels better to give someone something, I think, like... it's nice to take things as well because it's like a memento, kind of thing, but it's nice to give things because,	Happiness created by receipt of material gifts - shallow, short-term and unsatisfying?
'Real' happiness as deriving from social relationships rather than material goods	1214 1215 1216	you know, it makes people happy, so... even if it is just false happiness, I, I'm still happy with it, as long as they're at least somewhat happy, then I'm fine.	
	1217		
	1218 1219	*Yeah, yeah. You can feel good about that, that you've made them happy.*	
	1220		
	1221	Yeah.	Awareness of others' possible perspectives on his situation? Or at

	1222		least the existence of other perspectives
	1223	*Ok, ok. Is there anything else that you feel, erm, I've not asked you*	
	1224	*about that you, that you think is, er, relevant, that you'd like to talk*	
	1225	*about?*	
	1226		Sets himself apart from his peers again
	1227	Hmmm, erm... Well, in terms of school, 'cos this thing is about	- reinforces this point
	1228	school - I completely forgot! (both laugh) - erm, I think that what you	
	1229	could have said is something to do with how other people see it.	
	1230		
	1231	*Oh yeah?*	Sees self as *'intelligent'* - I think he
Self as more insightful/	1232		would define this as thoughtful and
thoughtful than peers	1233	...But that only works for me because I've actually been thinking	insightful, rather than necessarily to do
	1234	about this, whereas other people might not...	with academic attainment (my
	1235		assumption?)
	1236	*Ok.*	Variation in different people, their
Self as superior in intelligence	1237		experiences and their response to
	1238	...Might not actually think about this. You know, other people who	these
	1239	have a lot of time off school might not be as intelligent, either that or	
Individual experiences and	1240	they just don't show it. But, er, I think it depends on the personality	
personalities as diverse	1241	of the person why they have a thing off school. I don't think it's	
	1242	always... I don't think it's always going to be one thing, 'cos there is	
	1243	so much at school that can be bad.	
	1244		
	1245	*Yeah...*	
	1246		
	1247	And, like, depending on the person, it'll be different as to why they	The 'other' - sets self apart from them
	1248	take days off.	
	1249		
	1250	*Hmmm, yeah, definitely.*	
Self as distinct from 'other'	1251		
social groups	1252	So, like, I was thinking about that a lot, but, like, there are a lot of	
	1253	people I know that, like, go out the school to smoke or something	
	1254	like that. I don't particularly like those people but I know them from	
	1255	sitting in isolation with them. They're quite annoying actually.	
	1256		
Dislike of the 'other'	1257		*Referring to other as 'child' -*
		Right...	*demeaning, setting himself above*

	1258		*them in status - his knowledge of this person is positioned as being in line with teacher's view*
Desire to avoid attention	1259 1260 1261 1262 1263 1264	Yeah. The kind of people that I hate is like annoying people that draw attention to themselves. But that's actually kind of a good thing, 'cos if they draw attention to themselves, chances are all the attention's going to be on them rather than me, and I prefer if I don't have any attention on me. So, like, unless they come over and start drawing attention to me, then, you know, but... I sat next to	
Self as above peers - more mature/superior Self as being in line with adult views of peers?	1265 1266 1267 1268 1269 1270 1271	someone in Maths who stabbed me in the arm with a ruler, like, there, and it bled a little actually. But, like, I didn't tell the teacher 'cos I just couldn't be arsed, I didn't think it was worth it, 'cos I sort of hate the person but... So I... So, a few lessons later I just asked, "Could I move a room away from this child?" and she's just like, "Sure." Like, she knows, she knows he's an arsehole, so it was fine...	Categorising others - 'othering' them, setting them apart from himself and from each other, sees members of outgroup as homogeneous, not as individuals
'Others'/outgroup as distinct but homogeneous entities	1272 1273 1274	*Right...*	
Others as categories, not individuals Self as above/separate from majority social hierarchies	1275 1276 1277 1278 1279 1280 1281 1282 1283	Yeah (both laugh). Like, I hate attention-seekers and I hate sheep. Attention-seekers draw attention to themselves and sheep follow the people who draw attention to themselves, and then draw attention to themselves as a group. But then there's also the kind of people that would also bully other people, and it's the same, it's the same kind of group of people, so, I... Hmm. I forgot what the point was here. Or I just started talking. It's, it's kind of what happens with everything actually, I just started talking, as... but, like...	Slight misunderstanding of my research?
	1284 1285	*It's alright...*	Which other people? What they think about his situation or about their own situations?
	1286 1287	You're going to have a lot to write up!	
	1288 1289 1290 1291 1292 1293	*I know! (Both laugh) You were talking about... I said to you, erm, was there anything else that, perhaps, I should have asked you, or that, you know, that you'd like to talk about, and you said, erm, you said something about what other people think of the situation...*	Sees some others as having similar experience to his own
		Yeah...	Even the outgroup may have similar

Importance of others' views	1294		experiences to his own - absence from school is a response to stress, although in part they handle it differently (i.e. by smoking a lot)
	1295	*And how different people can have very different reasons for not*	
	1296	*being in school.*	
	1297		
	1298	Yeah, that... I think that would actually be an important factor in	
	1299	what you're doing here, because, like, I don't know if you can add	
	1300	questions onto it or not, but I think it would be really important to	
	1301	have that because it's important to know what other people think on	
Stress as universal experience	1302	the subject rather than, like, what, er, rather than just what one	School as a negative thing, but can't really articulate this
	1303	person thinks, rather have what one person thinks about what other	
Parallels between own and	1304	people think. What I... What I think about what other people think is	
others' school experiences	1305	usually just that, like, for some people they think it's cool, for some	
	1306	people like, like me, it's just because of stress and they don't want	
	1307	to deal with it, er, but then... Thinking about it, actually, the people I	
Inevitability of school-related	1308	hate, the attention-seekers who, like, smoke and do that kind of	
stress	1309	crap, er, they could have the same reason for going off school, they	
	1310	just do it more often 'cos they're heavy smokers so they smoke a	
	1311	lot. But, er, I think they, I think their reason could also be that it's	
	1312	just stressful, and I think.. I don't know how to change that in	
	1313	school, I think it's always going to be stressful. I don't think it can be	School constructed principally as a source of stress (again - see earlier)
	1314	dealt with unless you, like, you, er, you make the school, like... I	
	1315	don't know how to put this in words that, like, words that are nice	
Whole institution of school as a	1316	words...	
negative thing	1317		
	1318	*Any words will do, it's ok...*	
	1319		
	1320	Oh... (laughs) Well, if you, like, just pussify the school, basically, so	
	1321	like... I, I... You know what, upon saying that word I don't think I	*Acknowledges repetition of 'stressed'*
	1322	know what it means either... But, like, it's the word I want to use, so	*Constructs stress as 'sickness'*
School as source of stress	1323	I'm using it.	
Impact of sanctions - effective	1324		Acknowledges commonality of
to a point?	1325	*Ok...*	experience, but continues to distance
	1326		himself from others - they're *'just so*
	1327	But, like, if you make the school, er, less stressful and that, just by,	*stupid'* therefore express their
	1328	er, erm, I don't know, like... I would say like giving out less	experience differently
	1329		Universal experience
		punishments, but then also that could be bad because it'd make	

Left annotations	Line	Transcript	Right annotations
	1330	people do it more. But, it's, it's still the thing where school for	
	1331	everyone is always going to be stressful at some point or another,	Stress resulting from belief that present-day actions will have far-reaching consequences - importance of school for future life
	1332	like, I don't think there's anyone that's never had a day off school.	
	1333		
Stress viewed as 'sickness'	1334	*Oh, no.*	
	1335		
	1336	Like, everyone's going to have a day off school at one point or	Inescapable/inevitable - can't avoid his actions having future consequences
	1337	another. But, like, some people are just sick, others are actually like	
Different (inferior?) ways of	1338	sick in terms of stressed, and like - I keep using 'stressed', but like -	Motivation to learn from himself rather than be told by others
stress manifesting/being	1339	sort of, just one word to use for everything, but like... I think, I think	
expressed	1340	the people - the attention-seekers that I was talking about - I think	Stress because school is constructed
Outgroup as inferior to self	1341	they probably are stressed at school, they just explain it differently,	as so important
	1342	because they're just, they're just so stupid! Really. And it's, it's all	Those who don't care about this
	1343	annoying, that, like, when you actually sit and listen to them it just	wouldn't attend at all, so they must
Inevitability of school-related	1344	sounds like, er, school, for whatever reason, makes them stressed	care to some extent
stress for everyone	1345	out. That's just how it is with everyone. I don't know why it is, but I	Making direct link between school and
Imposition of others' values	1346	am also stressed out by school. It could be that school is such an	future job
Stress as result of inevitability	1347	important part of life that, like... At a very young age you're told that	
of consequences of actions	1348	everything you do now will have consequences in the future, and	*Emphasis - repetition of key points*
Internalisation of others' values	1349	when you're a child you don't want to be told that. It took, it took me	*above*
	1350	three years since I was told that to learn that everything I do has	
	1351	consequences. I learnt, I learnt that not so long ago, that, like,	Others are less able to learn for
Self as independent learner,	1352	everything I do will have consequences, no matter what I do, as	themselves than he is
rather than wanting to be told	1353	long as... Well, depending actually, because, like, I can get away	
Stress as result of future	1354	with some stuff, obviously, but like... Everything I do will have	
consequences of what	1355	consequences, good or bad, either way, stuff's going to happen, no	*Positions himself as passive rather*
happens at school	1356	matter what. But I think it's better to learn that on your own than to,	*than actively choosing, to an extent*
Self and others as caring about	1357	er, than to be told it. Because I was told it at like eleven or twelve or	Commonality of experience highlighted
future	1358	something, like, really young like that, so, for me, for me it's just	again, even though the smokers are
	1359	always been like, "Oh, this is really important," but it's actually	the 'other', the homogeneous outgroup
	1360	important, so it just gets me stressed. And, like, for people who say	
	1361	they don't care, like, if they didn't care then they wouldn't go to	
Stress as a result of the	1362	school non-stop. But they obviously do care to some degree about	
importance of school for future	1363	what job they're going to get in the future, and that's just how it is	Further reinforcing 'othering'
life	1364	really, like... My point there was, like, school's stressful for	
	1365		
Self as more mature than		everyone. Don't know why it is, but it's stressful, probably	

peers, more able to learn	1366	something to do with the fact that it's so important in your life, and,	
Inevitability of missing school - self as passive	1367	like, at a young age you're told everything you're going to do has	
	1368	consequences. Now, I'd rather be, I'd rather learn it, but then	
'Getting away with it'	1369	there's people who take longer to grow up than I have done, which,	
Commonality of experience between self and outgroup	1370	it's, er, it's sad, but it's sort of just how it is, like, some people, some	
	1371	people will change, some people won't. And, you know, I, I know, I	
	1372	don't think there's any way of getting around, er, the fact that I take	
	1373	days off school since... Since it's first started happening I know	School's sanctions are ineffective for him - not actually a punishment or deterrent
	1374	there are many, many ways to get away with it. I'm sort of just fine	
	1375	with doing it. So, like, I dunno, it's... I guess that also works for the,	
Self as different from many other groups	1376	the smokers and that as well.	
	1377		Lack of agency - inevitable - *'human nature'*
	1378	*Yeah?*	
	1379		
	1380	I don't know what else to call them, they're just people that I hate,	
'Getting away with it' as reinforcement for behaviour	1381	like, put those in a list...	*Ditto*
	1382		
	1383	*Yeah*	
	1384		
	1385	Er, but like, I think it works for them as well where, like, they get to a	Theory relating to inescapability of human nature, inevitable response to 'getting away with' things
	1386	point where, er, they know they can get away with it so they keep	
Ineffectiveness of school sanctions systems	1387	doing it.	
	1388		
	1389	*Yeah*	
Behaviour as inevitable result of 'getting away with it', lack of personal agency	1390		*'Stress' is externalised - an ever-present reality*
	1391	Even if they get isolation, like, I don't care about isolation! They put	
	1392	you in a room for a day, that's a good thing, depending on who's in	Behaviourist theory - behaviour is reinforced by not suffering undesirable consequences, therefore behaviour increases
	1393	the room. But, erm, yeah, it's, it's... I think, like, when people know	
	1394	- I think this is just people, just in human nature - when people	
	1395	know, or at least think they can get away with something, they'll try	
	1396	doing that something they can get away with. And I don't like it, but	
	1397	it's just how it is, and it's not... I dunno, like, when... I think it goes	
Human nature as inescapable	1398	with, er, when people don't think there will be consequences, then	Lack of physical barriers - need for these?
	1399	they'll do something, like, everyone will do that, like, they'll do	
	1400	something with less consequences or something with	
	1401		*Repetition - no barrier at all*
		consequences in their favour. And that's just how people are. It's	

	1402	like, yeah, that's my point, like... I think I've probably got a good, I guess I could call it a theory, there.	*Repetition*
Stress as ever-present	1403		
Avoidance behaviour reinforced by 'getting away with it'	1404		*Repetition - lack of barriers*
	1405	*Yes...*	
	1406		
	1407	'Cos stress and everything builds up, and then since some people know they can get away with something, they do it. And now there are people that have gotten away with it, they would do it more often.	
	1408		
	1409		
	1410		
Lack of physical barriers to leaving school site	1411		
	1412	*Yeah...*	Acknowledges the others are not all one big group, they're all different, smaller, social groups
	1413		
	1414	And it's not, er, I don't know how to fix that, because, because I know that, like... 'cos my school, you can just walk out of it. Like, they say, they say you can't - I think that's because they're legally supposed to say that - but you can, you can totally just walk out of the school. And most of the time, chances are, there's no-one down there, so you can just walk out of school and just... 'Cos it's right next to town as well, so you can go into Co-op and like buy Monster energy drinks or something, and just chill down the park or whatever, like. You can do stuff like that easily. I do that a lot, like, I do it a lot at lunch time, because, like, what you'll notice if you actually go to our school - the start of lunchtime, the start of any lunchtime, there will be a huge crowd of people walking down the way down town. 'Cos there's like, there's two ways, there's a way that's like the main road, or at least leading up to the main road that goes to the left, and there's a graveyard, and then there's a driveway up to the school with a car park at the front of the school. People walk down that driveway but at the start of lunch there's a huge, huge group of people that just walks down, and they're all like, they're not all one group, they're all like different people, and it's, it's weird because everyone thinks, everyone seems to think that they're so different from everyone else, but when you actually look into why, or at least when I've looked into why, you can actually see that they're not really that different. Just sort of a few, a few	But they're not actually that different - despite membership of different social groups they're mostly quite similar. Unlike him?
Ease of leaving site and 'getting away with it' as reinforcement of behaviour	1415		
	1416		
	1417		
	1418		
	1419		
	1420		*'I've looked into why' - casts self as overseeing situation, having over-arching understanding of peers from a superior, objective position?*
	1421		
	1422		
	1423		
	1424		
	1425		*Constructs individual differences as result of upbringing and prior experience, not as personal choice*
	1426		
	1427		
	1428		
Other social groups as largely homogeneous	1429		
	1430		
	1431		
	1432		
	1433		
Individual differences as result of upbringing/specific life experiences	1434		Mostly empiricist construction of personality development
	1435		
	1436		
	1437		
Self as malleable in response		things happened in their life that made them a little bit different,	Being 'outcasted' is key to his

to life experiences	1438	like... I've actually thought about this as well - some people that I	experience and consequently his
	1439	know are different from me, like some people that I care about, but	personality now
Impact of life experiences on	1440	they're only different in that... they are very much the same to me,	
personality and behaviour	1441	maybe that's because we all grew up almost the same way, but,	
	1442	like, basically... there's one person who was home-schooled for	
	1443	three years. The three years I would've been in St Peters. I	Centrality of experience of being
	1444	would've been more like them if I was home-schooled, if you know	'outcasted' - key part of his identity and
	1445	what I mean. And then there was someone who lives with... he's	the way he sees his own social group -
	1446	never known his Dad, right - I'd be more like him if I'd never known	sense of belonging and similarity with
	1447	my Dad. And so it's like, it's, er, it's one of those things where	these peers who have common
Impact of social exclusion on	1448	people aren't that different, but it's not... I think it's... I don't know if	experience
personality development	1449	it could be genetics, I think it's just the fact that, er, their	
	1450	surroundings are almost the same, so the way they're brought up is	*Repetition of empiricist position -*
	1451	almost the same as well, so since like, since we're all brought up	*emphasis*
	1452	almost the same way, we're actually quite the same, and since,	Doesn't want to assert something of
	1453	since we've all been outcasted, like, the way that we have been...	which he's not factually sure (see
Self as different and excluded	1454		earlier too)
from social mainstream	1455	*Outcasted?*	
Identity as 'outcast'	1456		
Sense of belonging within own	1457	Yeah, like, this, er... Not accepted by the common majority would	
small social group	1458	be a way to explain that. And the way we have been outcasted has	
	1459	made us almost the same, and there aren't that many differences	
	1460	from the group of friends that I hang around with at the moment.	
	1461	And I think the only thing that, like, er, that changes their personality	
	1462	is things that happen to them. Which is really weird to say because	
	1463	I'm... at least I think science is probably true when they talk about	
	1464	genetics and that, but I think that, like, people's personalities always	
	1465	depend on their surroundings and how they're brought up. And	
Key role of upbringing in	1466	since, since our little group are really, really similar, like, the ways	
shaping	1467	we've been brought up are really similar, we are... we're similar.	
personality/behavioural traits	1468	And we make, we have the same senses of humour... I don't know,	
	1469	I don't know how genetics work, so I'm not really too keen on saying	Wearing headphones a lot - is this to
	1470	this, but, like, we, we all, we all have traits that we share, not	do with shutting out the rest of the
	1471	because of, you know, our parents had them, but because this is	world? Isolating oneself?
	1472	how we was brought up, and we was all brought up almost the	
	1473		
		same, so it's sort of... just like one or two changes that could have	

	1474 made something different, like someone who is obsessed with being	
	1475 a cat, wearing cat ears, but then there is also another person who	
	1476 likes to draw cat faces on me, and also when we Skype I draw cat	
	1477 faces on me and she draws cat faces on herself. And it's quite fun	
	1478 to be a cat, but then... there's one, they both, like, er, one, er, one of	
	1479 them miaows when they're a cat, or when they're not a cat, one of	
	1480 them just miaows in general. But the other one doesn't. So, like,	
	1481 they... I don't know, like, I like... It's fun to draw cat faces on	Influence of context on behaviour, then behaviour leads to personality change/development
Deliberate isolation of self from others	1482 people, though, I will say that, it is very fun, even when people say	
	1483 no, it is very fun. But, like, I dunno, like, er, one of them, one of	
	1484 them who was home-schooled is one of those cat people, and she	Contrasts with 'sheep' description of others earlier
	1485 wears headphones a lot, which is probably to say that, like,	
	1486 something within that home schooling would have made me like	
	1487 that. I'm like that now, like I always... it's rare to find me without	
	1488 headphones on, because I use them so often, but like, er,	
	1489 something within that would have made the headphones thing	
	1490 more, er, happen more early on, and it's, it's like... that's just an	
	1491 example I came up with on the spot...	
	1492	
	1493 *Yeah...*	
	1494	Took this 'crowd' reference very literally! Another reference to anxiety?
Behaviour as agent for shaping personality (not vice versa)	1495 ...it's very hard to do that.	
	1496	
	1497 *Yeah.*	Maybe I should not have asked that - imposing my own sense-making on his situation?
Need to be individual rather than 'follow the crowd'	1498	
	1499 And it's just like, I dunno, people will act differently depending on	
	1500 their surroundings, and if they act differently they'll also become a	
Sense of belonging in small friendship group	1501 different person. I've, er, I've learned to act as I want rather than	Can't make sense of inherent contradiction?
Own social ingroup as 'different' from mainstream	1502 follow other people because I don't like following other people, I	
	1503 just... I don't know why I don't like doing it, I just don't like following	
	1504 other people, that's why, that's why our little group exists, because	Influence of school-related social experience on his own personality development
	1505 we don't like following other people, so we're going to follow	
	1506 nothing, and just be awesome together, I guess, I don't know, but...	
	1507	
Social anxiety - impact of crowds	1508 *That's something else you've got in common, then, not wanting to*	
	1509	
	just follow the crowd?	

Social experience of school as positive influence on life and personality development (contradiction with view of school in general)	1510 1511 1512 1513 1514 1515 1516 1517 1518 1519 1520 1521 1522 1523 1524	Yeah, that is awesome actually. Yeah. I don't like crowds either, they make me want to throw up (laughs). Oops. *Sounds like you've got a good group of friends, though... That's a positive, isn't it, in school?* Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Like, the weird thing is, though, if there was no school, none of that would exist. And... it makes my brain melt right now, because it's actually, it's actually really weird how that works, like if I, if I never went to school at all, if I was like home-schooled or something, I would have no friends and I would be a completely different person. *Yeah?...*	Sees a social benefit of school for himself, yet other aspects of school social experience cause him extreme anxiety Even thinking of the idea now is affecting his well-being in the present - high levels of anxiety Is very aware of own physiological response to these thoughts
Contradiction within social experience - anxiety but also importance of friendships Physiological response to anxiety	1525 1526 1527 1528 1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540 1541 1542 1543 1544 1545	And it sort of goes to show that school - as I said earlier, at some point - probably a few hours ago when I was ranting about something! (both laugh) - er, I probably, like... School is better as a social event because it gets people together. But since, like, I'm, I'm really awkward and that, especially around new people, and also big crowds make me want to throw up, especially in assembly, like... I've been told that I can go to the library instead of going to assembly because the teacher knows that it makes me want to throw up. I actually feel a little bad now because I'm thinking of a big crowd, of an assembly, like just the assembly room... But you're sort of, you're sort of forced to go to assembly, and I don't particularly like it, but... There's a point I was trying to make somewhere, and I don't know what I was talking about, 'cos like, now I feel sick! *Oh no... (both laugh)* I'm not going to throw up, at least I hope not. But... I've forgot what I was talking about actually. Er... *Before we got to assemblies?*	Struggling to expand on this?

	1546		Everyone will make friends, no matter how different they are - it's a basic need
	1547	Yeah.	
	1548		
	1549	*You were saying you can go to the library instead...*	*Repetition - emphasis*
	1550		
	1551	Yeah, before that...	
	1552		
	1553	*You were talking about your group of friends, and how it's like*	
	1554	*there's a bit of a, erm, a paradox, almost, isn't there, that school is*	
	1555	*so stressful and you don't want to be there, but at the same time*	
Paradoxical situation - hating school (stress) but its social experiences are central to life	1556	*you acknowledge that if it wasn't for school you wouldn't have those*	Expands on view of fundamental, universal human need for friendship, not being completely alone
	1557	*friends, you wouldn't have those experiences.*	
	1558		
	1559	Yeah. Yeah, that's the word I was looking for, paradox (both laugh).	
	1560	Yeah, er, it is definitely a, a paradox. Like, it's... it just, I don't know.	
	1561	But... I don't know. There's a lot of stuff I could say but my throat	Impact of not having this need met on personality
	1562	really hurts.	
Universal inevitability of making friends in school	1563		
	1564	*Ok, ok.*	
	1565		
Basic human need for friendship - self and others share this	1566	But, you know, it's just, it is very much a paradox. Like, school is,	
	1567	school is always going to be stressful, but no matter what you will	
	1568	always make friends at school. At least, if you don't, then there's	Is still struggling to make sense of this contradiction
	1569	something wrong in the paradox there. But I'm pretty sure I know	
	1570	people who have at least one friend, like you can't go... you can't go	
	1571	on your own for so long. Like, even if you've just got teachers that	Stress as a result of the importance of school for future - reiterated (see earlier)
	1572	are there for you. You can't go alone for so long. Like, we've been	
	1573	learning about, er, the book and movie - the movie's horrible - it was	
	1574	called 'Of Mice and Men'.	
	1575		
	1576	*Oh yeah?*	
Need for friendship to maintain positive personality/behaviour	1577		
	1578	And in that, they expand on how, how people get when they're	Attributes 'stress' to having to deal with this knowledge at an early age?
	1579	lonely. And I think that it's still, it still goes to show in nowadays	
Impact of loneliness	1580	times - I don't know when the book was written, so... But like, when	
	1581		
		people get lonely, they, they change. A lot. So like, some people	Physical brain constructed as reason

Universality of his own paradoxical experience	1582 1583 1584	get depressed, some people get, like, really horrible, and mean-spirited. So like... you can't go for so long being alone. You always have to have at least one friend that you've either made, or one	for the need to learn whilst young - physical constraints which are inevitable
Making sense of conflicting ideas	1585 1586 1587	person that you know that you can talk to, that's awesome. So, like, yeah, the paradox will probably always work, you'll never find, you'll never find a person that hasn't made a friend in their life because of	
	1588 1589	school. But, just, school is just really stressful, and it sort of... It messes with my head thinking about it like that, but it's sort of... I	Further explanation for why young people are mass-educated
School as most important factor in defining future life (this idea leading to stress)	1590 1591 1592 1593	guess it's just how it is, and I would like to change it, but I just don't know how to make school less stressful. If it wasn't as important as it is, then it would probably be, like, less stressful, because, like, it's the one thing that defines your future. Like, at least that's what	
Stress as the result of knowing long-term importance of school	1594 1595 1596	you're grown up to see it as, the one thing that defines your future. It probably isn't, there's probably things you can do when you're older to get stuff like that, but, like, they cost, and they're annoying	
Physical brain as agent of learning - inevitable physiological limitations	1597 1598 1599 1600 1601 1602 1603 1604 1605 1606	and stuff. But like, when you grow up, you seem to think that school is the one thing that defines your future. And, like, it's, it's really hard knowing that, especially when... when I was told, when I was like eleven, I was told that, so it was really hard for me to deal with that at the time. Because I couldn't, like, I couldn't understand why I had to do it at such a young age. Now I understand, because like your brain stops growing at the age of 21 or something like that, doesn't it? There's an age you get to where your brain stops growing?	Better not to think too hard about things? Is very reflective, very conscious of own thought processes
	1607 1608	*Possibly. I think it gets harder to learn as you get older, maybe.*	
	1609 1610 1611 1612	Yeah... I think it could be something to do with the fact that, like, when you're younger you can learn easier. Like, especially when you're a baby.	*'When you're a kid' - sees self as more than this now*
	1613 1614	*Oh yeah...*	
Conscious thought as barrier to easy learning	1615 1616 1617	You learn stuff, and because you don't think about it you learn a lot faster. And I think that, that could be a good, er, could be good advice, for like, erm, if you want to learn something just don't think	

Self as a learner impaired by too much conscious thought?	1618 1619 1620 1621 1622 1623 1624 1625	about it. But then, the thing is, as you get older you tend to think about things more. *Yeah, yeah.* And like, like trying to learn another language is a good example. It's very hard because you have to think of it in English, then think of what it is translated, and then you have to say it, correctly	Reiteration of the empiricist construction of personality. School has limited intended function - merely to provide qualifications. (Social function, previously discussed, is incidental?)
Self as mature, adult	1626 1627 1628 1629 1630 1631 1632 1633 1634 1635 1636 1637	translated, and if it isn't translated correctly you have to re-translate it, and it's, it's very hard, but... *A lot of thought goes into the process...* Yeah, yeah. But when you're a kid you sort of just like... er, since you're brought up to learn those two languages, it's, er, it's sort of just normal to you. It's, it's very weird. *Yeah. Much easier for young kids to learn a second language, isn't it?*	
School as secondary to home environment in shaping personality	1638 1639 1640 1641 1642 1643 1644 1645 1646 1647 1648 1649 1650	Yeah, it's...(pause) *It becomes more conscious when you're older...* Yes. It's... Everything has a lot to do with how you're brought up, I guess. Like, how you are brought up defines what person you're going to be, not... not school. School is there to provide you with the qualifications. I think that the way you grow up changes what person you're going to be, what future you're going to have. So I think that, er, I, I probably... I probably will feel bad saying this, because if I say this then I'd probably get my Mum into some crap, but like, just.. I was going to say something about dealing with parents differently.	Importance of parental influence on children's development - part of empiricist view of individual differences, personality development Attributions for influences on own development - *centrality of being 'outcasted'* - leading to independent thinking and early maturity
Importance of parenting	1651 1652 1653	 *Oh yeah?* And like, er, when the parents have the child, have them treat it	Inevitability

	1654	properly, instead of... It'd probably be hard to do that, 'cos it's	
Importance of very early life in shaping future personality	1655	something like two people born every day and one person dies	*Repetition of this point again* - as though learning about the importance
	1656	every day, or something like that. But I think that, that was the	of school was a one-off event which
	1657	equation for like world population or something like that. Two born,	has affected him a great deal, but an
	1658	one death, every day. At least that's what I learned when I was in	event which was inevitable?
Direct impact of parenting on personality and thinking	1659	like Year 7, so... I remember that for whatever reason, but like... I	
	1660	think parents should deal with their child better when the child is	
Independent thought and maturity as direct result of social rejection	1661	younger, because the way the child is brought up changes	
	1662	everything, the way they view things. I think you'll get to... everyone	
	1663	will get to a certain age where they will grow up and they'll think	
	1664	differently, or at least I think so anyway. But, it's different for	
External locus of control - inevitability of life not being easy	1665	everyone because they're all brought up differently. So, er, the way	
	1666	I've, like, the way I've changed within growing up, being outcasted	
	1667	and such, I've learnt to have more independent thought, which is	
	1668	why I grew up so early, at like 14, 15 probably. But I didn't grow up	Believes in importance of early
	1669	as much as I have done now, but back then I did, like, I did learn a	life/early upbringing (- is it too late for
	1670	lot more, and it was, I dunno, it was less... Obviously back then I	him now?)
Stress as result of burden of knowledge (at young age)	1671	knew less, but like... Back then is when I started to realise, like, life	
	1672	isn't easy, and anything I do will not change that.	
	1673		
	1674	*Mmm, sure.*	Advocating state control over parenting?
Inevitability of stress as result of knowledge	1675		But acknowledges the inherent
	1676	So, like, just... I had to learn at such a young age, which also made	difficulty of ensuring uniform
	1677	me deal with more stress, but I sort of since then have learnt I just	upbringings for all children
	1678	have to deal with it, there's no other way to, like, change it. You just	He thinks others don't think this is
	1679	have to deal with it and that's just how it is. I don't want it to be like	important - he thinks they're mistaken
	1680	that, I really don't, but that's just how it is and it's horrible. But, like, I	Advocating universal state control of
	1681	just... I was going on about how, er, parents should... (Interrupted by	parenting. Not individual responsibility
	1682	clock chimes)	- external policing
	1683		
	1684	You see why that gets on my nerves?	Thinks this is a good system, but he
Parents as irresponsible	1685		personally would hate it - it's for others,
	1686	*Yeah (both laugh)*	not for him
	1687		Referred earlier to peer as 'child' but
	1688	I was saying about how, like, er, parents should, erm, deal with their	not seeing self as the same
	1689		
		children better when the child is first born.	

Codes	Line	Transcript	Notes
Parents as being in need of guidance/oversight	1690 1691 1692	*Mmm...*	*Repetition - emphasis of importance of early life*
Experiential commonalities between adults and himself	1693 1694	And I think if you could get, if you could do that, like if you could actually change how people are with their children - it would be very,	
Importance of early life experiences	1695 1696 1697	it would be very hard to do because, er, because of people's upbringings, everyone's different because of their upbringing - even parents, that's just how everything is - er, I think if people would	
Parents as needing state supervision/monitoring - not to be automatically trusted with responsibility	1698 1699 1700 1701	slowly look after their children better when they're first born, rather than later in their life when they think it's supposed to matter... so I think that, like, when people are really young they should have better parents, and, like, maybe there should be a way, someone	*'If they started doing that'... Casts this as the state's responsibility. External locus of control again in this situation*
Conflict - need to ensure good parenting vs. individual privacy	1702 1703	make sure the kid's ok, without like having, er, without having erm, someone actually call and say there's a problem. Rather have	
Self as more than a child, above peers	1704 1705 1706	someone check in, or something like that. It... I'd probably hate to have that, because like, er, you know, I think after a while, or at least if I have a child, I'd probably think that it's very against privacy	
	1707 1708	because I, I hate children, obviously, but like, I don't, er, I don't think, erm, I don't... I hate children, but I think that if someone came to my	
Importance of early life	1709 1710 1711	door like every week or so I'd probably get a bit annoyed and that. But it's not, er... I think if there was a way to get parents to see things differently, to treat their children better, not, not just like, erm,	
	1712 1713 1714	child helplines or anything like that, because they'd be too young to know that. Rather when the baby's first born they have to make sure that the baby's being treated right. I think if there was a way to	*Focus on 'control', 'rules'*
	1715 1716	do that for every child eventually they won't have to do that and then the parents will look after the child the way they've been brought up.	Recognises the contradiction - he personally wouldn't want his suggested system
Overseeing parenting quality as the responsibility of the state ('they'), not individuals	1717 1718 1719	*Yeah*	I wonder what specific treatment he has in mind
	1720 1721	And then eventually everyone will be better, but it would probably take quite a few generations for that to happen. But, if they started	
Personal desire to have positive impact on society	1722 1723 1724 1725	doing that, slowly it would happen. And if stuff I say here actually matters, and this stuff does actually happen, and like, you know, parents get better at treating their kids, I'd be a little bit happier	
		because then, like, my, my actions would have consequences, good	

	1726	consequences.	
Need for control and rules relating to parenting	1727		
	1728	*Yeah...*	
	1729		
	1730	But it would take a long time and a lot of dedication, but then, since	
	1731	it would take generations, it would also have to take, er, I don't know	
Self as outside of proposed state system - not part of mainstream society	1732	how they'd do that across the generations, they'd have to, like, keep	
	1733	the same rules enforced if, like, someone in control dies they'd have	
	1734	to get a new person who also abides by these rules, the rules of,	
	1735	you know, looking after the children properly, but like... I, I think	
	1736	after saying this, and if this does actually happen, like if, if this does	Feels pleased with himself - has created an idea he thinks would improve society
	1737	actually happen, I probably won't have children because I like my	
Motivation/purpose - universal happiness	1738	privacy, obviously, so like... the... I dunno, it's... I think if there was	
	1739	a way to make parents just be good to their child and treat it well...	
	1740		
	1741	*Yeah...*	
	1742		
	1743	Like, I think if that happened, everyone would be happy and	External locus of control highlighted - parents control their children's personalities.
	1744	eventually everyone would be happy. And then, like, after	
	1745	generations, people will just naturally be like that, and, er, it's, it's,	
	1746	I'm glad we... I hope we have this recorded, I hope the recorder	Role of school is expanded slightly here, to include providing social opportunities (see earlier) alongside education/qualifications.
	1747	thingy's working...	
	1748		
	1749	*Yep, still going...*	
	1750		
	1751	Yeah, I just hope you actually, like, started recording at the start of	
	1752	this, because...	
	1753		
	1754	*Yeah*	
Self as competent thinker	1755		Greater social good?
	1756	...I just had an amazing thought process about that, and it's like,	
	1757	and, it goes to show, because I am actually really tired and I feel like	
	1758	I'm going to fall asleep right now, but I'm having an amazing thought	
	1759	process that, like, that I just had, that I just said. And it's, I dunno,	
	1760	it's nice to have good thoughts...	
	1761		
Child as lacking agency/control		*Yeah...*	

Parents as controlling children's personality development	1762 1763 1764 1765 1766 1767 1768	And just, like, what was I saying? Just like... don't... I dunno. There should be a way that, er, that, so that they make sure that parents treat their kids right. Because everything that a child does is up to their parents. It's usually not the school - the school is just there to provide social and, er, education and also qualifications, I think that goes into education. Erm, yeah, social and education.	TV as another external controller of thinking/behaviour
School as responsible for providing education and social opportunities/development			
	1769 1770 1771 1772 1773 1774 1775 1776 1777 1778 1779	The parents, the way they bring up their child, determines their personality. At least I think, anyway. If I'm wrong then, then, I guess, I dunno, but like if, if parents treat their kids right, the kids are going to treat everyone else right. Kids treat everyone else right, kids grow up treating everyone else right, parents, who were the kids, grow up to be parents, have kids, they treat their kids right, and then those kids go on and treat everyone else right, and stuff like that. And I think, I think that could also stop, maybe - maybe not - but it could potentially stop some crimes of at least younger children.	Role of parents in allowing children to be exposed to TV *'That's not supposed to be'/'that's not right'... implies objective 'right/wrong'/appropriateness of TV content*
Knock-on effect of behaviour from one person to the next			
Individuals as vulnerable to manipulation by social forces	1780 1781	*Yeah?*	*Cynical view of media motivation*
	1782 1783 1784 1785 1786 1787 1788 1789	That would probably be my best bet. If anything happens, probably stopping a few crimes from younger children, like smoking and that. But, you know, there's also the fact that, erm, er... There are ways TV can make people think differently about things. That's why I hate TV, 'cos most of the time they, they, like, er, there's... there's a huge rant I could go on about TV, like, about how... they just make people think the way they want them to think because they want money, and that's just how, it's just how everything's getting to be,	Limited experience of what else children/young people might do with their time
Need for parents to set boundaries for children	1790 1791 1792 1793 1794 1795 1796 1797	even, er, even gaming has got like that. Like, especially with the new consoles, they tell... The PS4 said it's like getting a new gaming computer. It's actually horrible, because, like, gaming computers are like thousands of pounds whereas the PS4 is £400. There's a bit of a difference there in terms of money and quality, but it's, like... I think a lot of things could also be to do with the fact that, like, children, their bringing up, it's mostly to do with the parents, a lot to do with the parents, but I think if the parents are really lenient	Recognises inherent contradiction
Children as vulnerable/passive - needing protection from malevolent social forces			

Conflict between belief in a need for social control but not wanting to advocate censorship	1798 1799 1800 1801 1802 1803 1804 1805 1806 1807 1808 1809	then the kid could like watch TV and get stuff into their brain that's not supposed to be, or at least that's not right, anyway. So, there's also, erm, corporations and stuff like that that just want money and they say stuff that they want to say because they can say it, not because it's right or anything, just because they can say it. And if kids get that into their heads by just sitting and watching TV, rather than... I don't know what else they'd do... hmmm. It'd probably be better to, like, make TV a lot better rather than like the crap that it is, most of it anyway. *Yeah (both laugh).*	Sees 'control' here as a negative Advocating more state media control, to prevent children being exposed to inappropriate material Freedom for him, but for him to have his ideal world, others need to lose freedoms
'Control' as a negative force	1810 1811 1812 1813 1814 1815 1816 1817 1818 1819 1820 1821 1822	So like, I think if there was more control over everything and there was less, like... If everything had more control, but not control, like... Just control to stop nonsense - I think that kind of control is ok, but if it's too much control, like most... I think the American government is very, er, money-heavy, let's just say, a lot of governments are like that, where they just... all they can think about is money, and their fricking... their jobs that they don't even deserve because they don't even run fricking countries right... But, like, I think the way I'm describing, the way I was describing, like, people should treat kids better, I think that's how it should be. *Yeah.*	Children ready to learn - parents responsible for controlling what they access and what they see
'Control' as threat to individual freedom Freedom as a dialectic	1823 1824 1825 1826 1827 1828 1829 1830 1831 1832 1833	And, like, with, with TV and corporations and everything else, like, everything that is also controlling the world, that could also change a kid's mind because, like, people don't think about what they're saying when they say it. And then some kid could see it and think that it's right, or it's wrong, or whatever, and then they could act upon it. And that's not a good thing. I think there should be more control, only control with like, er... I don't know what kind of control you call it, it's... I don't, I don't like control, I really don't, because it like stops me from doing stuff. I want freedom. But I also want, like, children to be better, that I think that, I think that if, if everyone... If everything was to change for children to be able to grow up better,	

Children as blank slates, passive absorbers of information	1834 1835 1836 1837 1838 1839 1840 1841 1842 1843 1844 1845 1846 1847 1848 1849 1850	or at least if parents could, like, stop them from watching stupid stuff on TV when they're, like, kids, or like stop them from playing video games or something, or something like that, I really don't know, because I grew up playing video games and that's just how I've learnt to do stuff. Like, the one form of entertainment is mostly video games and/or YouTube, but like, it's just that kids, kids can learn anything, and if parents are really lenient and let them play 18-plus games, like my parents let me when I was a child, I... they probably learn some bad stuff. I, I probably wasn't a stupid child, so... Or at least not that stupid so as to try one of those things, 'cos like, you know, it's a stupid idea to try one of those things... *What, you mean to try out something you've seen on a video game?* Yeah	Still reluctant to advocate for parental control of children, but sees this as a wider social good - regrettable but necessary?
	1851 1852	*Yeah*	Highlights the contradiction again
Control as leading to greater social good, despite discomfort	1853 1854 1855 1856 1857	Like, a good example would be Payday 2, robbing banks and setting things on fire. *Yeah...*	There is a 'correct' way of thinking which is reached on gaining sufficient maturity But would he mind? Yes.
Children as passive and malleable to other social influences besides parents Children's freedom outside the home	1858 1859 1860 1861 1862 1863 1864 1865 1866 1867 1868	Like, that would probably be a bad idea. Like, I think if parents actually controlled their children better... I hate to say it, but it would probably make everything better. But then there's also the fact that children, when they go off to school, they have more freedom than parents seem to think. So, like... This does actually quite, this does crush my theory quite a bit, because it's like... Children go out, to school, with friends, or people or whatever, they meet people, who know how to do things that you're not allowed to do, like something stupid off the top of my head would be probably smoke weed or something... A child would probably do it, just to try it, because like it's one of those things where when else am I going to be able to	Contradiction again, setting himself apart from others, from a hypothetical population (*'the children'*).
Importance of children's own feelings	1869	smoke weed? Like, so they do it, right, and then after a while, if	

Codes	Line	Transcript	Notes
'Correct' way of thinking/being	1870 1871 1872 1873 1874 1875 1876 1877 1878 1879 1880 1881 1882 1883 1884 1885	things go bad, they probably get addicted to it and want more and more, that's just how drugs are. But I say, I say I want parents to control their children, but it's very hard to do that because, without hurting the child's feelings, because like... er, I dunno, it's... it's a weird one, because I hate, I hate being controlled-slash-spied on by my parents, but like... I think if the children are grown up to think correctly they shouldn't have a problem with being spied on because, like, they're not doing anything bad. *Hmmm...* So, like... *You think it'd be worth it, then? Would the pay-off be worth it?* Yeah. But it would be very hard to get some people to do that.	Some reluctance to support fully legal intervention? *'or some crap like that' - devaluing legal process, but arguing for its use nevertheless* Parents under-estimate children's knowledge, experience and freedom away from the home
Society as dysfunctional	1886 1887	 *Yeah.*	
Legal powers to enforce parenting standards (although dismissive of law) Children more knowledgeable/experienced than parents think	1888 1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895 1896 1897 1898 1899 1900 1901	 Like, especially at the stage society's in now, when it's like everything's as, like, messed up as it is already, like, just... There should be more control with parents, and if parents can't control their children, then the parents should probably get prosecuted or some crap like that, I really don't know, but like, I think if there was more control with children, and around children, then it would be a lot better. The thing is, people say that, like, the world now, or at least most, most things now are oriented around children - they're really not. Either that or just, like, they're not trying that hard to be oriented around children. Like, if people say, "Oh, don't swear in front of children," yet children already know those swear words, and what they mean, because of friends.	Attempt to by-pass the contradiction - he wasn't brought up this way, so it's not for him, but it's for others from birth, starting now/in the future. Inevitability of this - out of anyone's control Even though this has caused him a lot of stress?
Self as separate from proposed system	1902 1903 1904 1905	*Yeah* But, like, it's, it's just... I say I want control with children, but I hate being controlled.	Actions in terms of behaviour, rather than learning at school

	1906		Direct impact on his own life - if his own parents had been more 'controlling'?
	1907	*Hmmm.*	
	1908		
Inevitability of teenage rebellious phase	1909	But I think that if children were more controlled, since they were a baby, they wouldn't mind being controlled.	
	1910		
	1911		
	1912	*Maybe not.*	
	1913		
Importance of understanding consequences of actions	1914	But, like, when, when they grow up and get to my age, there is always going to be a rebellious stage in children, that's just how it is.	
	1915		
Importance of children being given enough knowledge to have agency	1916		
	1917	*Yeah, yeah*	
	1918		
Self as competent independent learner; others as needing explicit teaching	1919	Like, no matter what, there's always going to be that. So, like, I really don't know. I think children should be brought up to learn that their actions have consequences, I think they should learn it, er, eh... I think they should learn it when they're younger, because learning it on your own is a lot harder than, like... You being told it is different from being, from learning it properly. I think if children were taught their, their actions have consequences, that they can't get away with these things, then everything would be a lot better and there'd be less crimes and stuff, because children would be more controlled, and there's more control over how people think and what they're thinking. I think it would solve a lot of problems that I have now.	Puts his own dislike of control down to being *'at the rebellious stage of growing up'*
	1920		
	1921		
Control relating to social behaviour	1922		
	1923		
	1924		
Self as having needed more assertive parenting?	1925		
	1926		
	1927		
	1928		*A lot of repetition of these points*
	1929		
	1930		
	1931		
	1932	*Yeah?*	
	1933		
	1934	Like, you know, just, if... I've said a lot, but I think I've made my point...	
	1935		Acknowledges practical impossibility of his plan
	1936		
Self as inevitably hating control because of age/'teenage rebellious phase'	1937	*Yeah, yeah, you have, absolutely...*	
	1938		
	1939	...that, just, I'm thinking control but I don't like control and I don't want to say it, but, you know, it's sort of necessary isn't it really...	
	1940		
	1941		
		'Cos I'm still, I'm probably still at the rebellious stage of growing up,	

	1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977	so, er, like, control for me, I hate it, I hate control in any degree. I hate control, that's just how it is. *Yeah...* I've probably always been like it, except for when I was a baby or something, so like, I dunno, if there's more control and children are taught that there are consequences to their actions, then the world would be a lot better, and there'd be a lot less of everything. But then, the thing is, you'd have to get every single parent to think the same way that I did just then. *(laughs) Yeah...* ...And that would be very hard. *It would.* Getting a lot of people to think that way would be really hard and I don't think I'd know how to do that. *No.* I think if I was, like, a politician or something - like, I don't know how the world of politics works, but - if I was like, if I was in a position where I could, like, potentially control the world, or at least the country anyway, I'd probably do what I just suggested. *Ok.* I'd probably figure out a way to do it that doesn't impede people's privacy. *There's a balance, I suppose, isn't there? You've got to find a balance...* Yeah, yeah, that's what I'd probably do. But, like, I don't think I'd	Need for balance between social control for the long-term good of society and of individuals, versus short-term individual rights Negative view of the world, of society - blames corporations' irresponsibility and profit-driven motivations
Need for individual privacy/agency			

Society as dysfunctional, profit-driven	1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013	ever have the confidence to do it, 'cos I've always been horrible with groups of people, I've never been good at it. *But, in an ideal world?..* Yeah, I think that's just how everything is, just in an ideal world these things can happen, but in the real world probably not, 'cos the world, the world is already screwed up as it is, like... It would be very hard to restore it but I think if there, if you could, probably be a good idea to restore it now rather than later, 'cos if you try it later it'd just get worse, and then, like, 'cos... You know, corporations would want more money, and then like things surrounding... and then like... Corporations would want more money, making everything a lot worse for children and everything, because I think, to get more money, to get better ratings, a show would have to... how can, erm... not just talking like TV but also internet shows and stuff like that... They'd go further than they have done already. *Yeah?* And they'd say, like, blatant lies and stuff on TV, 'cos apparently in America you can lie on TV, or something. So they could say blatant lies on TV and it'd get them better ratings. And this was actually in Anchorman 2, where, like, there was one point where they stopped doing the news and just started doing, er, stupid nonsense that the news is now. And they got better ratings for it. *Yeah?* But I think they will get to a point where... I think they might be at the point already where they, like, censor parts of stories to make it seem like, er, it wasn't what it actually was. *Yeah* And makes, makes everything better for the news, because they get	Society, corporations etc. should think more about children - thinks they don't do enough Importance of young generation *Repetition here - emphasising this point.* How is he defining 'children'? Is he one? Sets himself apart again. Were his parents ineffective, or was it him who was above being controlled?
Children as ignored/dismissed	2014	better ratings. TV shows get better ratings by doing more extreme	

part of general population	2015 2016 2017 2018	things, like, that's how things are, things like that, and all, all corporations want is money, so they'll go further to get more money but they'll also screw up children. When you're older you don't tend to think about children, when you're in a position of power and	
Self as separate from 'children'	2019 2020 2021 2022	everything, you don't tend to think of children, but really children are what, children are, like, the new generation I guess. *Absolutely...*	Very behaviourist view - it's about conditioning.
Self as transcending attempts to control him 'Control' as something for lesser young people Self as too clever to be controlled	2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035	As much as I hate, as much as I hate children... No matter which way you look at it they're always going to define the next generation, so you just have to, like, you have to find a way to control them in some way that, like... I think there has been instances where they've tried, at least my parents have tried to control me, but I've always found ways around it, it's like very easy, like. I used to have my, my Game Cube taken off me, and, like, in the morning when I'd wake up everyone was asleep and I'd, like, sneak into my Mum's room and steal the Game Cube back and play on it some more. Like, I think I was just a bad child (laughs), but I think that every child is like it really.	Again, there is a *'correct way'*
	2036 2037 2038	*Yeah... It's how you were saying earlier, about getting away with stuff and learning what you can get away with, isn't it...*	
Children as vulnerable to basic behaviourist conditioning Children as animal-like in learning/cognition	2039 2040 2041 2042 2043	Yeah... Once you do it once, it's a lot easier to do it again and again... *Yeah, yeah...*	
Some morality as absolute	2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050	But, I dunno, it's like, it's like when you train a dog to do something, when you, when you tell him off for doing it he won't do it again, but if he does it again you'll tell him off, and chances are he won't do it again. And then he'll, like, learn that from his mistakes, and I think that's how children are, I think dogs and puppies have the mentality of like babies or something like that. So they can learn very easily, and if they learn the correct way, the way I was thinking, everything	Setting himself apart as different from others, again

Self as different, more communicative than peers Self as child?	2051 2052 2053 2054 2055 2056 2057 2058 2059 2060 2061 2062 2063 2064 2065 2066 2067 2068 2069 2070 2071 2072 2073 2074 2075 2076 2077 2078 2079 2080 2081 2082 2083 2084 2085 2086	would be a lot better. *Hmmm.* I've talked so much on this! *You have, you have! And I think we're going to have to finish off really. What's it been... Gosh, two hours! (Both laugh.)* I have a lot to say. *You do, you do! Well thank you, it's been really fascinating and I'm really, really grateful to you for, you know, for talking about all of this. It's been really, really helpful for me, it's helped me understand your point of view, your experiences, and that's fantastic. I feel really privileged that you've been able to share all of that with me, so thank you.* Yeah... I don't think other children will be as, er, as forthcoming as I've been. *Maybe not, maybe not.* But it maybe goes to show that what I've said is true. *Perhaps so.* Yeah. *Yeah. I think you're very insightful.* Thanks. *Thank you, thank you. I shall turn this off now... (turns off Dictaphone)*	

	Interview 2 - Rosie		
Emerging themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33	*Ok, so we've been through all the background information, and, erm, the consent form and so on... Are you still happy...* Yeah *...still happy to go ahead with it?* ...Yeah *Ok, the first thing I was going to ask you, then, just a fairly straightforward thing really, is if you could just tell me a bit about your school history - what schools you've attended in the past, and when.* Erm... I've been to Station Road Primary School, St Peter's College, and then Newton School. *Ok... that's pretty standard really, isn't it, then - primary and then high school and then... that's it. Ok, how did you find it when you had to move from one school to the next, the transitions?* Easy... kind of. *Easy kind of?* Yeah *(Yeah) (both laugh).* Ok... I don't know anything at all about your current situation, so I hope that'll just sort of come out as we talk, really, about what's going on for you now. But let's just have a think back, back to a time when you were attending school full-time, when you weren't missing any. When would that have been? When was the last time you were fully full-time?* Erm... I can't remember. Like... I'm doing better this year 'cos, like,	Qualifies, but doesn't expand on this. 'Doing better' is equated with higher attendance, and adults' view on this

Internalisation of systemic priorities	34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43	I got an e-mail from Mrs Lang the other day saying that my attendance was better. *Oh, good, so things are on the up then?* Yeah. *Ok, that's good. What about in the past, like, have you ever been at school full-time or have you always, sort of, missed a fair bit?*	
Physical bullying School staff failed to protect her from bullying Fear	44 45 46 47	Erm... I used to go, like, every day, but then, like, I used to get hit and everything, and then Mrs Lang never done anything, so... I just got scared to come to school and everything.	Physical bullying, fear of others in school
	48 49	*Yeah?*	
Fear of bullying as barrier to school attendance	50 51	So that's why I didn't go as much.	Direct link - bullying led to lower attendance
	52 53 54	*Oh I see, so when would this be, then? When did that start to happen?*	
	55 56	Erm... About two or three months into Year 10.	
	57 58 59	*Oh ok... So when you were at St Peter's, was that... were you at school full-time then?*	
Impression management - minimising of 'deviant' behaviour	60 61	Kind of, yeah.	Minimising absenteeism?
	62 63	*Kind of?*	
	64 65	Like, I spent a bit of time off there, as well.	*'A bit of time off' - minimising.*
	66 67	*Right, ok... What about at primary school?*	
	68 69	I spent loads of time there.	

School systems as responsible for tackling bullying Self as passive victim	70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85	*So you didn't really miss any, at primary?* No. *Ok, then at St Peter's?...* Like, I was just getting bullied again, and school didn't do anything, so then I didn't spend much time there. *Oh, I see... So is that, is that the thing that changed, then, that led... that led to you having more time off school, then? Is that the main...* Yeah *...would you say that was the main thing that was the problem?*	Bullying at former school too. Expectation is that <u>school should have addressed this for her - they failed to do so.</u>
School as wholly negative experience Multiple reasons for bullying	86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99	Yeah. *Ok then, so... so how was school, like when you were at primary, when that wasn't a problem, how was school for you then?* Like, erm, it was ok, at the start, and then like everything just turned bad, and I got bullied about everything... *Ahh... This is at primary, is it? Or are you talking about St Peter's now?* St Peter's.	Reluctance to acknowledge positives - turns question into a negative. *'Everything just turned bad'* - <u>all-encompassing, whole experience was negative.</u> *'Bullied about everything'.*
Friendships as buffer to negative school experience Importance of friendships/positive social experiences	100 101 102 103 104 105	*At St Peter's?* Yeah. *So it started off alright...*	Impact of negative social experience, <u>friendships as protective factor which was then lost?</u>

Widespread bullying from many different people	106 107 108 109 110	Yeah *...and then it got worse?* Yeah, because like loads of my friends had ditched me.	*'Everyone bullied me'* - <u>*totality of experience.*</u>
Social isolation 'Black and white' view of negative aspects of experience - all bad	111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120	*Yeah?* So then like... I wanted a haircut as well, so, like, my mum cut my hair, and it went wrong so, like, I just like shaved it and had a short haircut. And then everyone bullied me about it. *Oh dear... So you got picked on for your haircut... Was there other stuff as well, or was that, like, the main cause of the problems?*	*'Always got called...' 'Always alone'* <u>Black and white, was it this absolute?</u> Negative social experience highlighted further
Loss, bereavement Verbal bullying around bereavement	121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139	Erm... I always got called a loner, as well, cos I was always alone at lunch and everything. *That must've been quite hard for you... That was while you were at St Peter's?* Yeah. *Ok.* And then, like, when my Grandma died, erm, loads of people started taking the mick, saying, "Ha ha, your Grandma's dead," and all this, so... yeah. *Oh, that's horrible, isn't it? So you were getting bullied and picked on and... did you not have that many friends, then? You say you were on your own a lot at lunchtimes and stuff...* Yeah...	Further negative social experience, bullying, on top of bereavement
Negative changes in life experience	140 141	*And then that happened as well? And was that all during that time*	Rapid negative changes in life, all during KS3

	142	*when you were at St Peter's?*	
	143		
	144	Yeah...	
	145		
	146	*Ok, I see. So that's quite a lot that happened, then, within a year or*	
	147	*two?*	
	148		
Academic aspiration	149	Yeah.	Feels need to achieve academically.
Sense of taking control of own	150		*Own choice/agency, 'I've realised*
life/future	151	*Ok, ok... Thinking about now, then, you say that this year you're in*	*that...'*
	152	*school more?*	
	153		
Self as in control, developing	154	Yeah.	She has taken control. It still happens
coping strategies	155		but she has developed strategies.
Academic aspirations over-riding	156	*How do you feel about that, about the fact that you're in school*	Work is taking priority now - over-
bullying experience	157	*more this year?*	riding negative social experiences for
Shift in individual priorities	158		her.
	159	Like, I've realised that I need to, like, buckle down more and	
Friendship difficulties, loss of	160	everything, because I've got all my exams this year...	Friendship difficulties
friendships	161		Bereavement - impact on her (but
	162	*Ah...*	continued attending school)
Loss and bereavement	163		
Emotional impact of loss	164	...So it's like every time that someone bullies me I just ignore them,	Emotional impact of loss
	165	and just get on with my work.	Name-calling, loss of friendship
School as responsible for solving	166		Other social problems
friendship difficulties	167	*Yeah? Ok. So, it's still happening a bit then? You're still having*	Onus is on school to sort out these
	168	*some problems with other kids?*	social difficulties
	169		
Self as passive, innocent victim	170	I had a problem with this... Jade, girl, cos like we were friends, but	
	171	then, like, when my Grandad died, like I was always like in a really	Some success? Limited. *'She fell*
Bullying and friendship difficulties	172	bad mood, but I still came to school and everything. So then, like,	*out with me' - she sees fault as being*
as one-sided problems	173	cos I was really close to my Grandad, I used to cry, like, all the time	*with Jade, not herself.*
	174	at school, so then she started calling me 'mardy' and all this. And	
Failure of school systems to	175	then, like, it just caused arguments and fall-outs with my cousin, so I	Bullying increased.
act/intervene when asked	176	went Year Room and reported it, and Year Room sat me and Jade	
	177	down in a room and we had a talk and we sorted it out.	School failed to act - she expected
			them to.

	178	*Yeah?*	Recent development - apology and some reconciliation. *She has experienced this as very one-sided - she is passive, innocent.*
	179		
	180	And then after that she fell out with me again, because I was still	
	181	upset, so she called me 'mardy' again... And, and then she started	
	182	saying that it was a god job my Grandad died because then he	
	183	wouldn't have to look at me ever again. And then, like, this year, it	
	184	was like really big arguments - she started threatening me, and	
	185	threatening to burn my house down, with me and my family in it and	
Value of 'keeping the peace'	186	everything. And, like, Year Room didn't do anything. And then, like,	
	187	about two weeks ago, she apologised and said that we need to be	Is standing her own ground, but is
	188	civil and all this. And now she's, like, really nice to me.	motivated to *'keep the peace'* rather
	189		then seek vengeance.
	190	*So, are you getting on ok with her at the moment then?*	
	191		
	192	Yeah.	
School as potentially powerful	193		
but ineffective	194	*Right. Even after all that horrible stuff that's gone on in the past?*	*Reiteration - school failed to tackle*
	195	*Do you feel able to, kind of, get along ok with her again now?*	*these problems - clear expectation*
Self as lacking power/agency	196		*that they should have done so.*
	197	I've told her that, like, I'm not going to be, like, best friends with her	Lack of power - had to involve Mum -
Self as needing adult intervention	198	again, but I'll be civil, just to keep the peace and everything.	they wouldn't listen to her alone.
to solve friendship/bullying	199		*'It never got sorted' - passive, lacking*
problems	200	*I see. Sounds like you've handled that very well, you've come*	*in agency.*
	201	*through that, that must've been hard for you, but you've found a*	Social impact of involving Mum.
	202	*way of managing that situation by the sounds of it.*	Confusion/ambiguity over how this
	203		has been interpreted.
	204	Year Room, like, Year Room never done anything about it, so then I	
	205	always had to ring my Mum, and then my Mum had to come into the	
	206	school, and she had to like, she had to go to Year Room herself and	
Positive benefit of parental	207	tell them, because every time I told them it was like, "Yeah, we'll sort	
intervention	208	it," and then it never got sorted, so then my Mum started coming in	But sees Mum's intervention as
	209	more, and then started telling Year Room. And then it started	positive.
	210	getting sorted more, but not as much. And now, like, loads of	
	211	people have told Jade that I'm going to get my Mum on her and	
	212	everything when I'm not, so I think Jade got a bit scared. But, like,	
Faith in school system's ability to	213	I'm not sure.	
solve problems - school as			Apparent faith in the school system to

powerful but inept	214 215 216 217 218	*Right... So did it help, then, your Mum going in to intervene, did that help?* Yeah.	have power (and motivation) to resolve these problems. (Would *'having a word'* have been enough?) *Re-emphasis on school's inaction.*
Self as betrayed/let down by system	219 220 221 222	*What would you have liked to see happen, you know, when you first told the Year Room that there was a problem, what would you like them to have done, ideally?*	Sense of betrayal - they broke their promise to her? They owed her this, but failed to deliver.
Loss of faith/trust in school systems	223 224 225	I would have liked them to, like, have a word with her, when she like, when she says all these things. But, like, when she used to hit me and everything, like, yeah. Like, they didn't do anything about	Trust and faith in school systems had broken down - deception felt
Need to increase own power	226 227	that either.	necessary in order to strengthen own position, to give her more power in the situation.
Self as taking control	228 229 230 231 232 233	*Did they not talk to her, then, or anything?* No. They said that they'll sort it, but they never did. *I see.*	*'Had to sort it myself' - took control, but only because she felt she had no choice.*
Self as more powerful now	234 235	And, like, Mum heard everything because, like, when my Mum was out, before, she couldn't come into the school, so I rang her and I	Took control and changed strategy - new approach.
Motivation to avoid (further) social problems	236 237 238 239 240	put the phone on loudspeaker, and we pretended that my Mum wasn't on the phone to me, and then she heard everything, like, "Oh yeah, we'll sort it," and, "We'll get back to you on all this," and it just never got sorted. And then I had to sort it myself.	Motivation to avoid further social problems and get along with cousin
Success of own strategy to stop bullying	241 242 243	*I see, I see. So when you say you sorted it yourself, how did that work out then, what did ... what happened then?*	Bully got bored with it - strategy was effective
	244 245 246	Like, every time she called me names and said loads of bad stuff about me and everything, like, I just ignored it, because she's friends with my cousin as well and it caused arguments with my	
Direct link - social/friendship problems and low attendance	247 248 249	cousin, and I always fell out with her, and I didn't want to. So, like, I just kept ignoring her, then, like, letting her get on with it, and then, like, I think she just got bored as well, with it, so like... and then she	Direct link between social problems and school attendance

Social isolation, being an outcast/seen as outcast	250	apologised to me, and asked if we could be civil.	
	251		
Emotional impact of bullying in the past	252	*Yeah, I see. Sounds like it has ended up being a better situation*	Consciously aware of her change in approach - is handling things more
	253	*than it was? Do you think, erm, the fact that you're attending school*	positively now
Self as in control now, able to develop own coping strategies	254	*more now, and the fact that you've got a better situation with Jade*	Is more aware of impact of her actions on others now - this has
	255	*now, are those two things linked?*	informed her strategy
	256		
	257	Yeah, yeah.	
	258		
	259	*Ok. (Both laugh.)*	
	260		
	261	Cos, like, loads of people have stopped bullying me now because,	
	262	like... in St Peter's, because I was always lonely, I was, like, that girl	
	263	that, like, when she got called names... I'd just put my head down,	
	264	and just walk away, sometimes cry and everything, but now it's like,	
	265	when someone calls me names I just smile and ignore them, and,	
	266	like, I think it's annoyed people that it's, like, not annoying me.	
	267		
	268	*Yeah... they'll lose interest, won't they, they give up.*	
	269		
Sense of injustice - bullies were not held accountable	270	Yeah, yeah.	
	271		Onus is on school again - they should
	272	*Good, good. So, at that time when this bullying problem first*	have reprimanded the bullies.
	273	*started, then, that'd be at St Peter's, wouldn't it?*	
Bullying as key factor in making school experience negative	274		*'the bullying started to happen' -*
	275	Yeah.	*distancing herself from it?*
School as responsible for intervening but failed to do so	276		
	277	*Erm... Do you think there's anything anyone could have done, at*	School failed to act - recurring motif.
	278	*that time, that would have really made a difference, that would have*	
	279	*made things better for you?*	
	280		
Feeling dismissed by school staff	281	Erm, the people that, like, used to bully me, it's like they never got	(At St Peter's - similar situation -
	282	told off or anything. And it's like, I never used to go to lessons in St	school failed to act)
	283	Peter's either, because like... it was great when I first started, and	
Avoidance of particular lessons because of certain peers	284	then when the bullying started to happen, and everything, it was	Avoided lessons because of certain individuals in certain classes
	285	like... When my Grandma died, that's when the bullying started to	Awareness of school's inaction -
Impact of bullying on her			

behaviour	286	happen. And, like, Year Room never done anything about it.	impact on behaviour
	287		
	288	*Yeah...*	
	289		
	290	So, then, I just got sick of it, and then I used to go to Student	
	291	Support all the time, during lesson time, and they used to say,	
	292	"Yeah, yeah, just go to lessons and we'll sort it later," and that used	
	293	to upset me because it never got sorted, and then like with all the	
	294	lessons that I had, with the people in it, I never used to go because I	
Feeling dismissed, betrayed by	295	knew that Student Support had never done anything about it, so I	
school staff/system	296	used to hide in the toilets and cry and everything.	Sense of betrayal?
	297		
	298	*And you felt like no-one could... No-one could, or would, do*	
	299	*anything about it, that would help, then? You told them in Student*	
	300	*Support and they just went, "Yeah, yeah, we'll sort it out later"?*	
	301		
	302	Yeah.	
	303		
	304	*Right. And then they didn't?*	
	305		
	306	No, they didn't.	
	307		
	308	*I see, I see. And then that's carried on into Year 10 as well, at*	
	309	*Newton?*	
	310		
	311	Yeah.	
	312		
	313	*I can see it must've been hard for you, being in school. I don't know*	Unclear about agency here - hasn't
	314	*if this is a strange question, but... thinking about when you were*	thought about it in this way before?
Individual control/agency	315	*missing lessons, and when you were not in school, how much did*	
uncertain in terms of	316	*you feel that that was your choice not to be there, or how much did*	
absenteeism	317	*you feel you didn't really have any choice?*	
	318		
	319	(...Few seconds pause...) (Both laugh)...	
	320		
	321	*It's a hard one, I know.*	

Learning as a positive	322	Yeah. (Few seconds pause...) I don't know.	
	323		
	324	*Not sure about that one?*	
	325		
	326	No.	
	327		
	328	*Ok, no, that's ok, I just wondered if you thought of it in that way,*	
	329	*maybe you don't really think of it that way.*	
Teachers failing to stand up for her	330		Enjoys learning itself - the problem has been the presence of specific peers.
	331	...No.	
Self as taking responsibility, developing own strategy for coping with bullying	332		Teacher failed to take responsibility
	333	*No, that's ok, I just wondered. Ok, so we've talked about what, sort*	She took responsibility more herself -
	334	*of, went wrong for you in school and when you stopped going in full-*	began ignoring the behaviour
	335	*time, when you started to miss things. I wonder, are there specific*	
	336	*times of day, or specific lessons or anything, that are particularly*	
	337	*difficult when it comes to attendance? Is there any sort of pattern*	
	338	*there for you, or has there been?*	
	339		
	340	I enjoy, like, all of my lessons. It's like... I only had one lesson with	
	341	Jade, and that was Health and Social Care. So, like, she always	
	342	started in there, and, like, the teacher always used to say, "Oh, I	
	343	never heard anything," or, "I never seen anything," and it just used	
	344	to annoy me. So then I just ignored her. And then it just, like, got	
	345	on my nerves, and then she knew it weren't upsetting me or	
	346	anything so she just stopped.	
Impact of single peer on well-being and other social relationships	347		
	348	*Yeah, I see. So that was the only lesson when you were actually*	
	349	*with her?*	Huge impact of one single individual
	350		
	351	Yeah.	
	352		
	353	*So, was it mainly her that was the problem, then? If Jade just*	
	354	*vanished, just disappeared into thin air, wasn't there any more, last*	
	355	*year say, would the situation have been very different then?*	
	356		Positive impact of Jade's absence on
Single peer as responsible for causing arguments, upset etc.	357	Yeah, because like she went away for a bit as well, because like,	other social relationships

Impact of single peer on her ability to be in school full-time	358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370	when we had a proper massive fall-out and everything, and, like, I used to always argue back with her, and then she got sick and tired of it, she told Year Room that I was threatening her and everything when I wasn't, so then she told Year Room and then was like, "You know what, I'm going on a break, I'm not coming in school for a week," and the week she was gone, it was peaceful. It was, like, me and my cousin, we got closer and everything, and me and my friends, we was really close and everything, we all got on well. We had, like, a really good time and everything, and there was no fall-outs, there was no people getting upset or anything, no-one starting arguments. And then she came back and then it all just started again.	Attributes Jade's presence to causing upset, arguments, fall-outs
	371 372	*So it was quite different then, when she wasn't there?*	
Single peer as sole/primary reason for wanting to avoid school	373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381	Yeah. *I see. And that week, were you in school all of that week then?* Yeah. *You didn't miss any?* No.	Was able to be in school full-time quite happily without Jade there
Holistic rating of school is contingent on efficacy of systems at dealing with bullying	382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393	*And that felt ok?* Yeah. *I see, good. I think it's very... it's very sensible of you really, isn't it, to go, "Alright, look, we're not going to be best mates but just let's be civil, and, you know, stop this," and that seems to be working - that's brilliant that you've managed to get to that stage after all of that trouble that you've had. So, thinking about school now then, as school is at the moment, you say your attendance is better now? How would you rate school, what's it like generally for you now?*	Holistic rating of school is higher because school staff are intervening more quickly now in these social problems Major influence on whole school experience

Social problems as most salient (negative) feature of school	394 395 396 397 398 399	Probably, like, eight out of ten, because like Year Room, they sort it quicker than they did last time, but like not as quick. It's like, it used to take them about two weeks to sort it, last time, now it takes them about a week to sort it. *So stuff is getting dealt with better?*	Additional social difficulties - <u>by far the most salient feature of school experience.</u>
	400 401	Yeah.	Single individual as key to these problems
Self as passive victim of others falling out with her	402 403 404	*Ok, eight out of ten, that's pretty good, isn't it?*	*Others 'fell out' with her - she was passive and innocent*
Power of single peer to control her other social interactions	405 406	Yeah.	But she took control, took the opportunity to try to repair the relationship with her cousin
	407 408 409 410	*Is that thinking about other people at school, thinking about your relationships with your friends and with other people in school, is that taking all that into account?*	
Self as capable of solving own peer difficulties	411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421	Yeah, 'cos like in Year 10 I had loads of fall-outs with my cousin, and, like, she told me that she wanted nothing to do with me any more and everything, because Jade started telling her that I said all of this stuff about her Dad because her Dad passed away when she was a baby, but, like, I didn't say anything so, like, my cousin fell out with me because she believed Jade, and then... And then, like, when Jade was gone, for that week, it was like I had a chance, I had a chance to go up to my cousin and talk to her properly, because like I never used to be able to talk to her without Jade starting. And so, like, I spoke to her and everything.	*'We worked it all out' - collaborative and cooperative, positive experience*
	422 423	*Yeah... And was that better for you?*	
Importance of school staff dealing with problems quickly - most salient way to improve school experience	424 425 426 427 428 429	Yeah, and we worked it all out, and got closer during the week, yeah. *Good. And has that lasted, do you think, that relationship with your cousin?*	Still sees main way to improve school experience as resting with school systems' efficiency/ability to sort out social difficulties

	430	Yeah.	
	431		
	432	*That's good. So, if it's eight out of ten then, I wonder what would*	
	433	*make it nine out of ten? What change could there be that would*	
	434	*make it even better?*	
	435		
	436	Like, if they sorted it a bit quicker, rather than sorting it in a week.	
	437		
Power of peer to control her	438	*Quicker still?*	
other relationships	439		
Self as powerless in presence of	440	Yeah.	Closer to other friends, but still sees
peer	441		Jade in position of control in relation
Self as powerful in peer's	442	*Ok, so sorting any problems really quickly.*	to these.
absence	443		Self as powerless within own
	444	Yeah.	friendships and social circle, while
	445		Jade was there.
	446	*Ok,so it sounds like that's something that's going really well in*	Self as more powerful in Jade's
	447	*school for you now, your relationship with your cousin, better*	absence - Jade as oppressor/in
Peer as all-powerful over self and	448	*relationship with Jade... What about other friendships - is that*	control, self as oppressed/powerless.
her friendships	449	*something that's going well for you?*	
	450		'She started controlling my other
	451	Erm, yeah, I'm like, I'm closer to my friends as well because Jade	friends...' Reinforces view of Jade as
	452	sent round rumours, in Year 10, that I was pregnant... And so, like,	all-powerful, self (and friends, e.g.
	453	my friends had all fallen out with me then, because they all thought	Alice) as powerless.
	454	that I'd been lying to them and everything, and keeping a secret	
	455	from them, so like... So then I had a talk with them as well, in the	
	456	week that Jade was gone, and we all sorted it out...	
	457		
	458	*Yeah...*	
	459		
	460	And, like, in Year 11 as well, when me and Jade had fallen out, she	
	461	started controlling my other friends as well, like, erm, my friend	
	462	Alice... It's like, I asked Alice to the fair with me if she wanted to,	
	463	and then Alice was like, "Yeah, can do," but then as soon as Jade	
	464	found out, Jade was like, "Oh no, you're not going with her, you can	
	465	come with me," so then Alice went to the fair with Jade. But then,	

	466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475	like, Alice told Jade that she thinks she should just stop being mean to me, and just leave me alone and everything, and then Jade got angry and pushed Alice into the road, while a car was coming. So, like, Alice nearly got hit. But then Alice's other mate, who was with her and Jade, she pulled Alice out of the way quick. And it was actually our maths teacher in the car. *Oh gosh... So the maths teacher must have seen what happened?* Yeah.	
Value of academic learning and ability to succeed	476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489	*Ok, so... On the whole, though, now, school seems to be going better for you?* Yeah. *Is there anything else in school that's going well for you at the moment?* Erm... Lessons are better now. *Your actual learning, and so on?* Yeah.	Academic difficulties - resolved now - had struggled in the past.
Temporal aspect - contrasts present with past	490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501	*Ok... Is that something that hasn't always gone so well in the past, then, your lessons?* Yeah, it was like, I always found it hard in lessons, and like, I didn't get anything, and like I couldn't concentrate properly. But now it's got better this year. *Good. Is there anything now that's still maybe not going so well for you, anything now that's still bothering you in school?* ...No.	*Qualifies positive statement. Contrast with the past.*

Self changed in response to difficulties	502 503	*Not really?*	These experiences have made her stronger, more resilient? More academic success, more able to ignore others and focus on work. More motivation to achieve?
Self as more focused academically	504 505	No, not any more.	
Self as stronger, more able to rise above bullying	506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515	*Ok, that's really positive, it sounds like things have turned around for you, like things are really looking up, and that's great to hear. So all this has gone on for, what, about the last three years or so, is that right? So all of these experiences you've had over the last three years, and the issue with having missed quite a lot of school, and you've had Mrs Summers involved, haven't you, with that, and all that kind of stuff around your school attendance... Do you think that all of those things have changed the way you see yourself, as a person?*	
Social problems as sole reason for non-attendance	516 517 518 519 520	(Few seconds pause...)... Yeah... I'm like... My Mum and Dad have said that I've changed as well, cos it's like, I'm buckling down in my lessons as well, it's like, I've got better at my art and my maths and everything. And I'm just ignoring what everyone else says.	*No reason not to be in school - 'it's all sorted now'.*
Positive towards school as a result of social difficulties being resolved	521 522 523 524 525	*Yeah... So do you think you've kind of learned from the experience, then, is that what you're saying?* Yeah.	Positive feelings towards school as a result of social difficulties being resolved
Clear goal for future	526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536	*So now, then, what's your attendance now, then? Do you know?* Erm... No. I haven't been told yet. *Ok... But there's nothing in particular that's sort of getting in the way, now, of you being in school, then?* No, it's all sorted now, so... (pause) *Good. So, for the rest of this academic year, till the end of Year 11, then, how are you feeling about being in school full-time?*	Clear aims for future
Unclear how to reach future goal	537		

Unclear about academic qualifications being studied	538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554	Alright, yeah. *Good, that's really good. What do you think, what are your best hopes, then, for the future, for the rest of school or the rest of your education?* Erm... When I finish school I want to go to college and do childcare. *Oh, ok. So, is that to be, like, a nursery nurse, that kind of thing, to work with little children?* Yeah. *Oh, lovely. Do you need any particular GCSEs and things for that? Do you know what you'll need to do to get there?* No, I haven't got to that bit in Health and Social yet.	
Long-standing aim for future	555 556 557	*Oh, course, you're doing Health and Social Care, is that a GNVQ, or something?*	
Influence of parental views on plans for future Making use of existing skills and experience Self as in control of own choices	558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569	I think so, yeah. *So that might lead into a childcare course, then, you think?* Yeah. *Ok, you seem quite definite about that as, "Yes, this is what I want to do," you're quite clear about that one?* Yeah.	Has given future aims some thought Parents' opinions important to her - may have played a part in her decision-making
Self as competent in chosen skill area Parents and brother see her as skilled	570 571 572 573	*How long have you wanted to do that?* Erm, like, I've been wanting to do it since my little brother Mark was born, because like... I couldn't choose what I wanted to do, whether	Sees self as competent and skilled with this task - positive experience for her

Clear plans for future	574 I wanted to be a beautician or do childcare, and like, so like I always 575 do my Mum's nails, and then there was like... they didn't look as 576 good as I thought they would. *(Karen laughs)* So then like I 577 decided to do childcare, and my Mum and Dad said that I'd be 578 better at doing that because I babysit Mark all the time. 579 580 *Oh right, ok. How old's Mark then?* 581 582 Six. 583 584 *Right. So you were, you'd be about nine when he was born, is that* 585 *right? So have you always been involved in looking after him then?* 586 587 Yeah, I like, I babysit him like every week, and it's like... When my 588 Mum and Dad walk out the door it's like I'll just be sitting here, while 589 Mark is watching TV, and then like when they come back they'll just 590 see me and Mark playing games, like playing cards or something. 591 And my Mum and Dad said that I am, like, good at helping with 592 Mark. Because, like, Mark has told my Mum and Dad as well that 593 he likes me looking after him cos he enjoys himself and everything. 594 595 *Oh, lovely. That's really good, something that you're really good at* 596 *and you enjoy doing.* 597 598 Yeah. 599 600 *Super, that's really good. That's quite a clear goal for you, then,* 601 *isn't it, for when you finish school in the Summer... Can you do that* 602 *course somewhere near here then, childcare?* 603 604 Erm... I can do it in Lowmoor College. 605 606 *Oh yeah, right, I see. Just down the road.* 607 608 Yeah. 609	Has done research - clear plans Emphasis remains on social experience - positive and negative Positive framed in terms of headteacher sorting out problems quickly - contrast with more recent experience.
Importance of social world Making friends Physical bullying Past experience of bullying being dealt with effectively (primary school)		

Self as initiating new friendship Positive experience of a close friendship	610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617	*Excellent. Ok, let me just have a quick look at this and see if there's anything that we've, kind of, missed out. We've talked a bit about your school history and that, we've... We talked a lot about, sort of, what went wrong for you in school, didn't we, and how you ended up becoming a bit part-time, how you ended up missing things... What we perhaps didn't talk about so much was when school was going better for you, earlier on, you know like at primary school and*	Positive social experience. She took initiative to form a friendship
Self and family as victims of 'fall-out'	618 619 620	*so on, before you had the issues with the bullying and that kind of thing. Do you remember much about primary school? Or maybe the beginning of St Peter's, when things were going better for you?*	...but she is back in the position of victim here
	621 622 623 624 625	Erm, like, when I started there, like, I was lonely there as well, but then like I made loads of new friends. And then there was this lad called Adam and he always used to hit me and I always used to go to the headteacher and it used to get sorted, like, straight away.	Brother as victim too - impact on her family of 'fall-out'
	626 627	*This was primary school, was it?*	
	628 629	Yeah.	
	630 631	*Ok.*	
Potential to recover lost friendship	632 633 634 635 636 637 638	And, and then like... for the last year, erm, there was this girl that moved back, and her name was Lauren, and like she had no friends, so I thought that I'd go up to her and ask to be friends, so I did and then we got like really close. And then we moved to St Peter's and, like, we was really close, and we went on holiday together and everything.	Potential to recover a lost friendship - collaborative, *'we became...'*
'Fall-outs' as ordinary part of life (own and others')	639 640	*Yeah...*	'Fall-outs' as an ordinary part of many people's lives?
Value of maintaining a friendship	641 642 643 644 645	And then, like, we had a fall-out, and then she started saying that my big brother Sean had pushed her downstairs and broke her ribs and everything, but he didn't. And so, like, Sean was always in trouble, like, he could never go out the house or anything, without people wanting to beat him up and everything. But then, like, when	

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681 | we went St Peter's together, cos we had that fall-out, she moved to Woodside College.

Oh yeah...

And then she came up to Newton, and she was best friends with my cousin, so it's like I had to see her every day when I hung around with my cousin.

I see.

And so like... and then we became really close friends. And now we're like family, but she's moved to the city now, because she had an argument with her Mum, and it caused a fall-out, so she's moved in with her Dad, so like we don't see each other as much any more.

I see.

But we're still really close.

You stay in contact?

Yeah.

Good, good. Ok, we've talked through most of this, I think... I think we're probably more or less done. Is there anything you can think of, that I haven't asked you about, that I ought to have asked you about? Anything you think is relevant, that's important, to do with your experience of school?

...No.

No?

No, not really. | Value of friendship - important to her, worth preserving |

	682	*Ok. It sounds like, for you, it's very much been about these*
	683	*difficulties with Jade and with, erm... well, mainly Jade isn't it, from*
	684	*what you've said? And the bullying you've experienced, and how*
	685	*that's not been dealt with very well, always, in school? And that's*
	686	*been what's got in the way of you being able to feel, you know, feel*
	687	*able to go into school full-time and stay there every day. Would you*
	688	*say that's a fair summary of the situation?*
	689	
	690	Yeah.
	691	
	692	*Is there anything else you want to add to what you've already told*
	693	*me about all of that?*
	694	
	695	...No, not really.
	696	
	697	*Ok, ok. Well, I'm really glad to hear that things are going better for*
	698	*you this year, anyway, and that the situation's resolved and people*
	699	*are behaving themselves better, and you're able to just get your*
	700	*head down and get on with things, and that you've got a really clear*
	701	*goal to work towards as well - that's really positive, super. Is there*
	702	*anything else you want to add?*
	703	
	704	No, not that I know of.
	705	
	706	*No, not really? Anything you wanted to ask me about?*
	707	
	708	No.
	709	
	710	*No? Ok, well, thank you, thanks. (Stops Dictaphone)*

Interview 4 - Sarah			
Emerging themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33	*Ok, so we've been through all the information, and the background and so on, are you still happy, still happy to go ahead with it?* Yeah. *Ok, brilliant. So shall we just start, then, with a bit about your school history - maybe you could just tell me which schools you've attended in the past, and when.* Erm... I went to Heath Village and then St Peter's. *Ok. Just those two, and then onto Newton?* Yeah. *Ok, that's fairly straightforward, isn't it. Have a think about the experience of moving between schools, the transition. How was that for you?* (Pause) Scary. *Was it? How?* (Pause) Don't know. *Dunno? Just scary?* Yeah. *Ok. What do you think it was that you were scared of?* Because there would be, like, new people.	
Anxiety around school transition	20		Anxiety around school transition
Social anxiety Fear of the unknown	32		Anxiety around meeting new people

Anticipation worse than actual experience	34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69	*Ok, that's understandable. Scared... new people... anything else that was scary?* No. *Mainly the new people? Ok. What was it like when you actually got there, then?* It was ok. *Was it? So, kind of scary beforehand but then, when you got there, it was ok?* Yeah. *Ok. Have a think back, then, erm... has there been a time when you were attending school completely full-time?* Yeah *When would that be?* Erm... at primary school. *Was that the last time that you were properly full-time?* Yeah. *Yeah? Ok. So how was school for you, when you were full-time, what was it like?* It was good. *What was going well?* Everything.	Anticipation was worse than the reality
Historic school experience as wholly positive - 'rose-tinted spectacles'?			Whole school experience - universally positive

Friendships as most salient feature of positive school experience	70	*Good. Did you enjoy it?*	Importance of friendships and positive social experience - most salient feature
	71		
	72	Yeah.	
	73		
	74	*Ok, what about, erm... I'm trying to think of specific things. What*	
	75	*was working well, what was making it a good experience for you?*	
	76		
	77	Friends	
	78		
	79	*Yeah?*	
Role of other people, as well as friends, as part of positive experience	80		Other people made the experience positive
	81	And good teachers.	
	82		
	83	*Ok. You had friends, good teachers... ok. Were you happy?*	
	84		
	85	Yeah	
	86		
	87	*Yeah... good! Was there anything at that time that wasn't going so*	
	88	*well?*	
'Rose-tinted' view?	89		Experience is homogenised - all positive
	90	No.	
	91		
	92	*Ok. So, thinking about how life was back then, and how life is now,*	
	93	*how was it similar or different?*	
	94		
	95	(Pause) Don't know.	
	96		
	97	*Thinking about life in general, not just school, perhaps?...*	
	98		
	99	(Pause) Don't know.	
	100		
	101	*Not sure? Ok, that's ok. So, there was a time when school was*	
	102	*good, and you were happy there, things were going well... Can you*	
	103	*remember, then, when you stopped going in full-time?*	
	104		
	105	(Pause) Yeah.	

Impression management? Reluctance to talk about 'deviant' behaviour	106 107 108 109	*When was that?* (Long pause)	Reluctance to talk about behaviour that might be seen as 'deviant'/negative?
	110 111	*What year were you in?*	Vague, imprecise
	112 113	Year 10, I think.	
	114 115	*Oh, quite recently then, really? Yeah? So, all through St Peter's, were you there full-time as well then?*	
Distancing self from behaviour	116 117	I think so.	(Unclear. Earlier she said primary school was the last time she attended full-time.)
	118 119	*Oh ok, ok, so it was in Year 10...*	
	120 121	Yeah	
	122 123 124	*... your attendance went down. Do you know what changed?*	
	125 126	No.	
	127 128	*Was there anything that happened in your life, at that time?*	Reluctance to share/explain?
	129 130	(Pause) I can't remember.	
	131 132 133	*Can't remember? Ok. But you stopped going in as much, you started to miss school more?*	
	134 135	Yeah	
	136 137	*Do you remember if there was a reason at the time?*	
Reluctance to divulge details relating to behaviour	138 139	I don't know.	
	140 141	*(Pause) I'm not, I'm not going to tell you off, or criticise, or anything, I promise - whatever was going on for you. I just wonder what*	

Lesson/subject-specific issues	142	*happened, what changed, that might have affected your*	
	143	*attendance, or... anything either within school or outside of school*	
	144	*that might have happened or changed.*	
	145		
	146	(Long pause)	
	147		
	148	*No? Ok, well how about have a think if... was it, erm, was it*	
	149	*particular days or particular lessons that you started to miss, was*	
	150	*there any pattern to it?*	Issues around specific lessons
	151		
	152	Erm... I stopped going to P.E.	
	153		
	154	*Oh right... was that the first thing you stopped going to, P.E.? Ok.*	
	155	*Was there any particular reason for... why P.E.?*	
	156		
	157	I just don't like it (laughs).	
	158		
	159	*(Laughs) Ok, fair enough... So P.E. was the first to go, ok... then*	
	160	*what...*	
	161		
	162	I can't remember them.	
	163		
	164	*Can't remember? So you stopped going to P.E., but then did you*	
	165	*end up missing just P.E., or did you end up missing more than P.E.?*	
	166		
	167	More.	
	168		
	169	*Ended up missing more? Ok. Do you remember any other lessons,*	
	170	*or anything that you particularly wanted to avoid?*	Reluctance?
	171		
	172	(Pause)	
	173		
	174	*No? Was it, was it about lessons, or maybe it wasn't about*	
	175	*lessons...*	
	176		
	177	I can't remember.	

	178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189	*No? Ok. Was it anything to do with, erm, people, certain people at school?* No. *No? Or anyone out of school?* No. *Ok, ok. So, this might be a weird question, I don't know, but thinking about when you started to miss lessons - was it just lessons or was it whole days you were missing?*	Not about individual people within or outside of school - what was it about for her?
Pattern to absences	190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197	 Just lessons. *Just lessons, ok. How much did you feel that was your choice? Were you choosing to miss lessons, or did you feel like actually you didn't really have much choice?* (Pause)... erm... (pause)	Pattern to absence - lesson-specific
	198 199 200 201 202 203	 *I know maybe that's a bit of an odd question... How much did you feel it was a conscious decision?* (Long pause)	Unable to answer, or reluctant to frame it in this way?
	204 205 206 207	*Don't know? Ok, ok. So when you first started to miss lessons, then - you say it was lessons rather than whole days - do you think, erm, was there anything that anyone could have done to change the situation, to get you back in full-time?*	
Within-person situation? Others as helpless to effect change	208 209 210 211 212 213	No. *No. Not anyone at school, is there anything anyone at school could have done?*	No external changes would have made any difference - no actions by others in any context

	214	(Pause)	
	215		
	216	*No? Or anyone at home?*	
	217		
	218	(Pause)	
	219		
	220	*Or is there any way that, if the situation had been different, you*	
	221	*might have stayed in school full-time?*	
	222		
	223	(Pause)	
	224		
Self as passive, resigned to situation	225	*What would have needed to be different?*	Can't envisage any way this situation could have been different - nothing she or others could have done. Resigned? Passive, controlled by situation, impotent to effect change?
	226		
	227	I don't know.	
	228		
	229	*No?... You say you don't like P.E., what if there had been... What if*	
	230	*P.E. had been removed from your timetable and you didn't have to*	
Lesson-specific change	231	*do P.E. any more? Would that have got you back in?*	Lesson-specific change - might have made a difference
	232		
	233	Maybe.	
	234		
	235	*Ok. Was there any other lessons that you'd have liked to have got*	
	236	*rid of?*	
	237		
	238	No.	
	239		
	240	*No. Ok. But you don't think there was anything that, erm, your*	
	241	*family could have done, or teachers in school, or.. what about your*	
Situation as impervious to external influence	242	*friends? Could they have done anything differently?*	
	243		
	244	No.	
	245		
	246	*You don't think anything could have made any difference? No? Ok.*	
	247	*Have a think about school now, then - how do you feel about school*	
	248	*now?*	What has changed?
	249		

	250	It's ok.	
	251		
	252	*It's ok? Ok. Do you do P.E. now?*	
	253		
	254	Yeah.	
	255		Is now able to tolerate problem subject
	256	*You do? You put up with it. How do you find P.E. now?*	- why? What has changed?
	257		
	258	(Pause) Ok.	
	259		
	260	*Ok? You, you tolerate it? Ok. So tell me about what's going well in*	
	261	*school now, then.*	
	262		
	263	(Pause) I don't know.	
	264		
	265	*No? But you... Are you... Is your attendance better now, then?*	
	266		
	267	Yeah.	
	268		
	269	*Are you there most of the time now? So something must be... has*	
	270	*something changed, then? If your attendance is going up, that*	
	271	*suggests that maybe something's got better than it was, maybe? Or*	Is reticent.
	272	*not?*	
	273		
	274	Don't know.	
	275		
	276	*Don't know?... I'm just wondering what's changed that's enabled*	
	277	*you to be in school more, that's made it easier for you to put up with*	
	278	*P.E. and to, to be in school full-time... I wonder? What's made a*	
	279	*difference?*	
	280		
	281	(Pause)	
	282		
	283	*Don't know? Ok. Are you feeling happier in school?...*	
	284		
	285	Yeah	

Importance of friends to make whole experience more positive Friends as buffer to negative experiences	286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303	*... than you used to?* Yeah *Is there anything that's changed, then, to make you feel happier, do you think?* New friends. *Oh ok, new friends... When, when did you make some new friends?* Erm, er... about four weeks ago. *Ok, so this term... And that's making school life a bit more pleasant for you?* Yeah.	Importance of friends, of positive social experience. Seems to be the only salient feature she can name. Recent change
Impact of satisfaction with social circle	304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321	*Ok, that's good. So in terms of friends now, then, do you... are you happy with the friends you've got?* Yeah. *What about in Year 10? What was your friendship group like then?* I didn't have many friends. *Oh, ok, ok. But that's something that's improved quite recently?* Yeah. *Good, good. So when you first came up to Newton School then, from St Peter's, did you have any friends that came up with you?* Yeah.	Satisfaction with social circle - impact of this Difference between then and now - lack of friends Loss of friends, isolation

Social isolation	322 323	*You did? And then did they stay your friends, or...*	
	324 325	No.	
	326 327	*Oh ok, can you tell me about that?*	
	328 329	Erm, they just went off with other people.	
	330 331	*Ok. So did you end up a little bit on your own, then?*	Direct link - social isolation, reduced attendance
	332 333	Yeah.	
Direct link - social isolation and missing school	334 335 336	*I see. Is that linked with starting to miss school, or not, do you think?*	
	337 338	Yeah.	
	339 340 341 342	*You think it is? Ok. Is that something that made school harder for you, perhaps, then, your friends drifting away from you and you feeling a bit on your own?*	Major impact on school experience
	343 344	Yeah.	
Friends as major (only salient) factor in school experience	345 346 347	*And then having new friends this year has helped you to feel better about school?*	
	348 349	Yeah.	
	350 351 352 353	*Ok, ok... That's something good, isn't it, that's happened this year. So that's something that's going well for you in school at the moment, isn't it...*	Nothing else stands out as salient within her experience
	354 355	Yeah	
	356 357	*... having new friends. Is there anything else in school that's going well for you now?*	Quite a negative slant...

Expectation/desire for 'fun' lessons	358	I don't know.	...Given her score of 7 out of 10.
	359		
	360	*You said you're feeling happier at school now... things are going*	
	361	*better... Anything else that's going well?*	
	362		
	363	(Long pause) No.	
	364		
	365	*No? Ok. Right, let's imagine a scale that goes from one to ten, ok,*	
	366	*one is 'school is really rubbish' and ten is 'school is really brilliant'.*	
	367	*Where would you rate it at the moment, on that scale?*	
	368		
	369	Seven.	
	370		
	371	*Seven? So that's quite good? Ok, so what would need to change,*	
	372	*then, for it to become an 'eight'? Just one step better?*	Expectation/desire for lessons to be enjoyable.
	373		
	374	(Pause) Don't know.	
	375		
	376	*Can you think of any slight, just slight improvements?*	
	377		
	378	(Pause) Better lessons.	
	379		
	380	*Better lessons? What, what would make them better? Do you*	
	381	*mean, like, different subjects or...*	
	382		
	383	No, like, just more fun.	
	384		
	385	*Lessons being more fun?*	
	386		
	387	Yeah.	
	388		Struggling to suggest further improvements
	389	*Ok. What do you think might make them more fun?*	
	390		
	391	(Pause) Don't know.	
	392		
	393	*Just more fun? Ok, that'd make it an eight out of ten then... What*	

Very significant impact of changes to friendships/ social experience	394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402	*would make it a nine out of ten?* (Long pause) *Ok, ok. So last year, in Year 10, then, when you were missing quite a bit of school, and when your friends had drifted away and you were feeling a bit alone, how would you have rated school at that point, do you think?*	Impact of friendships group changes
	403 404	Two.	
Friends as only salient feature of changed experience	405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416	*Two? Really bad?... It's come a long way then, hasn't it, from a 'two' up to a 'seven', that's quite a lot of improvement, then... Ok, is there other stuff, then, that's made that shift - you've talked about your friends, and how making new friends has really helped, but... but what else has made it go from a 'two' to a 'seven'?* (Pause) Don't know. *Is there anything else? Or is it just about friends?* Friends.	Friends as the only salient feature which has changed
Self as distant from school experience/absenteeism	417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426	*Friends? Ok, ok. So thinking about your experience with school in Year 10 then, with your attendance - you've had Mrs Summers involved, haven't you...* Yeah *...On your case, about being in school, and all of that stuff going on around your attendance - do you think that's changed the way you see yourself, as a person?*	Self as distant from this particular experience - not about her
Lack of perspective on others' views on absenteeism	427 428 429	(Pause) No. *No, ok. Have you any thoughts about what other people think about*	No inkling of others' perspectives on this - doesn't seem curious about this either

	430	*your experiences? Your Mum and Dad, or your friends, or anyone*	
	431	*around you, what do they think about it all?*	
	432		
	433	I don't know.	
	434		
	435	*No? I bet you've got some idea of what your parents think?*	
	436		
	437	No.	
	438		
	439	*No? Or anyone at school?*	
	440		
	441	(Pause)	
	442		
	443	*You don't really know what they think?*	
	444		
	445	No.	
	446		
	447	*Ok. So now, then, are you basically back in full-time now?*	
	448		
	449	Yeah.	
	450		Situation appears to be resolved - no
	451	*Yeah. So is there any, is there anything that's getting in the way of*	further barriers now that she has new
	452	*you being in school now, then?*	friends
Friends remove former barriers	453		
to attendance	454	No.	
	455		Clear aims for future
	456	*Nothing? Ok. Can you, can you see yourself staying there full-time*	
	457	*now, right up until you finish Year 11?*	
Future goal	458		
	459	Yeah.	
	460		
	461	*Yeah, ok, that's good. So, what are your, what are your best hopes*	
	462	*for the rest of your time in education?*	
	463		
	464	Hmmm... I want to go to college and do childcare.	
	465		Has done a bit of research...

| Limited knowledge about how to attain future goals | 466
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500
501 | *Oh right, ok. That'll be after you finish Year 11, then, in a year's time?*

Yeah.

Ok. Do you know where you can do that?

Erm... [name of town]

Ok. Do you know what you need, GCSEs-wise, in order to do that?

No.

Dunno? Ok. But that's your plan. Ok, super! How long's that course?

Erm... two years, I think.

And then you'd work as... what would you be?

Dunno.

Would you be a nursery nurse, maybe, something like that?

Yeah.

Do you mean little children, pre-school children?

Yeah.

I see, lovely. What about for the rest of Year 11, then, what are your best hopes for the rest of Year 11?

(Pause) Don't know.

Don't know?... If it was going to be the perfect Year 11, your ideal | Limited research. But has a goal. |

Self as passive in school context	502 503	*experience, you know, what would that be like? What would happen in the next few months?*	
	504		
	505	(Long pause)	Appears very passive - no particular hopes or aims for this year.
	506		
	507	*What would you like it to be like?*	
	508		
	509	(Pause)	
	510		
	511 512	*Thinking about friends, or thinking about your lessons, or whatever...*	
	513		
	514	(Long pause) Don't know.	
	515		
	516	*No particular thoughts on that?*	
	517		
	518	No.	
	519		Passive role - friends drifted away, no conflict
	520	*Ok, ok. But you've obviously got a goal, though, haven't you, for*	
	521	*after you finish school, which is... the childcare course, so that's*	
Self as passive within social circle	522	*good. Ok, so it sounds, from what you've said, like P.E. was an*	
	523	*issue, that you wanted to get out of P.E., 'cos that's a lesson you*	
	524	*didn't like at all, and there was issues about friends sort of drifting*	
	525	*away... Were there any actual fall-outs, or was it just a case of they*	
	526	*kind of drifted off and found new friends, or... how did that happen?*	
	527		
	528	They just found new friends.	
	529		
	530	*Ah, ok. But that was obviously something that made your time in*	
	531	*school harder...*	
	532		Pattern of absence - not whole days, just individual lessons
	533	Yeah	
	534		
Patterns of absence	535	*...when your friends sort of deserted you a bit. I'm trying to, sort of,*	
	536	*piece together what else was going on for you, you know, in Year 10*	
	537	*when your attendance did drop off. You say it was only some*	

Reluctance to share - attempt to minimise 'deviant' behaviour?	538	*individual lessons, you didn't miss a lot of whole days, is that right?*	
	539		
	540	Yeah	
	541		I wonder why this didn't come up earlier?
	542	*So it was individual lessons. And then what, you'd come back into*	
	543	*school after that, would you?*	
	544		
	545	Yeah.	
	546		
	547	*Ok, I see. What other lessons was it, as well as P.E., then, that you*	Doesn't know why science - no
	548	*ended up missing?*	particular aspect of it?
	549		
Reticence	550	(Pause) Science.	
	551		
	552	*Yeah?*	
	553		
	554	*That's... why science in particular?*	
	555		
	556	I don't know.	
	557		
	558	*Don't know? Was it to do with the lesson, or the people in the*	
	559	*lesson, or anything else?*	
	560		
	561	Can't remember.	
	562		
	563	*Can't remember? But science, you missed a few science lessons...*	
	564		
	565	Yeah.	
	566		
	567	*Ok. Anything else?*	
	568		
	569	No.	
	570		
	571	*P.E. and science mainly?*	
	572		
	573	Yeah.	

	574 *Ok. So we've talked about friendships, we've talked about P.E. and* 575 *science... What else is important in this story? What else was an* 576 *important factor for you, that maybe got in the way of you being in* 577 *school?* 578 579 (Pause) Don't know. 580 581 *Nothing else?* 582 583 No. 584 585 *Nothing else about your life outside of school that might have* 586 *affected things?* 587 588 No. 589 590 *I asked you about whether anything had changed, but you said* 591 *there was nothing in particular that you could think of that* 592 *changed... No?* 593 594 No. 595 596 *Ok. So if you had to sum up, then, your experiences of, of not* 597 *being in school as much in Year 10.. We've talked about friends,* 598 *we've talked about science and P.E... Anything else we can add to* 599 *that?* 600 601 (Pause) 602 603 *I promise I won't get you into trouble... (both laugh)* 604 605 (Pause) Dunno. 606 607 *Dunno? Ok. I've asked you quite a lot of questions there, haven't* 608 *I... Is there anything that I haven't asked you that I should have* 609 *asked you? Anything that's important, relevant to your*	

	610	*experiences? It's all about your experience...*	
	611		
	612	(Pause)	
	613		
	614	*Nothing else you can think of that perhaps I should have asked*	
	615	*you?*	
	616		
	617	No.	
	618		
	619	*No? Ok. I think that's probably about it, then, isn't it? I think I've*	
	620	*asked you all the questions I can ask you, really... Thank you.*	
	621	*Shall I stop the thing? [indicates Dictaphone - turns Dictaphone off].*	