The emotional experiences of Teaching Assistants, working 1:1 with a child

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Abstract

Government policy has identified the role of schools in the support and development of emotional wellbeing of children, specifically highlighting the contribution of Teaching Assistants (TAs) to children's welfare. Whilst previous research has focused on the instructive role of TAs, and the impact of 1:1 learning support from TAs on children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN/D), there has been limited exploration of the role of TA beyond the pedagogical, when working 1:1. There is also a paucity of research considering the experience of TAs, and the emotional experience of working closely with individual children. This qualitative research sought to explore the emotional experiences of TAs engaging in 1:1 work with a child. In this study, the emotional experience of working on a 1:1 basis with a child was understood in the context of austerity and cuts within education, the changing expectations and roles of TAs, as well as the individual contexts of the TAs. Using a psychosocial approach (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), two Free Association Narrative Interviews were completed with four TAs working at mainstream primary schools in London. All of the TAs worked on a 1:1 basis with the same child, regularly. A Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) approach was used to understand and interpret the data, using a case-study approach to consider each individual's data as a 'whole'. Themes drawn from each case-study were presented in the findings, then considered collectively, with pertinent psychoanalytic concepts applied. The implications of the study, for educational psychology practice and for the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting TAs with the emotional impact of their work is discussed, through the use of reflective and supervisory spaces.

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Abbreviations

ASC	Autism Spectrum Condition
BPS	British Psychological Society
CYP	Children and Young People
CLA	Children who are Looked After
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007-2010)
DfE	Department for Education (2010-date)
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment (1995-2001)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001-2007)
DoH	Department of Health (1988-2018)
DISS	Deployment and Impact of Support Staff
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
EY	Early Years
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
FANI	Free Association Narrative Interview
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MAST	Making a Statement
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SEBD	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN/D	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDCo	Special Education Need and Disability Co-ordinator
TA	Teaching Assistant
TLSA	Teaching and Learning Support Assistant
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter aims to provide context and demonstrate the relevance and significance of using a psychosocial approach to explore the emotional experiences of Teaching Assistants (TAs) working 1:1 with children in mainstream primary schools. This will be demonstrated through detailing the:

● Historical and current context of TAs within the English education system

● Role of TAs in the context they operate

● Relevance of the national and local context to TAs

● Value of research and importance for the EP role

● Contribution of psychoanalytic approaches to education

I will present the argument that little attention has been paid to the experiences of TAs from their perspective, despite the significant presence of TAs in of the education workforce, and their attributed value by others. This chapter will conclude with my position and interest as a researcher taking a psychosocial perspective, acknowledging the interconnectedness between myself and participants in the research.

1.1 Teaching Assistants

1.1.1 Use of terminology

The term "Teaching Assistant" (TA) is used to represent individuals who work directly with children and young people in educational provisions, in a differing capacity to the Teacher. There are a range of terms used to describe this role, including Classroom Assistant, Learning Support Assistant and Special Needs

Assistants. The complexity and fluidity of the TA role will be discussed, through presenting the historical context, changing definitions and breadth of the role.

1.1.2 Historical context of Teaching Assistants

TAs have been supporting children in the classroom since the 1960s and have been present through significant social and political changes, education reform and economic uncertainty in the UK. TAs have grown in presence in classrooms; initially described as a volunteer helper (Kerry, 2005; Rees, 2009), and supporting Teachers with preparation and administrative tasks for learning. The descriptions of TAs changing from being an "extra pair of hands" (Groom & Rose, 2005, p20) to "mobile paraprofessional" (Kerry, 2005, p377) demonstrates the professionalisation of role and a move from assisting the teacher, to assisting with teaching. This semantic shift suggests a social change in perception of TAs; a broadening role for TAs to contribute to the learning and wellbeing of CYP.

1.2 Role of Teaching Assistants

The historical context of TAs demonstrates the complexity of understanding and defining role through periods of significant change. The presence of TAs in school became more formalised following the Plowden Report (1967), with the recommendation that 'teacher-aides' were employed to support teachers in a range of learning and preparation tasks. Since then, differences in the TA role have emerged, including a legacy of funding 1:1 TAs since the 1980s (Balshaw, 2010) and specific, delineated tasks being highlighted for TAs in the *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload* agreement ('National Agreement'; DfES, 2003) to reduce Teacher workload. The National Agreement led to a substantial increase in TAs being

employed, which drew criticism, suggesting the increased roles and development of HLTA training blurred the boundary between the role of a Teacher and Assistant roles (Burgess & Mayes, 2009).

Kerry (2005) highlights the challenge of defining the role of TAs through describing various examples of how TA roles can be operationalised. These roles were perceived to range from "dogsbody" (Kerry, 2005, p377) to an autonomous professional teaching whole classes, with levels of duties and responsibilities between, including designated TA for pupils. Kerry (2005) used the multiplicity of roles to highlight the importance of creating distinction in titles, roles and remits, to reduce confusion and improve effectiveness. Tucker (2009) posits the workforce reforms following the National Agreement (DfES, 2003) caused confusions of identity construction for TAs, as well as impacting further the lack of clarity of the TA role for parents and teachers. Through reviewing literature, Tucker (2009) highlighted key factors impacting the construction of TAs' roles and identity, suggesting the political and ideological positions of the time influenced how 'official' language about TAs was formed, as well as research exploring TAs' experiences and practice. A dominant focus of research became the time lower-achieving pupils spent with TAs on a 1:1 basis (Blatchford, 2007; Ofsted, 2010; Richards & Armstrong, 2008; Wedell, 2005) despite the findings that the support of TAs had contributed significantly to the inclusion of children with SEN/D in mainstream classrooms (Groom & Rose, 2005).

Whilst the discussion of the TA role continued, significant attention was drawn to the pedagogical function of role through the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff report (DISS; Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, Martin, Russell, & Webster,

2009). This report highlighted significant numbers of TAs were working 1:1 with children with SEN/D, whilst Teachers focused on whole-class learning. This approach meant students working with TAs often received less direct input from the Teacher and made less progress than their peers. Further work by the DISS authors in the "Making a Statement" study (MAST; Webster & Blatchford, 2013) found Teachers often positioned TAs as the SEN/D experts, despite both parties reporting a lack of knowledge and experience in SEN/D. These findings connected with the SEN/D reforms, as Teachers were identified as the educator responsible for planning and delivering for CYP with SEN/D in the reformed SEN/D Code of Practice (DfE, 2015).

Charting the history of TA roles, it is possible to see the plurality in definitions, as well as the changes to roles over time. The challenge to define the role of a TA highlights a dilemma for researchers and practitioners seeking to work with TAs. Researchers have commented on the 'role creep' and 'role stretch', (Hancock, Swann, Marr, Turner & Cable, 2002; Radford, Bosanquet, Webster & Blatchford, 2015, p9; Warhurst, Nickson, Commander, & Gilbert, 2014; p171) highlighting the TA role has broadened substantially, entailing more responsibility without formal consultation or development of consistent training. As TAs become more involved with delivering interventions for psychological, communication and physical needs determined by external agencies, and hold responsibility for emotional learning in specialist roles (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018; Hill, O'Hare & Weidberg, 2013), this suggests that a predominant focus on the pedagogical role of a TA gives a limited understanding of a broad role.

Whilst researchers, policy makers and practitioners grapple with the breadth of identity and role of TAs, CYP are clear on the qualities they value in TAs. Views included "kind", "warm" and "understanding" (Bland & Sleightholme, 2012, p174) and identifying TAs as helpers (Fraser & Meadows, 2008). Children were also able to identify the pastoral contribution of TAs (Cable, 2003). Furthermore, primary-aged children were able to delineate between the TA and Teacher role, separating the support and academic functions. Although neglected in previous literature, parental views of TAs were also sought by Williams and O'Connor (2012), identifying that parents valued the fun, sensitivity and nurturing aspects brought by TAs, referencing approachability when their children experienced difficulty, and the value of TAs' helping roles. These views suggest children and parents understand an overall, pastoral role for TAs, and the TA role exceeds a pedagogical function.

Despite the recommendations of the DISS and MAST studies, TAs providing periods of 1:1 support is not obsolete in mainstream settings, as TAs continue to have a targeted, in-class role with children with SEN/D; with direct working with a child being the second most common task for TAs in primary schools (Skipp & Hopwood, 2019). Senior leaders identified in Skipp & Hopwood's (2019) evaluation that TAs' direct work with individual children spanned the range of SEN/D, support exceeded pedagogical roles and included managing emotional and behavioural needs, medical support, as well as creating and adapting learning resources.

1.3 National and Local Contexts

1.3.1 Political context of austerity and emotional wellbeing

TAs exist within an education context under increasing pressure, following a decade of austerity, LA budget cuts, ministerial and priority shifts within the DfE and a "tipping point" for high needs spending within SEN/D (Mills, 2017; Parish, Bryant & Swords, 2019, p1; Solity, 2017). Although schools face increasing challenges with funding, the employment of TAs has increased yearly, from 79,000 in 2000 to 263,900 in 2018, representing 27.9% of the educational workforce (DfE, 2019), with many TAs delivering in-class support to individual students (Skipp & Hopwood, 2019). This suggests, that despite increasing financial challenges, TAs are considered central to the work of schools to support children with SEN/D.

The BPS (2018) is unequivocal in stating the upsurge in CYP's mental health needs is connected to the rise in austerity and economic challenges in society. In response to the substantial increase in CYP's SEMH needs, the Government presented a plan for schools to have a greater connection with mental health services, with new teams working within schools to develop the capacity of staff to meet the SEMH needs of CYP ('Green Paper' for Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health provision; DfE & DoH, 2017). The 'Green Paper' suggests educators can have a similar impact through delivering interventions to CYP, comparable with a trained therapist, suggesting TAs will be further included in 1:1 work for wider purposes.

1.3.2 Attachment Theory in Schools

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) has become increasingly applied in schools, in relation to the adults who care for children during the school day (Colley & Cooper, 2017). In a modern context, the understanding of the caregiver-infant relationship has been applied within education; linking the ideas of 'proximity seeking' of children to carers, having a 'secure base' in a relationships to explore from and increase independence, alongside the development of the 'internal working model' representing how the child interprets the world and relationships based on prior experience (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980). Connected to the concept of attachment are the theories of 'containment' and 'reverie' (Bion, 1962a) demonstrating the role of an attuned adult to receive, understand and process the emotional communication of a child, when seeking to care for them. These concepts are often linked to relationships with adults in education, including TAs (Bomber, 2007). More recent advocates of attachment have utilised the theory to develop classroom strategies and whole-school approaches for emotional wellbeing (Bomber, 2007; Geddes, 2006; 2017; Rose & Gilbert, 2017). Whilst initially focused on children with experience of significant trauma and loss, attachment and associated psychoanalytic principles are pertinent to all children, and relevant to schools (Colley & Cooper, 2017).

The context of rising SEMH needs for CYP has led to educators developing attachment-informed relationships with children, as part of the wider 'Attachment Aware Schools' programme (Rose & Gilbert, 2017). Key adults are recommended as an intervention; positing the presence of an adult with less responsibilities for whole-class teaching, such as a TAs, can provide a trusting, consistent relationship as part of developing a child's independence in learning (Bomber, 2007; Greenhalgh, 1994).

Attachment-informed relationships between children and Teachers have been explored in research (Price, 2001; Verschweren & Koomer, 2012), with further research considering the 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1979; 1983) of teachers' relationships with children alongside a psychoanalytic framework (Ramvi, 2008; 2012, 2017). Ramvi's work invites reflection on the emotional needs of the adult within the attachment-informed relationship. However, the literature exploring the experiences of TAs working directly with a child is limited.

1.3.3 Local Context

This research takes place in the context of a London LA, with a substantial level of need in a population with disparate socioeconomic circumstances and increasing SEN/D needs. The LA commissions several services to support the SEMH development of CYP, including whole-school programmes to incorporate attachment and trauma-informed principles into the daily practice of educators, and an emotional literacy training programme for TAs in primary schools. Both of these programmes draw on attachment theory, emotional regulation and staff wellbeing, ensuring adults in roles with children reflect on their own emotions, experience and capacity to support others. Opportunities for educators to access group supervision spaces are available through the EPS offer, as well as the provision of reflective spaces for the TAs attending the emotional literacy training (Roberts, 2017). Whilst co-delivering the TA training and group supervision sessions, I noticed the emotions shared within the group, as many attendees shared the positives and challenges of their 1:1 work with children. The TAs positively evaluated the supervisory space, describing it as helpful and sharing that whilst reflective spaces for practice or the emotional impact of work were not available to them in schools, such opportunities would be desirable.

1.4 Teaching Assistants and Educational Psychologists

The published connection of TAs with EPs is limited, with few articles demonstrating EPs supporting TAs through group consultation spaces (Davison & Duffy, 2017) and developing skills and self-efficacy through training (Hayes, Richardson, Hindle & Grayson, 2011; Higgins & Guildford, 2014). There is a distinct role and literature base demonstrating EPs working with ELSAs; through training, supervising and evaluating the impact of their intervention (Krause, Blackwell & Claridge, 2020; Leighton, 2015; Osborne & Burton, 2014). This may highlight the potential for EPs to offer contribution to 'Assistants' within schools, when roles are clearly defined.

The variance in the TA role can make it difficult for EPs to 1) understand the remit and capacity of the role, 2) ensure appropriate recommendations are created in relation to the knowledge and planned input of TAs working with CYP and 3) consider TAs within their wider school contexts. TAs undertake a range of work when working in 1:1 with a child, including behaviour support (Scruton, 2016; Wren, 2017), adapting and modelling communication strategies (Martin & Alborz, 2014), physical care (Wren, 2017) and 1:1 social interventions as part of a 'safe space' for vulnerable students (Ross, 2019) alongside pedagogical tasks (Cockcroft & Atkinson, 2015). Thinking about challenges in role is rarely mentioned within these publications; Ross (2019) briefly mentioning the value of debriefing from the 1:1 work completed in the safe space and Scruton (2016) encouraging TAs to think about the impact of their beliefs and values on understanding behaviour, to seek help and identify "support mechanisms" (p132). These suggestions do not expand on the experiences of challenges for TAs or the system's role in helping to think about, understand and support when challenges are experienced. Cockcroft & Atkinson

(2015) highlighted a difficulty experienced by LSAs in relation to implementing recommendations from other professionals; identifying conflict between valuing the breadth of the role whilst feeling accountable for the delivery of interventions directed by (more well-paid) others. Although EPs were not directly named by the LSAs in the Cockcroft & Atkinson (2015) paper, this may suggest it is important for EPs to reflect on the destination of their professional recommendations, and the impact on TAs. Gaining an understanding of the experience of TAs working 1:1 will help EPs understand the TAs' roles and the challenges of their work, whilst attending to the emotional wellbeing for staff within whole-school systems.

Significant research (DISS, Blatchford et al, 2009; MAST, Webster & Blatchford, 2013) into the role of TAs suggests a primary focus on the pedagogical capacity of TAs, with limited exploration of the wider facets of role, such as pastoral work with CYP. The deployment of TAs in a 1:1 capacity continues, with roles beyond a pedagogical capacity (Skipp & Hopwood, 2019), suggesting 1:1 roles serve a purpose and need within schools. Whilst these studies have had a substantial impact on TA deployment, they included a limited exploration of the perspectives of TAs of role and the TA-child relationship. Seeking to understand the experience of TAs may inform how EPs work with TAs beyond developing pedagogical skills. By exploring how TAs make sense of the emotional aspects of 1:1 work, this may also lead to understanding about relationships with children in school, and within the school context.

1.5 Contribution of psychoanalytic theories to education

Despite an established connection of education and psychoanalytic thinking in the UK (Bibby, 2010; Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams & Osborne, 2005; Youell, 2006,); there has been a move away of education from the psychoanalytic ideas, resulting in a loss of reflection on the intrapsychic processes between educators and pupils (Bainbridge & West, 2012). There has been a move by educators with psychoanalytic interests to return this thinking to education, to help understand the unconscious processes between educators and children. Manning-Morton's (2006) group work considered the unconscious communications between children and EY practitioners as part of physical care and emotional learning, reflecting on the potential avoidance of emotions in EY practice. Manning-Morton's (2006) work with the practitioners highlighted the legacy of division between care and education; describing the lessening of 'care' and focusing on learning as representing avoidance of the difficulty in containing unprocessed emotions of young children (Manning-Morton, 2006). Further papers have used psychoanalytic theory to reflect on the unconscious communications between Teachers and students; as part of interviews with Teachers in a wider ethnographic study (Ramvi, 2008; 2012), through direct interventions with children (Price, 2006) and in reflective contexts with Teachers (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005; Weiss, 2002a, 2002b).

Whilst these articles highlight the relevance of applying psychoanalytic ideas to inform understanding of the emotional impact on Teachers, the experiences of TAs have not been explored through a similar lens. One study (Stammers & Williams, 2017) applied psychoanalytic theory to an observation of a TA with a child. Stammers & Williams (2017) acknowledged the different pulls for the TA; observing

the TA's response to the learning expectations of the teacher, and reflected on the TA's competing demands between the child's emotional needs and the institutional demands. Whilst this provides an indication of what may be unconscious processes for a TA in role; the understanding of the experience of the TA would be enhanced through the exploration of their views, where relevant psychoanalytic theory can then be applied.

Experiencing the value and use of psychoanalytic ideas in my educational psychology practice has empowered the potential to reconnect psychoanalytic ideas with education; aligning internal experiences with the social environs within which EPs operate (Ashford, 2012). Drawing from a psychosocial research tradition, this research aims to explore the experience of TAs working 1:1 with a child, considering beyond the face-value understandings that initial readings of qualitative data may present. This approach aims to provide an insight into the experience of TAs and the emotions in their work; applying relevant psychoanalytic theory previously utilised in education to gain further understanding. A further exploration of the psychosocial approach, the associated research paradigm and the connected theories will be presented in the Methodology chapter.

1.6 The position of the researcher

TAs exist within continually changing legislative, political and social contexts, with limited position and power to contribute or engage with the processes of change, or act as agents of change. Although representing a substantial proportion of the education workforce, TAs are considered "vital", yet are often "invisible" in the research discourse (Dyer, 1996 p187; Wood, 2016 p7). Research has been

consistently 'done-to' individuals within roles holding less power and position (Mertens, 2009). For TAs, their voices are marginalised in research (Armstrong, 2016), and their concerns have not been central to initial reasons for research inquiry. My curiosity about the TA experience initially developed from my experiences and interest in working with TAs, as well as from my personal experience of working in front-line, caring roles. The systems I worked in had explicit distinctions between individuals identified as 'professional' by qualifications and others (including myself) were described as 'non-qualifieds'. The roles involved direct work with, and in service of others, often without the professional security and support which comes with protected professions, such as supervision and professional bodies providing guidance and support for their members.

Prior to working in education, I was a Support Worker in a range of inpatient, residential and community-based mental health settings. In my different roles, I was aware of Support Workers describing not feeling listened to, or being seen as a professional voice of value. Despite having an intimate view into the lives of the people worked with, Support Workers' thoughts and experiences were not thought of as 'knowledge' by other professionals. As part of literature reviews conducted for previous academic studies, I noticed the feelings of being 'unheard' were reflected in the absence of literature, with few studies seeking the perspectives of Support Workers. When I changed my career to work in education, I noticed the parallels between the roles of Support Workers and TAs; 1) being identified as a 'key worker' with responsibilities, 2) engaging in 1:1 work with emotional and therapeutic support, 3) building trusting relationships and 4) facilitating the development of the individual's learning and skills. This position of both 'insider' from a similar

experience, whilst being an 'outsider' as a TEP (Gair, 2012) allows me to
acknowledge the impact of my experiences on understanding those of another, and
the use of subjectivity within the research process.

My interest in the experience of TAs further developed from working as an Assistant
EP alongside the Virtual School Team, where direct work with TAs supporting
Children who are Looked After took place. TAs were often identified as the 'key
adult' for a child; a role which varied from 1:1 work as part of specific interventions
(such as emotional regulation skills), in-class support as well as relational work
including morning greetings and being available when the child experienced distress.
The EPS sought to offer a group space for TAs, where a combination of training,
sharing strategies and peer discussion could take place, facilitated by EP team.
Through my work with the 1:1 TAs individually and in the small group sessions, I
was privy to discussions around the emotional experience of supporting children; the
challenges, conflicts and successes. I listened to TAs share they felt they had no-one
to speak to about the emotional challenges of work, or to share common experiences.
Witnessing the sharing of these inner experiences prompted my curiosity into whether
the emotional experience of TAs had been previously investigated.

Alongside the influences of my pre-training experience, is my immersion into the
experiential learning context of a TEP, and the imprints from the theories and
concepts privileged by training at the Tavistock. The doctoral training, embedded in
an attachment, systems and psychodynamic framework, demonstrates the importance
of an individual's internal experience, their relational connections with others and the
wider social, cultural and political contexts which they exist within. Applying this

thinking to research with TAs brings together the experience of the personal and professional identities of TAs, as well as their interaction with the wider context of schools, the education system and the politicisation of education. Exploring these ideas within my ontological, epistemological and axiological positioning, relevance to a psychosocial approach will be discussed in the Methodology chapter.

1.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the historical, social and political context for TAs, highlighting key studies which have a significant influence on the role of TAs within schools as well as current, national policies which further relate and impact upon their roles. Within these key studies, the focus of the role's function is central with little consideration of TAs' views, suggesting the voice of their experience has been underrepresented. In the next chapter, a Literature Review will be completed to systematically identify studies which explore the views of TAs, and will present a critique of the available literature on TAs' perspectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will utilise a Systematic Literature Review to identify the current

literature on the views of Teaching Assistants. The Literature Review will:

- Present questions to guide the focus of the literature search

- Utilise a systematic search strategy and screening process to determine

  relevant papers

- Describe and synthesise identified research, presenting the contribution of

  each study

- Critically evaluate the selected research using an appraisal tool

- Justify the aim and rationale for the current study, positioning this research in

  the presented literature

2.1 Literature Review Questions

As presented in the Introduction, the historical, socio-political contexts of TAs

highlight the complexity of defining role, the predominant focus on pedagogical skills

and the national context of increasing SEN/D with sustained use of TAs for direct

support of children. What is unclear is the extent of literature that explores the

perspectives of TAs working 1:1 with children. Therefore, the following question was

asked of the literature: "*What is known about the perspectives of TAs, working*

directly with children, in schools, in England?" using the search strategies and

screening processes highlighted in Appendix A. The initial search highlighted the

views of Senior Leaders and SENDCos in schools, children and parents have been

sought regarding TAs, but limited studies that explored the perspective of TAs

themselves in 1:1 roles with children. Therefore, a broader, literature search question

was developed, aiming to encapsulate *"What is known about the perspectives of TAs working in schools in England?"*, identifying the location for the research, due to the specific contexts of the English education system described in the Introduction.

2.2 Search Strategy

Six databases were identified to search for relevant papers; including APA PsycINFO, APA PsyArticles, Psychological & Behavioural Sciences Collection, PEP Archive, ERIC, and Education Source. Searches were repeated between February 2019 to April 2020, to establish new publications released during the research period. Databases were selected for their relevance, through their collections of psychological, (APA PsyINFO, APA PsyArticles, Psychological & Behavioural Sciences Collection) psychoanalytic (PEP Archive) and education journals (ERIC, Education Source). The databases utilised captured the "Educational Psychology in Practice", "Educational and Child Psychology" and "British Journal of Educational Psychology" journals; sought due to their educational psychology focus. Furthermore, a hand search of doctoral theses was completed in Ethos.

2.2.1 Search terms

Pilot searches were completed using the term "Teaching Assistant" to identify the range of terms used to represent the role within the literature and refine terms for the final searches. A thesaurus was also used to identify synonyms for key words, such as 'experience'. Table 1 presents an outline of key terms drawn from the first literature search question and utilised in searches detailed in Appendix A. Demonstrated in Table 1 is the use of truncation (*), allowing for varying suffixes at the end of a word

and the use of quotation marks to ensure specific phrases were searched as whole

terms.

Table 1: Search Terms utilised in Search 1

Role / Title	Experience	Task terms	Refining terms
"Teaching Assistant"	Experience	"One-to-one"	Child*
"Classroom Assistant"	Perspective		School
		1:1	
"Learning Support Assistant"	View		Education
		"In-class support"	
	Account		
"Special Needs Assistant"			
	Narrative		
"Key Worker"			

Individual searches were completed for each group of terms using the Boolean

Operator 'OR', combining the groups of searches in stages, using the Boolean

Operator 'AND'. Preliminary searches drawn from the first literature review question

identified many papers relating to Graduate Teaching Assistant roles in universities,

and adult healthcare roles; therefore, refining terms were utilised to centre the search

within the context of working with children. Following further search iterations, a

reduced number of terms were utilised to focus specifically on the school context,

with several search iterations until no new papers were found; the final search terms

utilised can be found in Appendix B. The retrieved papers identified from the final

search strategy and linked to the second literature question, can be found in Appendix

C. The final search demonstrated a limited number of papers exploring TAs'

experiences, with very few papers with an explicit focus on direct work with individual children.

2.2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To refine the search strategy and screening process to identify papers with relevance to the literature search question, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established; detailed in Table 2. Searches were limited by date to 2008; acknowledging the significant impact of the DISS publication (Blatchford et al, 2009) on role definition, deployment of TAs and on the education context in England. The literature was initially limited to research based in England, due to the specific social, political and economic context of education. However, due to the low number of returned papers, English language papers which met other inclusion criteria were accepted in the review.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Research on the TAs' views/experiences of their role	Studies focused on the evaluation of TA led interventions/practices, TA views solely about an intervention/practice or views on professionals/parents/child
Research with multiple perspectives from different stakeholders relating to TAs, where TAs have been included	Research focused on a Senior Leader, SENDCo, Teacher, Parent or Child view of TAs, without TA's views
Peer-reviewed publications	Non peer-reviewed publications, articles in magazines or letters.

Studies where primary data was collected	Studies using secondary data or systematic literature reviews with no primary data generation. Position papers, book reviews, books or editorials
Published in English Language	Papers without an English translation
Use of qualitative approaches to collect data	Use of solely quantitative approaches to collect data
Papers published after 2008	Papers published before 2008

A systematic process of screening was utilised, where titles, abstracts and full papers were reviewed against the above criteria. A PRISMA flowchart (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009) is presented in Figure 1 to demonstrate the levels of screening which took place following the retrieval of papers in the final search strategy laid out in Appendix B, leading to the remaining number of papers. Papers which were excluded from the critical review are listed in Appendix D, with level of screening and reason for exclusion.

2.3 Critical Review

Following the screening process for the literature search, five journal articles and one thesis remained for critical review. Table 3 details the authors, participant focus, type of study, location of the research and the authors' professional identification where stated. Each study is critically evaluated using the Qualitative Critical Appraisal checklist by the Specialist Unit for Research Evidence (SURE, 2018). The SURE framework explores the context of research, and provides questions to guide the evaluation of studies, based on methodology choice, sampling strategy, data

collection, researcher positioning in relation to participants, ethics and interpretation

of data. Linking to the psychosocial paradigm taken for this study, the SURE

framework was selected as it invites evaluation of researcher reflexivity, power and

ethics. The appraisal of the researcher's relationship to the research, role and

participants allows a consideration of the 'Social Graces' (Burnham, 2013),

considering the visible and less visible differences and similarities between

participants and researchers, and whether this is present within the literature. In

addition to the individual, critical appraisal of these papers, themes common to the

papers will be discussed. A demonstration of the approach to critical appraisal can be

found in Appendix E.

Figure 1: PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram for Literature Search Question - *What is known about the perspectives of TAs working in schools in England?"*

*additional structures of title and abstract screening
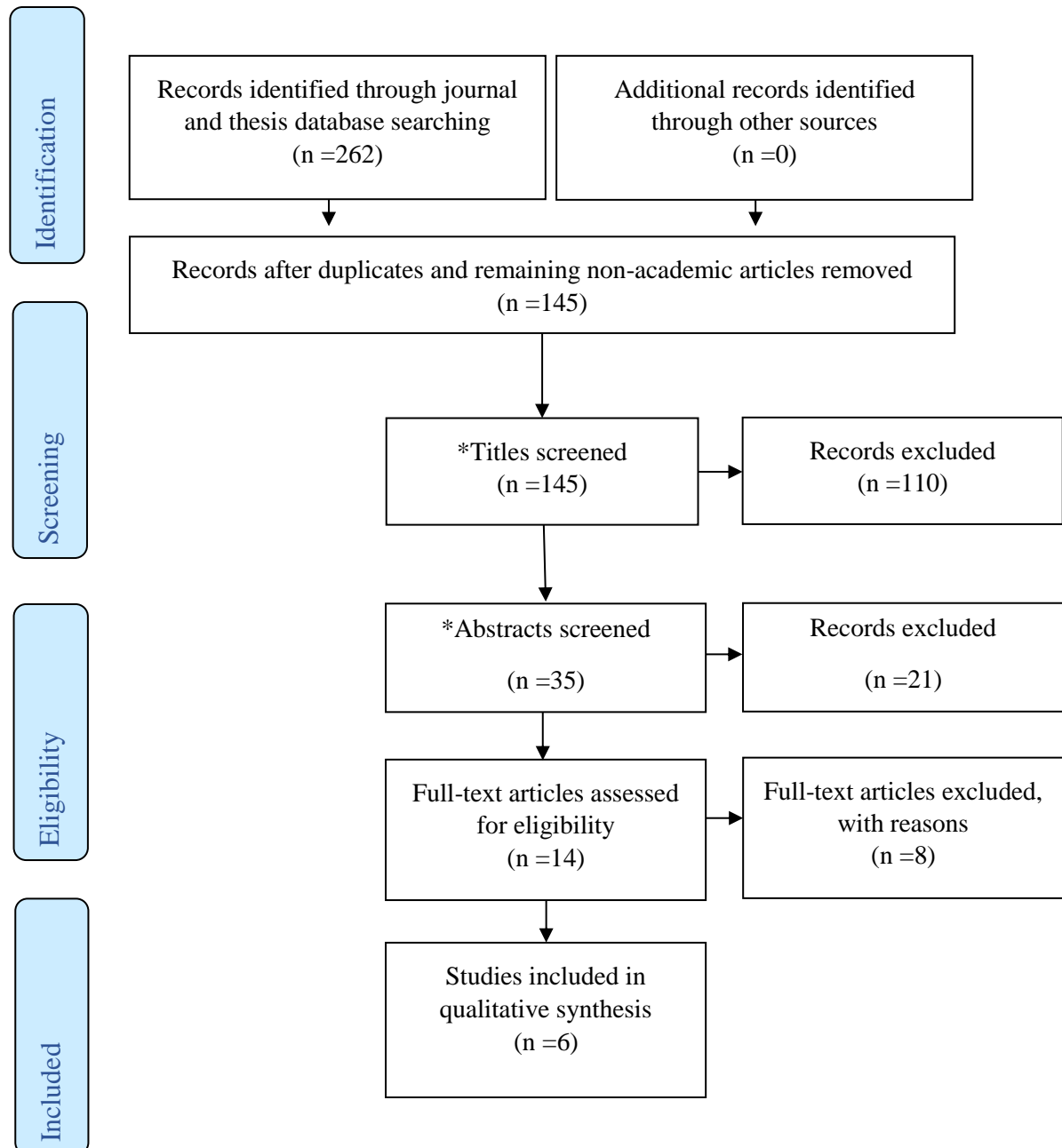
Table 3: Summary of Identified Studies for Critical Appraisal

Authors, date	Participant Focus & Type of Research	Research Location	Profession/s of authors
Barkham (2008)	TAs, Teachers and wider school community – 'participant observer' ethnographic approach and individual interviews	Bristol, UK	Academic– Education University, England
Maliphant (2008)	LSA – case-study, auto-ethnographic approach	Undisclosed city in England	LSA; student of Psychoanalytic Masters, England
Mackenzie (2011)	TAs – focus groups and individual, life histories interviews	East London, England	Lecturer in Education – University, England
Watson, Bayliss & Pratchett (2013)	TAs and Teachers – group discussions, workshops and individual interviews	Rural/urban areas of Devon, England	Education, childhood studies and SEN/D academics – University, England
Syrnyk (2018)	TAs and Teachers – mixed methods	Midlands, England	Academic- Psychology, University, Canada
Knight, (2015)	TAs – interviews analysed using IPA	Unidentified region in England	Educational Psychologist

2.4 Barkham (2008) Suitable work for women? Roles, relationships and

changing identities of 'other adults' in the early years classroom

The premise for Barkham's (2008) study was that TAs were marginalised within the

literature, acknowledging the gender and class status of TAs may have influenced this

silence, alongside the assumption of shared experiences of women in these roles.

Barkham's (2008) study utilised the "participant-observer' stance (Barnes, 1992,

p116), using an ethnographic approach to embed herself in the role of a TA, before

conducting interviews with four TAs, six Teachers and the Head Teacher; then

conversations within the wider community. Barkham (2008) presented her

epistemological leanings, highlighting the influence and importance of subjective,

diverse experiences and her aspirations for transformative research within a feminist

paradigm. Using this position, Barkham (2008) aimed to use both the insider and

outsider position; assuming the role within the setting to inform her interviews, then

following interviews, providing transcripts to her participants following interviews to

clarify details and check her understanding.

Barkham's (2008) approach to analysis implies a deductive stance, as she described

"*accounts given by the participants in this study are examined for evidence of a*

relationship between 'women's work' and the changing role of teaching assistants"

(p844). Whilst Barkham (2008) stated the analysis utilised a framework, the scant use

of quotes or supportive evidence provides the reader with solely her interpretation,

limiting the capacity for further reflection or alternative hypotheses. The presented

themes discuss the power and position of TAs, within their relationships with school

staff, and how they are perceived by staff and children. Akin to work considering the

caring function in education (Osgood, 2005), Barkham (2008) identifies similar themes of familial metaphors in professional relationships, with TAs assuming caring and emotional roles with children; distinct from the teacher, as a 'helper' (p845) and someone who 'really cares' (p846). Whilst this study does not explore the views of TAs in their work with children, the presented parallels between family life and caring responsibilities may point to an emotional aspect of role that could be further explored.

However, there are other issues which may impact the credibility of the study. Barkham's (2008) entry into the setting was mediated by the Headteacher, whom she knew from a postgraduate course. The introduction of Barkham to the system by the Headteacher may have had an impact on the power relations between Barkham and her participants, including when seeking informed consent and completing personal interviews. This is an interesting parallel for a study which identifies power and positions as a central aspect of the TA experience. Furthermore, Barkham (2008) did not use a recording device and made notes during the interview, which may mean some of the rich content of the interviews or reflections on the non-verbal or environmental experiences may be lost due to the dual roles of interviewer and transcriber. Although concepts of gender and class are not unique to this study (Osgood, 2005; Wood, 2016), and Barkham (2008) highlights the feminist framework applied to the data, the potential for Barkham to present excerpts from the 'fieldwork notes' and quotations to support her position on class and gender were not utilised.

2.5 Maliphant (2008) The triad in mind: An exploration of what is needed by the learning support assistant to facilitate integration of the child with special educational needs into mainstream education

This paper demonstrates an account of an LSA working 1:1 with a child in a mainstream primary setting; presenting a case-study of the child's development, alongside the experiences of the LSA, the author herself. Maliphant (2008) uses the psychoanalytic works of Bion (1987) and Winnicott (1990) to think about the emotional content of her work and interpret the experiences. Whilst Maliphant's (2008) work is indicated to be part of an overall thesis, there is only a brief presentation of the process used collected data, and a copy of the thesis could not be found online. The quotes in the text imply the use of process notes (Creaser, 2019), favoured by psychoanalytic observation groups Maliphant (2008) describes attending. There is limited information regarding the process of consent for the child and parent; although pseudonyms were utilised and personal demographics removed to provide anonymity. The reference to 'infant observation' groups (Reid, 1997) may imply consent was obtained for Maliphant's (2008) academic learning opportunity; however, this is not explicitly stated. Maliphant (2008) highlights using infant observation and work discussion groups as part of developing her thinking, describing being previously unaware of the defence mechanisms employed in response to her experience with the child.

Maliphant's (2008) account provides an insider view of her LSA experience, using a chronological format to demonstrate the beginning of her work with the child, developing a relationship and interactions with the parent and school system.

Maliphant (2008) considers the role of the LSA with a maternal function; observing the parallels when containing the child's emotions, the challenge of maintaining her own feelings and response to the child along with the process of returning their distress in a digestible format. Drawing on psychoanalytic theories may help elucidate aspects of the emotional experience when working 1:1 with a child, using theory to describe the mechanism of how emotions can be received, and internalised by the TA. Maliphant's (2008) work appears unique in the literature, as a presentation of her perspective as an LSA and published independently. However, Maliphant's access to academic and psychological resources as part of her course, may provide her with opportunities not readily accessible to the TA workforce.

Alongside the emotional challenge of being overwhelmed in the early months of their work together, Maliphant (2008) describes the impact of the school system on the experience of an LSA, referring to times where she felt "isolated and unsupported" (p167). Maliphant (2008) uses psychoanalytic theory to understand the unconscious defences of the system, reflecting on whether the difficult emotions evoked in the school staff team were defended against, leaving Maliphant to cope alone without wider support. Maliphant (2008) draws on the systemic factors such as hierarchy and resource challenges which may also impact on LSAs; highlighting how these contexts also mean LSAs are left to manage alone. This may present an additional, theoretical understanding to the findings of Blatchford et al (2009), where TAs are described as being left with the responsibility of the child with SEN/D; by acknowledging the emotional challenge, uncertainty and anxiety felt systemically about the capacity to meet the needs of a child with SEN/D. In addition to being left to 'cope alone' (Maliphant, 2008, p175), it is suggested the lack of support for LSAs

may increase the emotional challenges within role, as defences against anxiety are enacted in response to feeling overloaded, leaving the LSA feeling 'uncontained' and impacting the child they work with. The contribution of psychoanalytic theory to illuminate an individual experience demonstrates the value of exploring further the emotional experience of TAs, to identify whether Maliphant's (2008) account is echoed by other 1:1 TAs.

2.6 Mackenzie (2011): "Yes, but…": Rhetoric, reality and resistance in teaching assistants' experiences of inclusive education

Mackenzie (2011) explored TAs' perspectives of inclusion for children with SEN/D, with a focus on their backgrounds and personal experiences. Mackenzie (2011) utilised two qualitative approaches; completing a focus group interview and individual interviews with several TAs, where their life histories were further explored. The research is situated in the context of TAs' voices being limited within the literature, in relation to their impact and effectiveness when working with children with SEN/D. Positioning the voices of TAs as central to the research, Mackenzie (2011) implied an emancipatory purpose, acknowledging her role in the interpretation and presentation of their stories. However, the details of the interview process and analytical approach to data are unclear.

Mackenzie's (2011) use of the focus group presents an opportunity to identify common aspects of experience and allows experience to be explored from different viewpoints, as participants respond to given questions, as well as to each other. However, focus groups may lead to a dominant voice, meaning some views may

become privileged, with social norms impacting how participants voice dissenting views (Kitzinger, 1995). This limitation may have been managed using individual interviews; however, the process of developing interview procedures and questions is not clear. The use of life-histories in data collection and building case-studies of participants may point to an ontological position, acknowledging a constructivist position. Although the researcher's paradigm is unclear, an interest in the contradictions and tensions within the data highlights the value of further exploring and making meaning from experiences where the data is not taken at face value. Whilst considering some of the complex interactions within the data, there is limited reference to the researcher reflexivity. Mackenzie (2011) acknowledges her role in selecting stories and interviewing her students, although does not expand upon the power relations between lecturer/researcher and student/participant that may impact the study.

The paper summaries themes pertaining to the experience of challenging relationships for TAs with colleagues; conflicts in views and approaches to inclusive practice compared with recent policy changes, more recently qualified colleagues as well as the dissonance between the challenges and positive, rewarding feelings of the work (Mackenzie, 2011). Many participants refer to the demands and impact of the role, describing care and love for the children they work with alongside the emotional challenges for themselves; however, the analysis of this aspect is limited. Mackenzie (2011) interpreted the caring theme as connected to a perceived gender-role within a profession, connecting aspects of care from the life-histories of the TAs to their roles, where TAs had family members or experience of SEN/D. The case-study approach helped to highlight the individual-as-a-whole aspect of the data, presenting the

interactions of the personal and social worlds for each TA. However, the research focused on the emotional interactions and tensions for TAs with their colleagues and the system, with only a brief insight into the experience of direct work with children. This demonstrates a potential to expand on emotional experiences which relate to TAs working 1:1 with children.

2.7 Watson, Bayliss & Pratchett (2013) Pond life that 'know their place': exploring teaching and learning support assistants' experiences through positioning theory

Watson, Bayliss & Pratchett's (2013) stark title quoting terms 'pond life' and 'know their place' point to themes of power and class similar to those described by Barkham (2008). Watson et al (2013) used a series of workshops with TLSAs and Teachers across six schools to develop a shared meaning of the TLSA role. This was explored further using individual interviews to reflect on narratives from the group workshops, with identified themes presented back to the group. The authors used Positioning Theory (Davies & Harre, 1999) to explore similarity and difference in narratives, acknowledging the potential for the TLSAs' voices to be silenced, particularly as 4 of the 6 Teachers were also senior leaders. Watson et al (2013) highlight their interpretivist framework, using the returning of the themes to the participants to assure their presentation of the narratives are derived from participants, rather than imposed. However, the reflexivity of the researchers and their impact on the data interpretation is limited, with a vague reference to funders behind the study, and no discussion of ethical approval.

Power and status in relation to position within the school is a key theme from the group interviews. When the concepts of "pond life" and "knowing one's place" (Watson et al, 2013, p105) were presented, Teachers within the group appeared to respond defensively, suggesting it was a worst-case situation, not all TLSAs would experience it and one Teacher 'never had any complaints' (p105). Following this, the study described the TLSAs being silenced in this narrative, including when a Teacher participant presented a forceful view of not wanting to describe TLSAs as "professional" (Watson et al, 2013, p106). Similar to Barkham (2008), constructs of class and power were connected to perceptions of what "professional" means for roles inhabited by women, and the conflicted status of caring roles being seen as less professional and of a lower status.

Within individual interviews, the TLSAs rejected some given positions from the group discussions and presented alternative and different positions regarding professional identity. The generation of narratives in the individual interviews suggested further evidence of difficulty to voice positions and narratives pertaining to their experience within the power-laden group (Watson et al, 2013). Despite one Teacher's view that TLSAs were not professionals, an alternative view valuing the role came through TLSAs' close connection and similarities to the children and families within the communities; being confidants of families and understanding their contexts. This was described as 'social glue' (Watson et al 2013; p114), with the social and support tasks of TLSAs positioned as different, important roles rather than less professional. The TLSAs also shared views that further constructed their professional identities as relating to relationships with children, broader functions than pedagogical support and the impact of their own experiences on their work lives. TLSAs shared experiences of providing 'tender loving care" to children who need it

and describing their roles have gone beyond literacy support to someone who "supports their life" (p113). The TLSAs' previous negative experiences of school suggested the TLSAs felt their own histories informed how they understood and worked with children, showing a link between the personal and the professional. However, the personal influence of the TLSAs' own parental roles and emotional aspects of their professional role highlighted a conflict between "being nurturing and caring" whilst avoiding "being labelled as mumsy" (p112). The subjects of the relationships with children, emotional aspects of role and interaction of their personal and professional lives suggests a potential for further exploration of the TAs' individual experiences, separate to research aiming to define a shared meaning of role and outside of groups with power-differentials that may impact the expression of their views.

2.8 Syrnyk (2018) Knowing nurture: experiences of teaching assistants for children with SEMH

Syrnyk's (2018) study was positioned within the historical context of TAs in England, as well as the 'nurture approach' context being utilised within the school setting being researched. Alongside highlighting the research from other's perspectives to understand the role and valued characteristics of TAs, Syrnyk (2018) pointed to the limited information from the TA view, specifically in the SEMH context. Applying a case-study approach to a specialist primary school, Syrnyk (2018) used a semi-structured interview with 19 TAs about their role, practice and perspectives on TA qualities, alongside an adapted version of a questionnaire to ascertain the behaviours and beliefs of teaching staff. This data was triangulated with

interview and questionnaire data from the TA's Teacher colleagues. The study was presented as a mixed-method approach, using content analysis to identify themes from the interviews and comparing with the questionnaire data. Further attempts to quantify the data were noted; Syrnyk (2018) used a coverage calculation, using a percentage to give a representative weighting of a theme amongst all themes generated in each question. Although Syrnyk (2018) does not present her research paradigm, it may be suggested that attempts to quantify and compare to achieve consistency and generalisability may suggest a realist-informed approach to research.

Demographic information of the participants demonstrated a high proportion of female TAs from a range of age groups, with diverse previous experiences and length of service in the school. More detailed information on individual participants is not included, due to confidentiality concerns pertaining to the study; however, the maintenance of anonymity results in a loss of individual views situated in their contexts. The study appears to focus on principles aligned with post-positivist research, such as generalisability and accounting for bias; there appears to be no inclusion of reflexive accounts of the researcher on their position, influence or power within the research or in relation to participants.

Syrnyk (2018) utilises content analysis without a clear indication of the process by which themes are identified or generated, and primarily focuses on the occurrence of a theme. Key themes include the rewarding aspects of the role and capacity to utilise 1:1 working in a smaller setting, as well as the influence of parenting roles within their practice. Comparisons were made with mainstream settings, where it was

suggested the consistency of the application of the nurture approach and size of the setting permitted supportive staff relationships, which have been reported in other studies to be challenging for TAs (Mackenzie, 2011; Watson et al, 2013). However, the negatives of the approach were discussed, with TAs sharing the emotional challenges of the work, such as the potential to become "wrapped up in the emotions of that child" (Syrnyk, 2018, p338). Although not explored in further depth, the intimation of an emotional impact of the work, as suggested by Watson et al (2013) presents a potential avenue for further research into the TA experience.

2.9 Hand Search of Theses

Further to the systematic search of journal databases, a hand search of published theses was conducted, using the British Library Ethos database. One thesis was highlighted as relevant to this literature search; Knight (2015). Knight's (2015) thesis has been reviewed for themes, methodological approach and implications for future research.

2.10 Knight (2015) The experiences of primary-school teaching assistants working one-to-one with looked-after and adopted children who present with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; an exploration with the use of attachment theory

Knight (2015) interviewed six TAs from schools in an unidentified LA in England. Her focus was the experience of TAs working 1:1 with children who were either CLA, or Adopted, with identified SEBD. Knight (2015) used IPA as part of an interpretivist research paradigm to explore meaning making of the TAs' roles and

their experiences. Knight's (2015) rationale was that a dominant discourse in TA literature existed and pertained to the pedagogical role of TAs, impact on academic outcomes and their deployment in schools. Four main themes were identified, including 1) roles and relationships; 2) the emotional experiences of role (understanding the child's emotional experiences and the negative impact on self), 3) understanding and managing behaviour and 4) team dynamics impacting their 1:1 role. Knight (2015) utilised attachment theory to help understand the relational, familial and emotional themes identified within the data, noticing the TAs offered emotional containment to the children they worked with, supported them to make sense of their emotional states whilst managing their own emotional responses.

Knight (2015) presented an alternative conceptualisation to previous research about TAs, suggesting there was a greater emphasis within the TAs' views that the building of relationships and consistency in approaches were essential foundations of adult support for learning, and the strength and importance of the relationship had a positive impact on the child's emotional wellbeing and behaviour. This challenges the narrative presented in the DISS and MAST reports (Blatchford et al, 2009, Webster & Blatchford, 2013) that the value of individualised support relates only to academic outcomes, and supporting in learning tasks is a primary function of all 1:1 TA roles. The TAs shared the importance of relevant training and information-sharing about the life histories of the children they worked with; how this knowledge contributed to their application of consistent approaches to boundaries and behaviour management, as well as the connection, involvement and communication with the wider team around the child. (Knight, 2015). Using attachment and systems theory to understand these themes, Knight (2015) identified the TAs saw themselves as "additional

attachment figures" (p136) to the children, and their role involved providing consistency (as an individual, and as part of the wider system) to enable the child to experience 'relative dependence' through a 'secure base' (Bomber, 2007; Knight, 2015) and develop the child's emotional capacity to learn.

Knight (2015) purported the TAs' use of familial language, such as feeling like a 'brother' or 'mum' to the child demonstrated parallels between the parental function of attuning to and responding to emotional distress, and the TA role, akin to Maliphant's (2008) reflection on containing a child's emotional output and using reverie to develop the child's self-regulation skills over time. Within the discussion of relationships, a conflict in boundaries was highlighted by some participants; such as receiving physical affection from a child and the expectation of professional boundaries; being a 1:1 and a TA for the whole class, as well as worrying about separations from the child and being perceived as rejecting the child. Although many of the participants described having a colleague in school to seek support from when they experienced challenge; none of the interviewees appeared to discuss formal reflecting spaces such as supervision or work discussion groups, where experiences of role conflict and boundaries could be discussed, and provide a space for TAs to receive a parallel process of attunement, containment and reverie for their professional challenges.

As well as the experiences of conflict in role, a key feature of Knight's (2015) work was the exploration of the emotional impact of the work on the TAs, expanding on some of the tentative exploration from previous studies (Mackenzie, 2011; Watson et al, 2013). Participants shared the challenges of managing their own emotional

responses whilst seeking to meet the child's needs; trying to keep their difficult feelings from the child and seeking support from others for their own emotional needs (Knight, 2015). Difficult experiences for the TAs included worrying about 'getting it wrong' (p110) and being to blame for when it did, experiencing distress after a situation with a child and feeling 'frustration' and experiencing 'helplessness' (p140) with a child. Knight (2015) hypothesised the feelings of being stuck in relation to individual children, whom some TAs described as 'controlling', 'jealous' and 'obstinate' alongside reference to 'power-struggles' (p117-118, p128) connected with the within-child interpretations of behaviour, suggesting the TAs may have not reflected on what lay beneath the observed behaviour. Furthermore, Knight (2015) tentatively posited the TAs may also be experiencing projections of the child's emotional state, and that TAs could be supported to make use of projections to inform their responses. These examples give further credence to Knight's (2015) suggestion for a professional thinking space for TAs, as well as for further research to explore the potential intrapsychic experiences of TAs working 1:1 with children.

The depth of exploration into TA views and their experiences by Knight (2015) is the one of the first since the DISS and MAST studies (Blatchford et al, 2009; Webster & Blatchford, 2013) and demonstrates wider aspects of the TA role, and the emotional impact on TAs working 1:1 with children with SEBD. However, Knight's work focuses on a specific subgroup of TAs, working on a 1:1 basis with CLA or Adopted with SEBD needs, meaning there is a particular 'sensitivity to context' (Yardley, 2017) that needs to be considered when attempting to 'transfer' the findings of this study to other situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), such as TAs working directly with a primary aged child with an identified need. Therefore, Knight's (2015) suggestion

for further research into the negative emotional impact on the self can be considered as a relevant and valuable area for investigation with a stipulation expanding the research beyond Knight's (2015) participant population is reflective of its own social, political and personal contexts.

2.11 Synthesis of the Literature Review

2.11.1 Synthesis of themes

As demonstrated in the Literature Review, the existing literature into TAs' views collected through qualitative research approaches is limited. This included studies where TAs were participants alongside teachers or senior leaders (Barkham, 2008; Syrnyk, 2018; Watson et al, 2013), where the focus of gathering data pertained to defining the role of TA role (Watson et al, 2013) and how TAs work inclusively (Mackenzie, 2011). One paper presented a case-study written by an LSA of her experience working 1:1 with a child (Maliphant, 2008), providing the sole representation of the TA experience from an insider perspective (Gair, 2012). Knight (2015) provided a depth of information only possible in doctoral theses, which is utilised for its focus on the experience of TAs in a specific, 1:1 role and thorough consideration of epistemological and ontological positions, approach to data collection and analysis and researcher reflections.

Where views of TAs have been sought using qualitative approaches, TAs have spoken about the emotional aspects of role, including when this is not the intended focus of the research (Mackenzie, 2011; Syrnyk, 2018; Watson et al 2013), suggesting these experiences are currently relevant to the TAs involved in research, and highlights an area warranting further and directed attention. Knight's (2015) use

of IPA generated themes of emotional and relational aspects of role suggests further research into the area of the "negative emotional impact on self" (p163). TAs shared the emotional challenges of the role, with participants in studies describing leaving work upset following difficult experiences, challenges of managing frustration and feelings of helplessness (Knight, 2015) as well as experiences of feeling unsupported with the emotional challenge of the role (Knight, 2015; Maliphant, 2008). Some participants acknowledged the impact of the child's emotions on their feelings (Maliphant, 2008; Syrnyk, 2018), as well as having a personal connection to the child's experiences, suggesting this helped them to further understand the child (Mackenzie, 2011; Watson et al, 2013). Much of the research acknowledged the caring capacity of TAs, highlighting gendered roles, power imbalances and perceptions of caring roles as lesser than the academic, 'professional' discourse of education (Barkham, 2008; Mackenzie, 2011; Watson et al, 2013). The combination of the personal experience of a relationship in role, in the context of school, social and political systems points to a potential for tension between different facets of experience (Mackenzie, 2011; Watson et al, 2013), of which a psychosocial perspective may be able to offer an additional perspective.

The Literature Review demonstrates an area for further research; identifying an aspect of TAs' views shared in previous papers, with content which TAs brought to the interview in relation to their direct work with individual children, rather than having been specifically asked. This has established a gap in the literature for a purposeful exploration into the emotional experiences of TAs working directly with children, expanding on the research conducted by Knight (2015), considering the potential for negative emotional impact in 1:1 roles when working with children.

2.11.2 Methodological synthesis

One of the noticeable gaps in the studies presented in the Literature Review was the limited descriptions of methodological approaches, connected to decision-making based on a research paradigm and approaches to data analysis. Whilst four of the reviewed studies described interviewing participants and drawing themes from the data; only two refer to specific interview processes. This includes stating the use of focus groups and life histories (Mackenzie, 2011) and providing interview questions (Syrnyk, 2018); others provide less information regarding individual interview processes (Barkham, 2008; Watson et al, 2013). Syrnyk (2018) referred to content analysis, however, further discussion about the process of identifying themes from the data is unclear as it is not identified if the themes were generated or predetermined. Barkham (2008) highlighted issues with utilising a recording device within interviews and reflected the potential impact this may have on the conversation between her and the participants; however, the lack of verbatim information from the interview may present a challenge to reflect on the interview data as part of the analysis, and impact achieving the principles of commitment and rigour (Yardley, 2008, 2017). Although Barkham (2018) utilises Barnes's (1992) emancipatory position of the participant observer role and draws on a gender and power-relations informed framework, she does not elucidate further on how this influences her analytical approach to discourse and the approach taken and limits the transparency and coherence of her work (Yardley, 2008, 2017).

Knight's (2015) thesis provides a clear and in-depth presentation of the methodological and analytical processes of IPA, including a discussion of her

research paradigm and reflexive positioning to the data; however, a direct comparison of content provided to published articles would be unrepresentative, due to the different publication remits. Whilst one study applied psychoanalytic theory to understanding her experience of being an LSA as a case-study (Maliphant, 2008), the Literature Review did not reveal any studies drawing on psychosocial methods to explore TA views. The use of psychosocial approaches to explore TAs' experiences may provide further depth and understanding to themes generated from data and add to the limited literature base exploring the views of TAs.

2.12 Rationale for research

Reviewing the common themes from the appraised studies points to the focus on particular topics from the researchers' perspectives as important, whilst TAs speak of emotional experiences of their work (Barkham, 2008; MacKenzie, 2011; Maliphant, 2008; Syrnyk, 2018, and Watson et al, 2013). A positive contribution to the literature is where TA views were sought, and emotional experiences emerged, this was included and presented in the analysis, allowing for a broader view of the TA experience to be considered. However, only one study explored this area as a primary focus for the research, investigating a specific delineation of TA's potential roles (1:1 work with CLA and Adopted children with SEMH needs; Knight, 2015). Based on the shared findings across the papers and methodological limitations presented within this review, a psychosocial approach was thought to further enhance the exploration of TAs' experiences, considering the psychological, interpersonal and unconscious processes present within relationships with a child they work with (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Furthermore, this approach invites the reflexivity as a researcher

throughout the process, the presence of which was limited in the reviewed papers and varied in extent of discussion (Barkham, 2008; Knight, 2015; Watson et al, 2013).

2.13 Summary

This chapter has explored what is known about the views and experiences of TAs in an English context, since the publication of the DISS and MAST papers, SEN/D reforms and during a decade of austerity and political uncertainty. This review has demonstrated there is a dearth of papers exploring the views of TAs beyond the dominant discourse of the pedagogical role, including views of TAs working on 1:1 basis with children. A key finding of this review is that TAs voice their perspectives on the emotional and relational aspects of their work when taking part in interviews about their wider experiences. I have argued this suggests speaking about the emotional and relational aspects of role is important to TAs, and much of the previous research may not have considered the area as central in the inception of their research. The Literature Review identifies this common theme within different studies, and is a key tenet of one, more recent study (Knight, 2015). Within this search, no research utilising a psychosocial approach was identified. Therefore, the following chapter presents my psychosocial approach to research, and how this aims to show the emotional experience of TAs, working directly with a child.

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter presents the overall purpose for the research. It aims to

- Outline the research questions of this study

- Present the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions informing the researcher's paradigm

- Define key psychoanalytic theories relevant to the identified research paradigm and methodological approach

- Describe the research design and method

- Present the approach to data analysis

- Reflect on ethical practice and quality assurance of qualitative research

3.1 Purpose

This research has an exploratory purpose, as the Literature Review demonstrates limited attention has been given to investigating the emotional experiences of TAs working on a 1:1 basis. Furthermore, no known research has been conducted with TAs, where a psychosocial approach has been used to explore their experiences. This study has a potential to elevate the voices of TAs, in relation to their previously marginalised position in research (Armstrong, 2016). Using a psychosocial-informed approach aims to attend to both the inner, psychological processes of the individual as well as the social contexts, providing a space to reflect on the meaning of their emotional experiences as 1:1 TAs.

3.2 Researcher Positioning

As described in the Introduction, my interests in exploring TAs' views comes from

personal experiences, prior professional experience and my work as a TEP. These act

as influences on my approach to research, and are important to acknowledge when

considering research paradigms and associated methodologies. Therefore I will

examine my ontological and epistemological positions; how I understand

'knowledge', think about what can be 'known', and how 'knowledge' is generated.

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology can be understood as how an individual views the concept of 'reality', with

a number of different perspectives on how 'truth' is defined (Mertens, 2015).

Through exploring the assumptions, motivations and underlying beliefs held

regarding their view of reality, a researcher can create connections between the nature

of knowledge (epistemology) and how knowledge can be generated or understood

(methodology) with their ontological worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). By

adopting a psychosocial ontology, I posit that an individual's worldview is shaped

through their individual, internal experiences, interacting with the external, social

world on conscious and unconscious levels. A psychosocial ontology is separate to

other, established positions along the realist-relativist continuum, as it acknowledges

acceptance of the 'reality' of the unconscious and its processes alongside the

construction of one's experience through the interactions of the internal and external

experiences (Hollway & Froggett, 2013). With each individual's worldview shaped

by the interaction of the psychological/internal and social/external 'realities', this also

relates to myself as a researcher and my subjectivity; acknowledging how my role in

the research influences the process, from the inception of the idea to data collection,

analysis and interpretation (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemological positions influence how 'knowledge' can be known and the

relationship between knowledge and the researcher, informed by the ontological

perspective taken (Mertens, 2015). A psychosocial epistemology considers the

psychological and social worlds of equal relevance to inform understanding,

reflecting on the dynamic, intersubjective space between the researcher and

participant as an opportunity to 'know' through the dynamic, emotional and

unconscious processes which take place (Ogden, 1994). In the presence of the

researcher, the participant's narratives are constructed through the interactions of

their internal/external worlds, in a relational context (Hollway & Froggett, 2013),

with the impact of the participant upon the researcher placed as central to interpreting

the participant's narratives. Using one's own subjectivity "as an instrument of

knowing" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p159) places the emotional responses and

unconscious processes in the intersubjective space as fundamental to gaining

understanding; moving beyond the face-value to acknowledging the 'in-between'

aspects of experience (Hollway & Froggett, 2013). As this inquiry utilises researcher

subjectivity, it is important to acknowledge the perceptions and assumptions which

have impacted my own experience. This also involves acknowledging aspects of

myself and my experience which are discomforting and challenging, and the potential

for myself to enact unconscious defences against anxiety, as well as the participant.

3.2.3 Methodology

A range of qualitative approaches for exploring perspectives could be utilised for this research. Whilst many approaches to qualitative research may be suited to the exploration of TAs' views, a challenge remains that many established, qualitative methods assume that participants will provide coherent narratives that can be taken at face-value (Hollway & Jefferson, 2001); a position which is challenged in taking a psychosocial epistemological position. Methods such as IPA implicitly assume that participants are consciously aware of their contributions, and suggest the researcher is able to identify the participant's interpretation of their own experience, whilst bracketing off researcher subjectivity (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The suitability of psychosocial methods has been demonstrated by previous psychosocial research exploring role and identity (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway, 2015), and has provided a conduit to explore emotions. Adopting psychosocial ontological and epistemological positions corresponds with a psychosocial methodology, drawing on the application of researcher subjectivity as part of knowing the participant's 'meaning-frame' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; p32).

3.3 Principles of Psychosocial Research

Utilising a Psychosocial approach to research involves reflection on the principles which inform research practice.

3.3.1 (In)coherence

The concept of attempting to attain 'coherence' in an interview may suggest the researcher might wish to achieve methodological rigour, and potential desire to find 'valid' knowledge, aligned with other research paradigms (Hollway & Jefferson,

2013). This may suggest that researchers could (unintentionally) navigate their data into consistent narratives rather than accept the uncertainties and inconsistencies in their data, as reflective of individual experience. Psychosocial research acknowledges inconsistencies and abstract ideas within discursive practices as valuable to generating understanding, and their potential to reveal the "unconscious logic" and "emotional motivation" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013 p34) of what the participant shares, which the researcher can utilise reflexivity and their subjectivity to aid in sense-making. As the emotional and unconscious factors may not be accessible to the researcher in the moment of the research encounter, research supervision uses the presence of an external other, to help make sense of the interaction and processes.

3.3.2 Asking questions

Interview schedules in a range of approaches consider the linguistic loading of questions, where researchers endeavour to avoid directing participants to topics or using terminology with cultural or social judgements (Willig & Stainton-Jones, 2017). Particular to a psychosocial approach is that types of questions, and the timing when they are introduced may stifle the participant, leading them to answer to what they perceive is the researcher's agenda (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Furthermore, Hollway & Jefferson (2013) posit that 'why' questions may lead to intellectualisation or reasoning of experience, which through non-psychosocial methods, may be taken at face-value. Therefore, psychosocial research aims to use few, open questions and aims to become "almost invisible" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p34) in the research interaction.

3.3.3 Considering data as a 'whole'

Qualitative methodologies have been highlighted as focusing on fragments of individual experience, moving away from the data 'as a whole' to compartmentalise experience through the coding fragments and comparison with other individual's responses at initial analysis stages. A psychosocial approach proposes the consideration of the individual-as-a-whole; aiming to find a "gestalt" or "meaning-frame" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p34) to understand the experience of the participant.

3.4 Psychoanalytic Concepts in Psychosocial Research

The concept of applying psychoanalytic theories to research has existed since the inception of psychoanalysis. However, in the context of 'evidence-based practice' and 'effectiveness', psychoanalytic theories and their proponents have faced increasing pressure to demonstrate outcomes of psychoanalysis through methodologies connected to empirical paradigms of understanding phenomena (Rustin 2019; Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019). Further criticism has been presented, suggesting the limitations of applying psychoanalytical concepts beyond the experience of therapy in the clinic, in the social world and wider community (Rustin, 2019). In challenge to this, Rustin (2019) posit that the unconscious communications experienced clinically may be representative of internal and external interactions which take place outside of the clinic, and represent a useful tool for 'knowing' beyond clinical settings. Beyond the therapeutic application of psychoanalytic theory is a growing use and relevance of psychoanalytic concepts within educational psychology, informing the application of consultation (Farouk, 2004; Pellegrini, 2010), supervision (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015; Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon, &

Canagaratnam, 2019) and thinking about school systems (Eloquin, 2016), therefore demonstrating the relevance to educational psychology research.

3.4.1 'Object Relations' Theories

Drawing primarily on an 'Object Relations' psychodynamic approach to psychoanalytic concepts provides a framework to make sense of the relationship and interactions between the researcher and participant (Hollway, 1989). An 'Object Relations' stance considers the work of Klein (1946, 1957) and Bion (1961, 1962a, 1962b) into the mother-child interaction, expanding these ideas to think about other relational dyads. An overarching theme is that 'objects' relate to both external and internal concepts of 'others', and the interaction of 'objects' in our view of others. The initial, significant relationship of the mother and infant was understood by Klein as a template from which future relationships are based; from exploring this primary relationship, the key concepts of "projection", "splitting", "projective identification" and "countertransference" were developed (Spillius, 2005). Bion (1962a) expanded on Klein's work, contributing ideas of 'containment' and 'reverie', the process by which the mother receives and holds the unconsciously expressed emotions of the child, and uses reverie to process and feedback to the child in a digested format. Whilst these constructs were developed in relation to child development, they are relevant to understanding the wider human experience of defending against anxiety and pain.

3.4.1.1 "Splitting" and "Projection"

The concept of 'splitting' arises from the idea that an internal conflict for the individual is experienced, distinguishing parts as 'all good' or 'all bad'; and the

emotional experience of accepting both 'good' and 'bad' aspects within one 'object' is avoided (Klein, 1946). Often connected to splitting, 'projection' relates to an individual unconsciously placing the experience of a difficult emotion onto another, rather than retaining the feeling as one's own (Klein, 1946; Spillius, 2005). These mechanisms have been described as operating in school settings by Pellegrini (2010), demonstrating how school staff, parents and EPs can engage in unconscious processes against defence when engaging in difficult conversations. In the research context, processes of splitting and projection may be identified through noticing participants holding idealised or denigrated positions of individuals or experiences, or whereby an emotion is felt that is not recognised as connected to one's own experience.

3.4.1.2 "Transference", "Countertransference" and "Projective Identification"

Bion furthered Freud & Klein's work on transference (Spillius, 2005), defined as the concept of a person unconsciously communicating their feelings of past experiences and relationships onto another (Price, 2001). Freud first introduced countertransference in correspondence (Freud & Jung; 1906-1913) and the definition has been expanded to highlight the unconscious response of the recipient of another's emotional communication, and experiencing it as one's own (Heimann, 1950). Extending on the concept of projection is projective identification, where the individual takes up the projections received from another, and unconsciously acts and behaves in response to the projected feeling (Klein, 1946). Relevant to the research interaction, the researcher may become the recipient of countertransference, as well as have a valency for receiving particular projections (Clarke & Hogget, 2009;

Hollway & Jefferson, 2013); through the process of supervision and reflexivity, the unconscious processes of the research encounter may be revealed.

3.4.1.3 "Containment" and "Reverie"

Bion (1962a) developed and furthered Klein's work, identifying "containment" and "reverie" as key aspects of the developing mind in the initial caregiver-infant relationship. Whilst primarily focused on the experience of primary caregivers and infants, containment is also pertinent to the experiences in the researcher/participant capacity, where the interplay of expressed and unconscious emotional content can be held by the researcher (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Where this relates to 'defences against anxiety' and the need for reflexivity on the intersubjective experiences, the recipient, or 'container' of the emotional communication can also unconsciously defend, potentially through reassurance or denial of the painful content (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This concept has influence on the responses of the researcher aiming to identify intersubjective experiences using the interview and reflexive data.

3.4.2 Defended Subjects and Defended Researcher

The concept of 'defended subjects' and 'defended researchers' comes from defence mechanisms employed against anxiety, such as projection and splitting (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Klein, 1946). It is posited that defence mechanisms are an unconscious process which protects the individual against distressing emotions, in varying levels of sophistication (Freud, 1937; Curtis, 2015). Hollway & Jefferson (2013) suggest the presence of defence mechanisms within research relationships highlight that both the researcher and the participant can be subject to, and instigator of, defences against anxiety. Witnessed within data, participants may give "well-

rehearsed generalisations" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p31) of their experiences, or
utilise intellectual positions rather than personal connections to their narratives.

The researcher is also vulnerable to a defended position; whereby the emotions
expressed by the participant can evoke the researcher's defence mechanisms, or the
researcher unconsciously takes up projections and transferences communicated by the
participant, through projective identification and countertransference, respectively.
This may be experienced if the researcher as a recipient, or container (Bion,1962a) of
the emotional communications employs defences; the researcher may be drawn to
offer reassurance of a painful event, (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), interrupt stories or
ask questions that direct away from the emotions expressed. In my roles as a
researcher and practitioner, I am mindful of the potential to blur the
boundaries between my consultative work, where I may use questioning to further
elicit understanding and generate tentative formulations in the moment. This connects
with the importance of avoiding 'wild analysis' (Freud, 1937), resisting the urge to
ask and sit with what may appear to be unrelated information, in the moment of the
interview.

Alongside individual defences, the power differences between the participant and the
researcher may also have an impact on defence mechanisms; in order to please the
researcher by predicting what they may be seeking, the participant may attempt to
describe narratives that fit this expectation, repressing and unconsciously denying
their feelings (Curtis, 2015; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The use of supervision to
attend to the experiences of both the defended subject and researcher may elucidate

further the unconscious processes in the relational encounter, and invite different interpretations of the researcher's experience (Walkerdine, 1997).

3.5 Research Questions

The following research question was developed from a distillation of the findings from the Literature Review, and utilisation of a psychosocial paradigm:

"*What are the emotional experiences of Teaching Assistants, working 1:1 with a child?*"

A broad research question was established to allow for an exploration of the presented topic through a free-associative research approach. The question, and approach to research has attempted to navigate value and judgements of emotions (such as 'good' or 'bad') in an effort to allow the participants to respond to their prompts within their own 'meaning-frame', aiming to move away from the researcher defining the agenda with their own 'meaning-frame' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p32).

3.6 Research Design

3.6.1 Participants

Participants invited to take part in the study identified as TAs working on a 1:1 basis with a child in a mainstream primary school. Purposive sampling was used to obtain the small number of participants required for the study. As the focus of the study is on each individual's intrapsychic experience, homogeneity across the participants beyond the identified role was not sought. An inclusion criterion of working in

mainstream primary schools was defined; drawn from findings of the literature review.

Table 4: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Participants

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
TAs working 1:1 with a child on a regular basis	TAs working with small groups or whole classes of children only, or providing cover to 1:1 staff members on an occasional basis	The breadth of the term "regular" was used under the premise that the TA worked with the child consistently for a period of time and had an established relationship, without providing a too limiting definition of 'regular'.
Working in a mainstream primary school	Working in a specialist provision or secondary school	Due to the complexity and diversity of the defined 1:1 TA role across schools, age ranges and specialist provisions, one setting with established 1:1 roles within the literature (mainstream primary schools) was identified as an inclusion criteria

3.6.2 Recruitment

Participants were sought in mainstream primary schools, within the LA where I was completing my doctoral training. Initially, two schools were approached where I was not the allocated EP, with information of the study (Appendix H), including a letter for prospective TA participants (Appendix K). This was sent via the SENDCo and Headteacher, and they informed me of initial consent to contact. Two participants were recruited through this process; two further participants were recruited from a second wave of staggered recruitment.

Participants who expressed interest were directly contacted and given an opportunity to review the information sheet and ask questions prior to participation. Acknowledging the power differentials in my role as a researcher and initial invitation to participate arriving via the participant's employer, I confirmed the voluntary, independent nature of participation. Once informed consent was provided, the initial interview was conducted, with further opportunity to ask questions given afterwards. Participation took place within the schools that participants worked in, which may also inform the 'scenic understanding' (Hollway, 2015; Lorenzer, 2016) of the interviews. Four TAs agreed to take part in the research; Bella, Mina, Aya & Jenna; details of their roles are in Table 5. All participants described their roles as 1:1 TAs.

Table 5: Participants

Pseudonym	Role	Length of time in 1:1 role
Mina	1:1 TA (one named child)	2 years
Bella	1:1 TA (one named child)	3 years
Aya	1:1 TA (one named child)	2 years
Jenna	1:1 TA (daily work with one key child, and other 1:1 roles with several pupils)	3 years

3.6.3 Data Collection and Methodological Design

The approach to data collection aimed to capture the 'here-and-now' experience between the participant and researcher, as well as the wider process of experiencing, discussing and analysing data, reflecting on the 'then-and-there' aspects of research; immediately after interviews and over time. The methods used include the FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), and questions for a Pen Portrait, to obtain demographic and biographical data participants wished to share. Participants shared further information about their identities, personal contexts and anonymised, key information about the child they worked with; the Pen Portrait was then used to situate participants and their interviews in context as well as support my understanding of the participant's meaning-frame. In addition, reflexive data was also collected using researcher field notes from interviews, notes taken in psychosocially-informed research supervision with two supervisors and in a peer psychosocial supervision group, collectively forming a research diary.

3.6.4 Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI)

The FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) is an approach to data collection, developed to consider the emotional motivation and unconscious logic of participant narratives, positioned in their social contexts. The FANI was used to invite the TA participants to share their stories and experiences of working 1:1 with a child. The use of the FANI aimed to elicit emotional experiences, allowing an opportunity for the presence of the unconscious within narratives to be explored, through the recognition of 'defended' participants and researcher, and reflection on the inconsistencies and avoidances which may suggest the defences against anxiety (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The key premise of the free-associative process is that defences against difficult feelings may emerge, and links between the inner and outer world of the participant may be uncovered (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Separate to other narrative approaches to interview, the FANI suggests a second interview, where further exploration and understanding can be sought, using questions sensitively generated from the initial transcript to reflect on the inconsistencies and potential avoidances observed in the data.

3.6.5 Interview Development

Interview schedules were developed to invite free-associative responses to questions, using an open-ended format, aiming for neutral language which invited curiosity about experiences rather than imposing a meaning-frame for the participant to work within (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Prompt questions were included, to elicit further information whilst aiming for minimal researcher direction. The interview schedule was designed to allow participants to complete responses uninterrupted, and invite sharing of time-specific experiences (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Hollway, 2015).

Participants were interviewed twice, with the primary interview being used to establish rapport and an initial understanding of the TA's experience following open-ended questions aimed to facilitate the sharing of stories linked to events and times (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013); the template used for all initial interviews can be found in Appendix N. The purpose of the first interview is to elicit experiences and events from the participant's free-associative responses to the given topic (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). A pilot interview was trialled with a TEP colleague with prior 1:1 TA experience, to ascertain the acceptability of the questions and whether free-associative responses could be elicited. Consent was given to include the anonymised pilot interview in the thesis, presented in Appendix L. Through immersion in the data, self-reflexivity and supervision, material suggestive of unconscious processes present in the interview transcripts was considered; noticing the placing of emphasis, tonal changes and moving away from topics (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Through this process, information and potential questions for the second interview schedule were generated, with the purpose of the second interview to establish understanding of meaning together, and expand on information from the initial interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Follow-up questions sought to use the language of the participant to re-connect them with their previous interview, and to respect the participant's meaning frame (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The development of an individualised, second interview schedule included questions to explore any pauses, avoidance or contradictions which emerged following review of the initial interview transcripts; these interview schedules can be found in Appendix P.

3.6.6 Interview Procedure

Eight interviews took place in total. All interviews took place within the TAs' school premises with permission from the school. Interview time slots of an hour were offered to participants to discuss the participant information sheet, obtain informed consent and complete the interview. Interviews took place at different times within the academic year, based on recruitment of participants. Informed consent was established by providing a copy of the information sheet and offering the opportunity to ask questions prior to seeking consent. Following informed consent, the process of the two interviews and recording of interview was reiterated, and participants were invited to complete a demographic information sheet. Interviews were recorded using a digital Dictaphone, and transcribed by myself following the interviews. Using Hollway & Jefferson's (2013) format, I transcribed the recordings, noting spoken language as well as tonal data; reviewing the recordings and transcripts to check for mis-hearings of words and sounds. Whilst transcribing, I also made reflexive notes to capture my thinking when processing the data.

3.7 Reflexivity

The premise of reflexivity within psychosocial research is of central importance, and part of triangulation for knowledge generation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Through reflexivity, the researcher can attend to their subjective responses to assist in making interpretations and with another, identify where interpretations are unsubstantiated (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Connected to my research paradigm, I consider reflexivity as a vital component of accessing the intersubjective experience, across all stages of the research encounter (Etherington, 2004).

Although Parker (2015) argues that the focus on the researcher's experience is detrimental to the study due to the potential for over-involvement and focus on the self at the expense of participants, I argue engagement with reflexivity provides transparency about the analytical processes, presenting scope for alternative interpretations (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Walkerdine 1997; Yardley, 2017). My engagement with reflexivity included a research diary, noting thoughts and reflections during each encounter with 'research'; through field notes immediately following interviews and notes taken when re-engaging with data during transcription and analytical processes. I also engaged with psychosocial discussions with my research supervisor as part of supervision, as well as participated in peer psychosocial supervision with an experienced, psychosocially informed facilitator. Engaging with reflexive processes in supervision aims to gain access to my own unconscious logic, elucidating my own potential for avoidance or defence against anxiety.

3.7.1 Research Diary

The initial engagement with the research diary utilised the documentation of reflection with the generation and development of the research topic, detailing processes and content. At times, ideas were recorded when thoughts spontaneously occurred, with the diary compiled of formal notes, post-its and loose-leaf pages. The premise of the research diary was to foster transparency throughout the process by presenting the evolution and development of the research, providing data on the experience of engaging relationally for research (Elliott, Ryan & Hollway, 2012). As well as a chronological record, the diary also presents data for reflexive engagement, where assumptions or bias may have emerged in my thinking.

3.7.2 Researcher Field Notes

Following the completion of audio-recorded interviews, written notes were made to capture my experience of the interview; the 'scenic understanding' (Lorenzer, 2016) and details of the interview context. Notes included eye-contact and gestures made by the participant, relational interactions, and my reflections on the encounter (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). These notes were to aid reflexivity, capturing further information that may aid understanding of unconscious and intersubjective processes, during and following interviews. Where re-engagement with the audio-interviews, transcriptions or field notes took place, notetaking was continued as part of the research diary, distinguishing between the "here-and-now" records written after each interview, and reflections which emerged during "then-and-there" experiences of data.

3.7.3 Research Supervision

Research supervision with a psychosocially-informed supervisor presented the opportunity to consider my thinking in a relational context. Supervision involved procedural aspects of research, reflecting on experiences of different stages of the research and reflections on self, through considering the defended researcher position, and the supervisor's role in helping me to attend to avoidances and notice potential enactions of projective identification and countertransference (Elliott et al, 2012; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Written records were used within the supervisory relationship sought to observe the presence of the unconscious in the research process, distinct to any thematic review of the data (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019).

3.7.4 Psychosocial Peer Supervision

A supportive, confidential space was proffered to psychosocial researchers, where any aspect of the research encounter could be explored. The sessions used a free-associative approach to content brought, to explore subjective responses to the material submitted. The process aimed to support thinking about one's subjectivity, in response to another's subjective experience of unconscious processes (Elliott et al, 2012), demonstrating Schwaber's (1992) principle of needing others' subjectivity to identify one's own. The group was attended by three members of the training cohort, where established, personal relationships existed prior to the group formation. The group was facilitated by an experienced research lecturer in psychosocial studies. Acknowledging the connection between the personal and research 'self' presented an opportunity to explore my subjectivity with known, trusted others.

3.8 Ethics

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC); the ethical approval letter can be found in Appendix F. The commitment to ethical research continues beyond formal approval, with ethics reflected on as part of supervision and research practice to ensure adherence to the TREC approval and BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018). A key focus is the potential for distress or harm to participants, and the responsibility incumbent on the researcher to ameliorate these concerns (Robson & McCarten, 2016). Hence, the importance of ethics being embedded throughout the research process; with ethical approval pertaining to written documents for participants, processes for informed consent and engaging in ethical research practice in all researcher encounters.

A challenge for exploring emotional experiences using psychosocial approaches is that unanticipated feelings or thoughts may arise through the process of free-association (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This may potentially occur, as the researcher's questions may evoke memories and feelings that could impact the participant and mean the participant does not leave the research 'unchanged'. The concept of remaining 'unchanged' connects with the principle of doing no harm; that by engaging in research, participants are not negatively impacted by the process. Through supervision, I considered the ethical impact of unforeseen responses and sought to ensure the wellbeing of the participants during and following interviews. Whilst the interviews may evoke emotional responses, it is suggested that participants find qualitative interviews a positive experience, when a researcher is sensitive and interested in their story (Kvale, 2007; Dennis, 2014). Lowes & Gill (2006) found that whilst participants had initial reservations about research, their involvement provided a space to talk about their experiences which would not normally exist in their daily lives, and that the interviews contributed to a helpful, 'therapeutic' process in response to difficult, emotional events. This may suggest that there can be benefit in exploring emotional topics in research, and that participants may view the 'therapeutic' process described by Lowes & Gill (2006) as an unintended, positive impact from research. However, it is imperative that the researcher continues to ensure the wellbeing of participants as a primary concern, including utilising a distress policy for emotional support during and beyond the interview process if participants become distressed, as described in the ethical approval documentation.

A further consideration is the intrinsic power imbalance in research interviews. Whilst psychosocial research may explore the intersubjective dynamic between the researcher and participant, power is also relevant to the interaction. Examples of the power-laden position of the researcher include the researcher's determination of the interview situation, the primarily one-way dialogue to elicit views and being the central interpreter of the participant's voice (Kvale, 2007). Reflecting on the similar processes which can take place in practitioner roles; determining meeting times, places and being the main author of a psychological formulation, I reflected on how I might address the power balance in my research role.

3.8.2 Response to ethical considerations

Transparency regarding the potential for emotional experiences as part of the interview process was included within the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix H), which was shared with TAs prior to seeking informed consent. This was further established by checking the emotional wellbeing of the participants during and following interviews, when distress was evident and through planned interview questions which offered an opportunity for the researcher to signpost or discuss further, emotional support for each participant. Informed consent was obtained through a signed and initialled Consent Form (see Appendix I), after reading the Participant Information Sheet and being given opportunities to ask questions. The Participant Information Sheet clearly described the aims of the study, the interview procedure and the time commitment required. This information, alongside details concerning data-handling, storage and potential for future, anonymised dissemination was presented to participants, providing clarity on the reasons for being invited to participate, their rights and protections they could expect. Two hard copies of the

consent form were utilised; one for the participant to keep and one stored by the researcher, in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) and guidance set by United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI, 2018) for all data transcripts and identifiable information. Confidentiality agreements were stipulated, describing the process for breaching confidentiality in the event of safeguarding concerns, or duty of care to protect against harm. Pseudonyms were used to observe anonymity, with identifying details in the data remove or altered.

To address the power imbalances in the research process, I sought ways to give the participants opportunity to say no, withdraw consent and reflect on the information they had shared. Interview schedules were developed to include questions which provided an opportunity for participants to be directly asked about their experience of, and response to both interviews, as well as revisiting consent at the start of each second interview. In addition to informing participants of their right to withdraw, participants were also provided with the opportunity to request information to be removed from the dataset. Connecting with the potential for unanticipated thoughts and emotions to have emerged during interview, this provided the participant with an aspect of ownership over their narrative, and rights to remove information without discontinuing participation. Interviews were arranged at times and locations convenient to the TAs, acknowledging the power dilemma by determining a location for participants, and the unanticipated difficulties that may occur across different sites connecting to personal and professional lives (Elwood & Martin, 2000). As each interview took place in the TAs' own schools, this may have also contributed positively to the power differential, as a place of familiarity and considered 'their' territory.

3.9 Data Analysis

The imperative lies with the researcher to determine their analytical approach

purposefully; acknowledging the importance to engage with and understand the

philosophical underpinnings of their research paradigm. When considering the

outlined psychosocial principles, the range of data approaches which consider the

individual participant's data as a 'whole' are limited, with many qualitative

approaches using a de-contextualised fragmentation of data at the initial states of

analysis; drawing commonalities between other participant's fragments rather than

their contextualised 'wholes' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The separation of data can

mean that the potential for achieving a 'gestalt' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p31) is

lost. The desire to fragment the data may also stem from a 'defended researcher'

experiencing a challenge to hold the 'whole' in mind; akin to the nurses in Menzies-

Lyth's (1960) study, where fragmentation of care tasks for patients across several

staff represented a defence against the emotions of caring for the patient as a 'whole'.

As an approach to organising and analysing data I explored the use of IPA (Smith,

Flowers & Larkin, 2009) as the approach considers the experiences of the participants

central to meaning-making and interpretation of data. Researchers using IPA strive to

explore the perspectives of participants whilst bracketing off their own influences to

interpret from the participant's lens (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Whilst IPA

would provide a potential avenue to analyse data as an initial 'whole' through case-

by-case analysis before generating themes across the participants, a challenge would

be the divergent position on drawing on the researcher's experience and subjectivity

as part of the analysis. Furthermore, IPA is deemed unsuitable for the application of

theoretical perspectives during analysis; Smith (2004) posits that researchers taking a

psychoanalytic reading of data are entering analysis from a different epistemological position than researchers interpreting data through IPA. Reflecting on the importance of subjectivity, reflexivity and theory as essential with the psychosocial paradigm, this approach was rejected. This decision led me to consider a 'reflexive' approach to Thematic Analysis (RTA), recently re-established by Braun & Clarke (2019a) following exploration into the breadth of application of Thematic Analysis, and re-conceptualisation of an RTA approach. This approach allowed for interpretation beyond the face-value of descriptive analysis through a reflexive stance; meaning psychological events, social contexts and unconscious processes within the research encounter could be analysed.

3.9.1 Case Studies using Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Observing Hollway & Jefferson's (2013) reflections on data being understood as-a-whole and within context, I sought to complete the data analysis using a case-by-case approach with RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Whilst there are different incarnations of Thematic Analysis presented by Braun & Clarke (2019a), the authors highlight the importance of the researcher justifying their approaches and decision-making when using Thematic Analysis, including when departing from Braun & Clarke's (2019a) recommendations. Previous psychosocial research has utilised Braun & Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis (Ross-Lonergan, 2019; Plender, 2019; Soares, 2017) suggesting suitability of the Thematic Analysis. A Reflexive Thematic Analysis is described as a one form of the wider, theoretically flexible approach developed by Braun & Clarke (2019a). The decision to adopt a reflexive approach relates to my research positioning and compatibility with the 'Big Q' approach of this model;

identified as fully connected with the assumptions, philosophical leanings and methodologies of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2019a).

RTA values the subjectivity of the researcher as an inherent part of knowledge production, alongside their theoretical position, their analytic capacity and the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). The use of RTA links to the psychosocial paradigm, which informs this research and my aspirations to meet Yardley's (2008; 2017) quality principles, when engaging with informed decision-making, analytic processes and reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). My utilisation of RTA connects an initial inductive analysis, based on the organic coding from each individual's data, followed by an application of psychoanalytic theory and researcher subjectivity to findings as a method of triangulation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2019b). Applying an RTA approach to case-by-case analysis provides an organisation and presentation to the individual participant's experience, which may highlight the contradictions and inconsistencies within the narrative.

3.9.2 Six Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The approach for RTA remains part of the six-phase process of completing analysis, whilst acknowledging the recursive moves between different stages of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). The orientation of a phased model supports the depth of engagement for psychosocial research whilst allowing a space for review.

3.9.2.1 Phase 1: "Familiarising yourself with the Data" (Braun & Clarke, 2019a)

The primary focus of this phase is to immerse oneself and become conversant with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019a). This stage began at the data collection stage, as I interviewed and recorded the interviews with participants, using my research diary to document my experiences of the interview and any aspects that may relate to scenic understanding (Hollway, 2015; Lorenzer, 2016). I also connected with the data through the transcription process, transcribing the data myself as well as making notes on the process and emerging thoughts each time I revisited the data. This demonstrates one aspect of immersion in the data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Aiming to capture verbal and non-verbal communications within the interview, I also included sounds, pauses, and tonal changes in the transcription. This was standardised across the interview transcripts by using a key, primarily drawn from Silverman's (1993) suggested symbols and Holstein & Gubrium's (2003) reflections on capturing pauses, laughter and tone; provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Transcription Key (adapted: Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, Silverman 1993)

Symbol / demarcation	Purpose and explanation
…	Brief pause or elapsed time (under 3 seconds)
(*pause*)	Longer pause (+3seconds)
(=)	Second person speaking at the same time as the first person
-	To indicate where sounds or words are cut off, unfinished or changed
underline	Representing emphasis, through volume, tone, pitch
(*italics*)	Non-verbal information (such as gesture, sign) or non-speech act e.g. laughing, breathing
[brackets]	Redacted information

3.9.2.2 Phase 2: Generating initial labels

Following the preliminary immersion in the data, initial labels are created organically

through the researcher systematically attending to all aspects of the data collection

and identifying areas of interest (Clarke, 2018). Once the initial labels are complete,

the researcher returns to the data to complete several iterative cycles to establish

whether the labels generated earlier in the process remain relevant. For RTA, labels

are collated within each individual's dataset and draw on researcher subjectivity

(Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Researcher reflexivity was used to attend to the analysis

questions described by Hollway & Jefferson (2013), encouraging the researcher to

attend to the process of noticing the what, why and how of analysis. MAXQDA was

identified as a tool to help organise the labelling of sections of data as part of the

analytical process, with individual coding documents utilised to separate the case

studies and immerse in one participant's data at a time (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

The initial labelling process was reviewed by my supervisor, through sharing sections

of processed data. An example of a coded transcript can be found in Appendix Q.

3.9.2.3 Phase 3: Generating initial themes from labels

Extending from the created labels is the consideration of wider representation of

meaning within the data, described as 'themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Labels are

drawn together in groupings of tentative themes; to think about the meaning of the

'whole' for the individual (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). MAXQDA software was

utilised to support the thematic process, using colours to organise distinctions

between themes, and where sections of data have multiple labels.

3.9.2.4 Phase 4: Reviewing initial themes

Considering the generated themes alongside the rest of the individual dataset requires researcher-reflexivity to consider whether the interpretation of themes is 'the right one' and resonate in the data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p51). Themes are considered for their shared meaning, boundaries and quality (Clarke, 2018), with a recommendation to avoid too many themes. This phase also returns to the research question, exploring themes connected to and separate from the primary focus of the research. As part of my analysis for each case-study, themes were joined together, separated or determined as unsubstantiated through examination of their meaning and relevance. This process was completed through reviewing the data excerpts which themes were connected to and reviewing the interview data as a whole, to consider the connections of the themes to the narrative and individual 'gestalt' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.9.2.5 Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

As themes are consolidated, aspects of the dataset are collated to explore the scope of the theme, and identifying a defining narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). This involves using the name of the theme as a description, that can contribute to the overall story presented (Clarke, 2018). An example of themes presented in MAXQDA coding systems for each participant can be found in Appendix R.

3.9.2.6 Phase 6: Engaging with writing up

Braun & Clarke's (2019a) final phase refers to the process of threading analysis, excerpts from the data and the relevant sociocultural contexts for participants alongside pertinent literature to express the analytic outcome. For this study, the

analysis was written up as four, individual case studies within the following Data
Analysis chapter. Balancing the meaning made as part of the research encounter
together, the case studies are reflective of the narratives given by the participants,
with the use of researcher subjectivity and reflexivity, in addition to the application of
psychoanalytic theory

3.9.3 Applying Psychoanalytic Theory to the Research

The process of applying theory to the individual data sets takes place once the six
phases of RTA are complete, and clear narratives have been generated from the data.
This stage will utilise the aforementioned 'Objects Relations' theories, when
considering the researcher and participant experience, the subjectivity of the
researcher and tentative considerations of defences against anxiety defined by
Freud and Object-Relations theorists (Bion, 1961, 1962a, 1962b; Freud, 1937; Klein,
1946; 1957). Theories are applied to individual case-studies in the Data Analysis
chapter, then considered more broadly across the four participants in the Discussion.

3.10 Quality Criteria for Qualitative Research

Responding to the empirical constructs of reliability and validity as quality markers
for research, several qualitative researchers have developed alternative criteria,
attending to the values and paradigms connected with qualitative methodologies.
Exploring quality criteria identified Lincoln & Guba's (1985) Trustworthiness
principle, Yardley's (2008; 2017) criteria and Hollway & Jefferson's (2013) specific
quality markers for psychosocial research. The shared ethos of these ideas will be
explored, in relation to the research and process of quality assurance.

3.10.1 Credibility & Confirmability – Transparency & Coherence - Honesty

A common theme within these criteria is the openness of the researcher and research to scrutiny; so data analysis and interpretation can be understood from an external position. Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Hollway & Jefferson (2013) posit the value of triangulation, used in this research through two interviews, research supervision and use of research documentation. Reflexivity (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Yardley, 2017) is also demonstrated through the process and recording of supervision. Whilst this research cannot be described as neutral, in relation to 'confirmability' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the openness demonstrates a commitment to accounting for bias through reflexive processes.

3.10.2 Dependability - Commitment & Rigour - Respect

The collective criteria speak to the thoroughness, organisation and faithfulness to the process of the research, and to the participants, to honour their involvement. Lincoln & Guba (1985) consider dependability is shown through clear auditing and availability of records for inspection. Yardley (2017) views the importance of the dedication to the topic, through the individual's skills, process of data collection and thorough analysis. Hollway & Jefferson (2013) place the importance of this criteria in relation to the value of the participant; how the researcher demonstrates their value of the participants through their 'respect' of the research. These criteria are demonstrated through the presence of example records provided in the Appendices (L to R), and connection to the reflexive process throughout. Commitment, rigour and respect are shown through the detailed investigation into the history and context of TAs, evaluation of relevant literature and the in-depth analysis of each TA's data,

attending to their narratives and connecting the findings with real-world implications and outcomes.

3.10.3 Transferability – Sensitive to Context –Importance - Sympathy

These criteria connect to the individual participants; their voices, social contexts and the duty to consider their individual meaning-frame, and potential relevance to others in their communities and contexts. The concept of richness, and importance of the individual voice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) is maintained in this research, through the individual case-studies as the process of analysis. The connection to the participant's voice beyond individual interpretation is captured through reflexive processes, where analysis is explored both through individual immersion, and supervision (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The connection beyond the individual, considering the social contexts and transferability is reflected throughout the research (Yardley, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985); the introduction explores the wider sociocultural and historical contexts within which TAs are positioned, and the Literature Review demonstrates how TAs are represented and exist in the literature. Transferability is considered in the Discussion chapter, reflecting on the shared meanings found between individual voices, and how this may also contribute to a wider understanding of the TA experience, as well as be considered useful knowledge within education (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2017).

3.11 Summary

This chapter aimed to demonstrate the connections between my ontological and epistemological positions and the decisions relating to research design, methodology and data analysis. This chapter reveals the value of interrogation of one's own motivations, interests and subjective relationship to the research, ensuring that reflexive processes in supervision explore both the participant and researcher's unconscious processes. To ensure the commitment to quality assurance principles, the chapter details the processes of the research, from the development of the participant recruitment, interview schedule and reflexive procedures, to the analytical process. Throughout the chapter, reference has been made to pertinent theoretical influences and ethical considerations. The following chapter will present the findings of the study, using RTA to interpret four, individual case studies.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This chapter provides the case-by-case analysis of each of the participants' data, using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019a) as detailed in the Method chapter. The process of analysis included personally transcribing the data, relistening to the audio-recordings prior to, and during the transcription to attend to the sounds and tones of the data and reconnect to my experience of the interviews.

Each participants' data is drawn into narratives from generated themes, collating experiences presented across the two interviews, and acknowledging the chronology of events which occur within the school context (such as beginnings and endings in the relationship). Responding to how participants answered questions about emotions, describing circumstances and events which connected with their emotional experiences, themes have been distinguished by the times where TAs shared or described their emotions (labelled 'emotional experiences'), and where they referenced circumstances or events which connected to emotional experiences (such as roles, relationships and transitions). Quotes used reference the interview and line number they are drawn from and are displayed numerically (Interview; Lines).

4.1 Bella

Bella is a White British woman in her thirties who became a TA in the last five years. She shared with me her family context; married with primary aged children and she is religious. Prior to working as a TA, Bella worked in an unrelated career and said that she had wanted to change direction to have more time with her children. Bella works as a TA in the same school her children attend.

Bella works in a 1:1 capacity with a child in Key Stage 2, spending all day with the child. The child has a diagnosis of ASC and Bella has worked with the child for almost three years, supporting her in and out of the classroom. During the first interview, Bella was coming to the end of her third year working with the child and was anticipating working with her in the next academic year. In the second interview, Bella spoke of the progression into the next academic year representing getting closer to the end of the child's primary school years.

4.1.1 "The best thing I ever done" (1;66)

Becoming a TA was a significant step in Bella's life, which helped her to fulfil her wish to be more available for her children. Bella spoke of her initial uncertainty in taking the role, working at lunch times in school for a period to check if she wanted to work with children. She described her how she felt "*quite happy and proud that I have got where I have got*" (1;202-203) implying her beliefs about predestiny:

"*I am just so, you know, unfortunate that I didn't do it sooner but obviously these things are meant to be and, yeah, so I am really enjoying, what I am doing*" (1;65-68)…"*I suppose it makes me feel it suits me, it's, yeah, (heh) it was obviously meant for me (laughs)*" (1;229-230)

During the interview, Bella shared something that she felt she had not thought before, akin to an "unthought known" (Bollas, 1987), known to an individual that has not reached a conscious thought. She described thinking being in the same school as her children meant she was "*not anxious about I have left them somewhere else*" (1;189-191). The realisation of this came to Bella as she reflected on what she shared:

"I can completely relax here and know that my children are close to me as well, and, I don't know, I mean I am just thinking, I have never thought that before, but just sitting here thinking about it, it could be something that makes me actually feel a lot more happier when I am here" (1;193-197)

4.1.2 Emotional experiences

4.1.2.1 Rewarding

Bella shared multiple times how much she enjoyed her role and was excited for the future. Many of Bella's positive feelings were connected to observing the impact of her work and difference made to the child; described by Bella as *"rewarding" (1;4)*:

"Yeah, it makes you feel really good and I think that's why I probably enjoy it so much because I do feel like, I come out of here some days… I've done something or like I am helping someone" (1;137-139)…"I find it very rewarding because you actually see that individual, you know, their changes are happening, and this is coming from you" (2;316-318)

Seeing the child's progression with Bella's support led to Bella describing feeling "*better in yourself*" *(2;189-191)* and the child's happiness *"actually makes me feel happy just seeing her" (1;127)* although she found it hard when the child experienced difficulty:

"you really want to do, be able to help them and you can't like, if they're having a little, a bad day" (1;46-48)…"it was horrible seeing... a child, like now when, you know, there's not, you know you're trying to help them and you, you can't" (2;187-188)… "seeing someone having a really bad day, obviously does have an effect on how you feel when you leave work" (2;192-194)

Bella noticed the impact of the child's emotions on herself, describing the unexpected nature of a change from things going well to a potential experience of receiving the projected emotions of the child:

"all of a sudden, this, something just takes over and she can become quite upsetting, and for me then I will leave and feel, quite deflated and feel a bit upset" (1;35-37)
I wondered about how Bella made sense of the feelings of being deflated and upset, and her feelings as she left work implied that there was not a space for her to process emotions before finishing work.

4.1.2.2 "I am emotional" (1;104)

Bella's emotions were apparent, as she began to cry when sharing a story about supporting the child through her distress. Bella appeared to locate the emotions in relation to her work, within herself:

"(laughs) I am quite emotional when it comes to, I do cry quite easily so things that, like if I am seeing someone distressed, I'll cry for them half the time" (1;104-106)

The concept of being an emotional person was reflected on by Bella in the second interview *("I know I'm quite emotional anyway, and it doesn't take a lot to trigger me off" (2;84-85)* where she considered her emotional response to the nature of the child's needs and her inclusion in activities:

"so I just let her, you know, think that she's actually doing it, so that, she doesn't feel, that so she doesn't feel left out and it's probably maybe I've got more of the emotions than she has (laughs) because she's probably just thinking "I just want to do what they're doing" and I'm thinking "Oh, it's not fair that she's not, included in this"

(2;77-82)…"So, you know, she's not feeling like that it's more affecting me than her (laughs)" (2;95-96)

I noticed that I had left the interview with Bella confused and sad, and that I had felt distance between us; reflecting back on the experience, I wondered if I had experienced 'projective identification' (Klein, 1946). Considering Bella's attempts to understand what the child's feelings may be, alongside her own feelings highlighted the challenge of making sense of emotional communications that may not be coherent with the external, observable self of the child. I wondered if this sense of puzzlement arose from the "lack of communicative expressed emotion" (Alvarez & Reid, 2013, p7) and the challenge for others to make sense of a different forms of unconscious communication when working with children with ASC (Reid, 2013).

4.1.2.3 "It doesn't really upset me" (2;177)

Alongside the process of trying to understand the meaning of the child's feelings and her own, Bella spoke of times that were difficult:

"we had a lot of them days when I first started working with her, but I think I understand her so much more now…but we don't really have them days" (1;38-40).

There were moments in the first interview where the 'what' of events remained unnamed; I was unclear about the difficulty, as Bella moved away from them:

"we could have parts of the day where she might get a little bit, but now, I can sort of 'oh, come on, let's do this instead' and then it's forgotten about" (1;129-131)

I was curious about the unnamed, difficult experiences compared to Bella's rich descriptions of positive times and I sought to sensitively attend to this and Bella's

feelings in the second interview. In the second interview, Bella described experiences where *"she's, like hit me a few times, and, even with that I just come away and I'm a bit like 'it's so sad' (softer tone)" (2;118-119)* and I noticed the depersonalised language of "*it's so sad*". Bella expanded on how she had understood this from the perspective of the child:

"Yeah, it doesn't really upset me. It doesn't upset me, it doesn't, because I think, you know, she's going through that and she doesn't understand what's going on with her body. She's not doing it to be vicious. She's not doing it on purpose to be hurtful" *(2;177-180)*

I wondered whether it was difficult for Bella to think about her feelings about being hurt by the child, as she appeared to make distinctions between the child's behaviour from 'behaviour' of other children. I became curious about how Bella perceived my role beyond an interviewer, and whether I was in receipt of 'projections' of feelings relating to judgement:

"She's not one of them children that has got erm, behaviour problems, so she's not, you know, she's got none of that in her. I know this sounds really funny like she's got no, but I'm saying if you met her, if you knew her, you would see that that's just not, her way" *(2;121-124)*

I was curious about what beliefs may underpin this difference between Bella's 1:1 child and other children with SEN/D, wondering if engaging with "splitting", locating negative experiences in other children helped Bella to manage complex feelings of working with the child.

4.1.3 The relationship

4.1.3.1 "We've really got a positive relationship" (1;52-53)

Bella described how *"lovely"(1;4)* the relationship with the child was, and how both of them knowing each other contributed towards her happiness:

"I have built this relationship with her where she understands me and I understand her, and just, it is just so positive and that's why I think I feel so happy" (1;78-80)

She spoke of keeping *"upbeat for her"* and *"positive" (1;113-114)* reflecting on bringing positivity to the relationship, as well as receiving:

"you know I am giving her my upbeat, but if she could just be sad all the time, I coul-, then it could probably be quite draining for me" (1;240-241)

There were times when Bella's reflections on difficulties conflicted with an idea that that it was not okay to have a horrible day:

"I never have a day where I walk out of here and go "that was really tough today, that was a horrible day' because you are working with children and I think you can't really have that attitude if you work with children anyway" (1;141-144)

I was curious about the underlying beliefs, coupled with Bella's view of children as *"innocent"(1;58)* and the connection to the polarised positions of Bella's positive experience, and other TAs who had described the 1:1 role to her as *"soul-destroying"(1;114).* Bella spoke of not listening to the advice from others not to do the role because it was *"really horrible" (1;223)* and challenged their view, seeing progress and building a relationship as positives. I wondered whether 'either/or' language may point to a "paranoid-schizoid" position (Klein, 1946), and the difficulty of being able to accept feelings of experiences that can be both good and bad.

4.1.3.2 "You don't want her to get any of your vibes" (2;376-377)

Whilst Bella shared her hope to maintain positivity in the relationship, she described how she managed her own feelings in work. Bella referenced the emotional communication between her and the child, understanding of the impact of her emotions in the relationship:

"Yeah, I just make sure that I come to school with the attitude that I want her to feed off of me, and she is not going to feed off of me if I come in like 'urghh" (1;125-127)

Compared with the 'emotional' person Bella self-described as, she seemed surprised at her capacity to manage her emotions when with the child:

"in front of her, I'm actually I don't know where it comes from, but I am really strong with her, like, she would never see that I've got any problems with it" (2;89-91)

Bella's capacity to manage her emotions when working with the child may be representative of the maternal function of containment (Bion, 1962a); considering the impact of leakage of unprocessed feelings on the child *("And (swallow) so I suppose you just gotta be that little bit more stronger" (2;377-378)*. Bella spoke of recognising her own anxiety and similarities with that of the child *"she gets a lot more anxiety with it...and I know for myself, like I've suffered with anxiety in the past" (2;63-64)*. However, the impact of keeping her feelings in meant that Bella experienced her difficult emotions after work, having had to do something which she personally found a challenge:

"I've been exhausted. I had a bit of a meltdown last night. I had a little cry. And then I was like, "No, get yourself together. Get on with it" (2;255-256)

4.1.3.3 "I don't want to let her down" (2;333-334)

Although Bella described the emotions she experienced when facing her own challenges, she also felt it was important to not let the child down; *"it's not my choice. But, I wouldn't see her miss out" (2;249)*:

"you have got to be, keep them going, no matter how much you are feeling inside, like, you know you could have a bad day or it could just be one of them days you are feeling a bit, but then you come in and make sure that you pick yourself up because, you know, you keep your stresses at home" (1;144-148)

Bella's commitment to the child; her routine, need for certainty and the impact on Bella's colleagues meant that at times, she sacrificed her needs following illness and bereavement, to be present with the child. Bella also spoke of the positives of coming to work and seeing the child, after a recent bereavement:

"I was really, I was really unwell before Christmas (swallow) and I just, I had to just come in everyday thinking "I've just got to get through this" because who's, who's gonna be with her like, it's not fair on her" (2;325-329)

"I was feeling really down, because it was only this week that, I had, my second loss and.., and I come in, and err she was, she just done something and, it just really made me laugh and I just thought "I'm so glad I did come into work because just seeing this just makes you think, yeah, it's worth it". You know?" (2;339-344)

4.1.4 Attachment, Separation and Endings

4.1.4.1 "I talk about her like she's my child" (1;53-54)

Bella spoke positively of the length of the relationship; how this contributed to her understanding the child and her needs, and seeing her progress over time. She acknowledged the impact of time on how she felt about the child:

"there's probably a possibility that you could get quite,...well you get attached to the child, so it's more than…it's more, it could be more emotional for you" (2;15-17)…
"I have these feelings for like she's my child (laughs) because you do, because you work so closely with a child for such a long time that you do, yeah" (2;133-135)

There were differences in how Bella related to her key child to her own children, acknowledging a time when she had become frustrated with her own children because she would have been late:

"I could have a bad morning with the children trying to get them ready and all that and I am like "come on you have got to listen to me" they are my own children so I feel like I can sort of do that to them… then once I get here, I am just like "oh, I don't know why we had that stress, and then I am like "sorry children, have a nice day" (1;153-161)

Exploring this further with Bella in the second interview highlighted a difference in boundaries and the meaning attached to this *"I feel like I can tell them off…If she's done something wrong, I haven't got the heart to because I think that she doesn't realise what she's doing" (2;102-104).* This appeared connected to sympathy, and Bella's feelings of sadness that the child *"can't actually grasp and she can't understand like, another child could" (2;58-59)* and worries for her future:

"I worry about her like my own child…is she gonna get on in life, is she gonna.. be able to go and get a job?" (2;147-149).

4.1.4.2 The photograph

A time that stood out to Bella was when she had been supporting the child through a school photograph. She described the child feeling anxious, as she didn't know what was happening, and then all of the staff were invited to get into a photograph. Whilst telling this story, Bella began to cry:

"she was really upset and you know I was hugging her and then it was like 'right, I've got to quickly jump in this photo and just get back to her' and that really sticks in my head because it made me feel really upset, like I literally felt like I was going to cry myself…it's making my cry now (laughs and wipes tears away…) yeah, but yeah, so that's the only time that I think I have ever felt, really sad about it, because she's got such a lovely life and she- her family are so lovely as well that, I don't think that, you know, to me I just think she is a gift from God" (1;87-101)

During the interview, I was struck by Bella not looking at me for periods of time when she spoke. Bella shared at the start of the interview that she did not have her glasses, and she was not going to get them as it would confuse the child whom she had left with someone else. Reflecting on the transcripts, I wondered whether Bella's looking away and the disconnect between us represented a preoccupation with being separate from the child, and the story of the child's upset when Bella left the child to do something for herself was communicating the worry of returning to a distressed child. In the second interview, Bella's response appeared more processed:

"I felt quite good about myself actually, when we come away this time that she had, got through all the photos and there was no,(swallow) she was calm, she could deal with it" (2;272-275)

4.1.4.3 The future

Bella shared her feelings of wanting to stay with the child into the next academic year (*"I was actually praying that I get to stay with her next year" (1;18-19),* and the certainty this gave her, working with a child she was familiar with. In the second interview, Bella had begun to think about the child's future transition to secondary school, and the impact on her:

"I think I'm going to be quite upset when she actually leaves...I feel like she's my right arm. Like if she has a day off of school, I'm like "When is she gonna come back? I don't like this" (2;305-307)…"I know once she leaves the school I'll probably never seen her again, but it's still right now when you're working so closely with someone, you sort of had that bond with him that, you can't help that sort of feeling (laughs)" (2;207-210)

I wondered what it was like for Bella to think about never seeing the child again after a relationship spanning many years. Bella's thoughts turned to the attachment between her and the child:

"that's the only thing that that does, make me think that I would want to do. I wouldn't want to be that attached to someone" (2;331-333)…"that would make me think that, I don't want to get that attachment again if you understand?" (2;323-324)

Bella was clear that another 1:1 role was not something she wanted to do again and linked this to becoming attached. At this point, I felt a powerful sense of loss in the transference, and wondered about the experience of loss for Bella and other TAs, when their relationships end:

"then all of a sudden, she's just gone, it's got to be "wow, what happens now?" Do they start you off it all over again? Or...that's why I'm think-- that's why I keep thinking to myself, "maybe be good to ask to go into a class rather than having that whole thing again" so that you don't get that sort of attachment" (2;364-368)

4.2 Mina

Mina is a woman in her thirties of British Asian heritage. Mina has worked in a number of different schools in both classroom and 1:1 TA roles for 10 years, before her current role. She is married with children and shared her experience of her son having a communication need in his younger years. Mina has family members who have previously worked in education and has family members with additional needs.

Mina's key child is in Key Stage 1; she works with him all day, in a 1:1 capacity. The child is described as having a Trisomy disorder, with communication, physical and behavioural needs; Mina's role involves supervising him, communicating expectations and completing physical care tasks, as well as supporting his learning. Mina uses Makaton and spoken language to communicate with the child, and since working with her, he now uses Makaton to respond to Mina and express his wishes. During the interview, Mina used her hands alongside verbal communication; using gestures and Makaton signs when giving examples and in her general communication. This made me wonder about how embedded her signing communications were and think about the assimilation of professional skills in personal life.

4.2.1 Personal and Professional

4.2.1.1 Personal beliefs and work

Through the interview, I gained a sense of the beliefs that were important to Mina and how she perceived herself *("always see the positive things"… "determined about my work"* and *"family orientated" (2;293, 336 & 347)*. Mina talked about the *"hope, oh, that I am doing something very good" (1;13-14)* and *"doing the right thing" (2;221),* suggesting an importance for her work to be seen to make a difference to the child

("*other people can tell what you are doing*" *(2;388)*). The ideas of 'good' and 'right' appeared connected to Mina's work with her key child, and the importance of making sure he was engaging in tasks:

"*I try to do at least one new, introduce at least one new thing to him, then I know he learned something new otherwise I feel like he didn't do anything today*" *(1;296-298)*

"*I feel really good that…today didn't go to waste, at least they did something…but when…he don't want to do anything, I feel like "oh, today he missed out so much" so, I feel err like a little bit guilty like "how can I help him more? How can I make him do this thing?*" *(2;50-57)*

The sense of not 'good enough' was palpable and I wondered whether this represented a 'depressive-anxiety' state (Klein, 1946) whereby the carer of a child experiences an unconscious feeling of inadequacy and fear of harm resulting from their attempts to love and care.

Mina's sense of 'good' and 'right' appeared to extend to her thoughts on the importance of making a difference in society *("If you don't love the job, you cannot deliver good things to the people" (2;306-307)*), which working with her key child allowed her to do (*"at least I'm contributing to the society as well by helping people" (2;267-268)*. She describes being able to connect with others in the community using the Makaton uses to sign with her key child:

"*I'm talking to them by using my Makaton and I was so happy…I was so happy that you know, I can communicate this kind of people as well*" *(2;278-280)*.

4.2.1.2 The impact of others' experiences

Mina shared experiences where she had been impacted by other's stories, such as the "*hardship*" (*1;186*) experienced by members of her family in relation to children with SEN/D, as well as stories of when she had met in the community with personal experience of additional need. Mina reflects on the interplay between her thoughts about these experiences and the child she is working with, saying she had "*never deeply thought about it*" (*1;186*) prior to working with the child, yet now she was thinking about this more, and outside of work. This appeared evident in the stories she shared about her experiences in the community; meeting people with the same condition as the child and using Makaton to communicate with a family in a park, suggesting she had become more attuned to noticing others with similar experiences to the child.

4.2.1.3 From not sharing to sharing

Mina linked the experience of the death of her mother, and her son's communication need as the catalyst to change, from being someone who was *"very reserved" (1;239)* to being someone who would share emotions. Mina's story of her loss emerged from a discussion about sharing feelings with colleagues and wondering about the impact of her voiced feelings on others (*"is this going to make the other person upset" (1;245)*. Reflecting on her loss, she described how she had noticed that her son was *"not talking much" (1;274)* realised that she "*didn't talk much to him*" *(1;278)* and connected this to his limited speech. In this moment, I noticed my own curiosity about the parallels between the experience of her own child with communication needs and working with a child who is not yet able to talk.

4.2.2 Emotional Experiences

4.2.2.1 "Challenging, at the same time, very rewarding"(1;29)

In the initial interview, Mina shared how much she was *"loving" (1;7)* working 1:1 with a child, how it was *"amazing" (1;7)*, alongside her sense of *"satisfaction" (1;18 & 21)* when seeing the child's progress. This was in contrast to the feelings Mina had about the job before working with children on a 1:1 basis; she had seen the *"struggle of parents and teacher" (2;263-264)*, and observing the work to be *"very tough…..very difficult"* yet, she said *"I started, and I love it"(1;308-309; 312).* Over the course of the interviews, the interplay between *"happy"* or *"good"* times *(2; 59, 329, 359 & 413)* with more challenging experiences continued; where Mina described feeling shocked and upset when hurt by the child:

"When he slammed the door on my face, I feel a bit sad" (2;80-81)…"I know it's accident. So, yeah, but I was more shocked than because it was my eyes" (2;301-302) Mina gestured actions (such as pinching and biting) whilst speaking; I was curious about using gestures and sign to communicate whilst re-experiencing the harm she had felt. Akin to Bella's experience, when Mina shared other times where she had been hurt, her response appeared to be attenuated by suggesting potential reasons for his behaviour:

"last week he had a tummy ache and I knew, so he just pinched me, and that was upset me because he never does this thing to me, but he pinched me very badly and immediately he said sorry to me, he didn't mean to but I think he wanted to express himself" (1;151-154).

I was struck by Mina's commitment to understanding the experience of the child and wondered what impact this may have on how she thinks about her feelings in

response to being hurt. Whilst considering the conscious efforts to make sense of his experience, there may be an unconscious wish to place an emotional distance between her experience and feelings; defending against anxiety through intellectualisation (Schafer, 1954).

Reference to challenging times were accompanied by exhaustion for Mina; in one instance, she identified the child's tiredness preceding her own, potentially indicating that Mina was responding to the child's projected feelings:

"So, like, this week, he's very tired. And when he's tired, he's ill. He didn't, don't have enough sleep, he is very challenging. And then end of the day, I'm exhausted because I have to put 10 times more effort to make him do things. So that's why some days I'm very exhausted" (2;25-30)

Mina considered the intensity of the experience and feelings of exhaustion:

"Sometimes, I do not even know what is going on next to me because I am too focused on him, and erm, I feel exhausted some days" (1;371-373)…"I cannot even blink my eyes, I have to be so, this kind of days I can like, very stressed" (1;69-71)

and her wish to be apart from the child, sometimes *"there is days where I am exhausted and I feel like, I want to be with other children" (1;343-344),* which led me to wonder about the experience of spending entire days with one child in role. In the second interview, Mina commented on the change in the child's behaviour, that led to her spending more time with other children, acknowledging she did not *"feel left out anymore" (2;172)*:

"So, I don't miss other children because I'm already out with them. I don't feel lonely because, last year is only me and [child] will be in the big playground by ourselves" *(2;161-163)*

Mina's descriptions of challenging experiences were often followed by counterbalancing statements, as though to mitigate her feelings *"I got stress and other things, but (inbreath) because I think with children, even adult, one smile can make your day, isn't it?" (2;404-405)* including when Mina described being hit by a door just before the interview *"he realised…that you know, he did something wrong…but erm, I feel good working with him. I miss him" (2;83-84)*

Through the transcription process and in supervision, I was able to understand the emotions in the interview. I had noted the discord between the emotions shared in response to challenge, and the swift move to a more positive reframe; exploring this helped me to identify Mina potentially finding it difficult to have negative feelings towards a child; her avoidance of these feelings, coupled with the perception of children as *"innocent" (2;476).*

4.2.2.2 Feeling 'Good', 'Doing' and Expectations of Self

Mina shared feeling "good" and "happy" about her work with the child, often connected to 'doing'; suggesting that progress of the child was important to her sense of doing well and her expectations of herself:

"I feel really good that…today didn't go any waste, at least they did something" (2;53-55)…"I am so happy that he's doing this, is because I am teaching him well enough" (2;86-88)…"I'm happy, the work I'm doing with him. I'm happy, that he is progressing well" (2;412-413)

Mina described her feelings of anxiety, stress and guilt when the child does not 'do' anything:

"like yesterday, he didn't want to tidy up, he is giving me like anxiety "why is he not doing it?" (1;119-120)…"So I feel like, stressed, like or today he's not doing enough, learning, so, how shall I help him more?" (2;44-45)…"but when…he don't want to do anything, I feel like "oh, today he missed out so much" so, I feel err like a little bit guilty like "How can I help him more?" (2;55-58)

and the importance others seeing her work, and their feedback on her output:

"You're so good with him and you're always happy, you're never upset" and that made me feel happy as well, like, other people can tell what you're doing so yeah (Researcher: what do you mean?) Like, err like, acknowledge your work, other people can spot what you're doing. Like, if I didn't do well probably he would have also spot that as well, isn't it?" (2; 386-392)

Mina's concern for how others perceived her work and for others to see it as 'good' struck me in the previous interview; I was curious about the feelings of being not 'good enough' and the high expectations of herself that I had noticed in the 'transference'. Noticing my own feelings in response, I used supervision prior to the second interview to reflect on my own anxieties as a 'good enough' researcher, and attempted to navigate the pull to respond as positive and encouraging in the interview; potentially replicating the relational exchanges between Mina and her colleagues, as well my wish for validation.

In the initial interview, Mina had given examples of colleagues praising her, including when she had shared an experience of challenge with them:

"I'm having a tough day today" and everybody was saying "yeah, you're doing a wonderful job", they are giving me compliment, "you are so good in here, we

appreciate the work you are doing" so you think *"yeah I am doing something good, isn't it?" (1;258-261)*

I wondered about the reassurance from colleagues when Mina had shared something difficult. It appeared as though Mina's attempts to share difficult feelings with others, after overcoming her worries of upsetting others with her emotions, had not been received and 'contained'; that a space to process overwhelming feelings was not available, and potentially, Mina had been subject to the defence mechanisms of another, through the denial of her feelings (Freud, 1937). This experience preceded Mina sharing the loss of her mother in her early adulthood, and how she had previously withdrawn from sharing her feelings and aspects of herself. I noticed the feeling of shock at the unexpectedness of the loss, and returning to the interview data later, I was able to make sense of the 'transference' experienced; Mina's sense of not being able to *"control my emotions" (1;265)* and separation, through being in a different country at the time of her death. In the sharing of the loss of her first containing figure, I was aware of my own pre-occupations of trying to be containing as a researcher showing an interest in her emotions, and the challenge to think through feelings (Bion, 1962b).

4.2.2.3 Feeling 'special'

Alongside managing difficult feelings in response to challenge and the sense of positive feelings being tied to performance, Mina spoke of feeling special, connected to feedback about her work and as someone able to offer something distinct to the child that others could not:

"So, I feel very special like, okay, like, last month, I had a appointment and I had to go, two o'clock as soon as I left he did a - I changed him before I went. And as soon

as they said, two, three minutes later, he did a poo. And the whole school knew he did one, because he wasn't allowing to make, he didn't cooperate with anybody? So, three people tried and he was touching his pants. So, next day when I came in, I feel so special. Like, everybody was like, "Mina, how do you manage? How do you change him, he is so challenging. We really admire your job. You know, you're doing it great" (2;207-214)

This story amused Mina and consolidated her unique contribution, as someone who could offer something others could not. The 'whole school knowing' echoed the importance for Mina that others were aware of her work, and I wondered whether this also spoke to others having experienced Mina's work for themselves, and whether this validated her experience of tough days, when verbally sharing emotions was not received by others.

In addition to the feedback Mina received about how well she was doing, she was also told how happy she looked by colleagues and *"you don't have any stress (laughs)"* (2;72). Mina spoke of her body language and face revealing stress to others when she did not verbalise her feelings; although her recollection of other's responses to her feelings centred around noticing happiness. She shared a memory of a previous workplace, and witnessing an upset colleague:

"I feel good that like that people don't see because I saw, in my, another workplace one lady use to be always, upset and grumpy face and everybody will talk behind her like "why she's upset all the time". You don't want to see upset face every day" (2;407-410)

This struck me as a potential defence against experiencing the difficult feelings that exist within her and others. To avoid acknowledging the difficult feelings beneath a sunny exterior, Mina was unconsciously utilising 'splitting' and 'projection' (Klein,

1946), locating the revelation of negative experiences within the person showing the feelings, rather than acknowledging them as part of her emotions. At a group level, the reference to others talking behind the colleagues back and locating difficulty within one person may suggest the witnessing of 'scapegoating' (Obholzer & Zagier Roberts, 2019) individuals within a group, and the vulnerability of being the individual who represents difficult feelings. I wondered about the function of the reassuring comments from colleagues, Mina witnessing another's scapegoating, and how this impacted Mina's perspective on being able to share difficult emotions in work.

4.2.3 The Relationship

4.2.3.1 Attachment & 'Love'

For Mina, this relationship was a new experience, and she noticed a change in how she approached her work; towards the prospect of working 1:1 and her emotions towards the child. She spoke of loving him and wanting *"to do as much as I can for him"(1;87)* and the emotional nature of 1:1, describing getting *"very attached with them"(1;180).* Mina's recollections of the things they do together suggest a reciprocity, sharing joy and playfulness *("we do jokes with each other….when we laugh, giggle"(1;107-109),* exploring together *("we look at things…we chased the pigeon"(1;109-111)* and reminders of rules and boundaries ("*We are very friendly, as, as the same time, I am very strict with him and he knows that"(1;99-100),* suggesting Mina following the child's lead, receiving his approaches as though providing a 'safe haven' (Ainsworth, 1967), mirroring the attachment relationship between a parent and a child. Mina also noticed a parallel between her commitment

and efforts for the child, and the role of a parent in understanding and providing for a child:

"I never before used to go online and read up on [Trisomy Disorder] children, now I go on different websites, see things for him, activities for him, and erm, makes me feel like I'm doing research for my own child" (1;88-90)

The connection with parenting and family appeared reciprocal, where Mina shared feeling *"like I am a mummy" (1;173)* in response to the child's potential regressed states when he has done something wrong:

"And the happy moments is like, he always hugs me so as soon as I say "I am upset [his name] with you" he comes to me, he put his head, my head on his chest, and goes to hold my hand, kissed there and put his thumb inside his mouth and he said "baby" (1;167-170)

The reference to both happy moments and being upset in this interaction and receiving a child in an infant state made me wonder about what space was available to process and make sense of the emotional communications between them, and the lack of distinction between a professional, caring and parental role. The relationship is also noticed by another in Mina's life:

"he said "mummy, I need to meet him one day" and I said "okay", he say "you love him so much, sometimes I feel like you love him more than me" so they, at six years old, can tell now, how much I love the job" (1;320-323)

In the first interview, the language of the 'job' stood out, and I wondered about the potential 'displacement' (Freud, 1937) of feelings onto the job, and avoiding the feelings that Mina's son had shared with her. I had reflected in supervision how to sensitively explore this further and use Mina's words to inform questions. When

offered space to explore this further in the second interview, Mina acknowledged *"this conversation still goes on" (2;183)* and reflected on her son's feelings, describing his *'jealousy' (2;100)*, her teasing and attempts to explain:

"I always like to tease my little one as well, like "okay, if you think yeah, I do love him" (2;185-186)…"I don't want you to get upset because I love ohh ahh, because I work with him I have to love him, and I do love him. I have to take care of him" (2;189-191)…"I always explain, I don't want them to be upset as well, like okay my mum is not erm giving us priority" (2;191-192).

The move to engaging with her son and their feelings in the narrative presented a shift from the initial avoidance and displacement, with Mina taking on her son's feelings and acknowledging the difficulty.

4.2.3.2 'I feel very lost without him' (1;78)

During the first interview, I noticed when Mina was asked about what it was like being with the child, her response related to being without him:

"I feel like he is part of my family…so, erm, like if he is not in, I feel very lost, and everybody else can tell that, my difference, so I feel very lost without him and I start to miss him and I call other children by his name" (1;76-79)

This led me to be curious about the boundaries of the relationship, being able to separate from the child and think about others; calling others by his name, including her son:

"sometimes I, my son's name is […...] and I call him [child name], the day before yesterday I said 'stop it [child's name]' and he goes 'mum, I am [.....], not [child's name], he's at school' (laughs) (1;347-350)…"he said, "okay, mum is enough. You are talking too much about [child]" (2;178-180)

Although Mina is employed to work with the child all day, his frequent absence for ill-health means she can be asked to do other duties. I wondered what sense she made of the separation, from the child in school and from her usual role. Her description of feeling lost suggested a challenge with tolerating the uncertainty of the child's absence, alongside her sense of identity in role:

"when he's not here, I have to go to another classroom, or help another class. So, I feel really like lost because I'm not into that routine, you know? So, I feel without him like, "what am I doing? Oh, I do miss him as well" (2;118-122)

The absence of professional others in Mina's narrative invited my curiosity about what is known to Mina about the processes that take place in the child's absence, and how the system communicates and helps to contain her anxiety when things change. A more anticipated separation came with the summer holidays; Mina described dreaming of the child during the holidays and wondering how different he might be:

"I was really excited to see how much he's gonna change in the six weeks and also the other exciting thing was the for the first time he was going back home, his dad back home, err [country] and I was like how he's gonna react there? Is he gonna learn another language? Is he gone tall? (laugh) Is he gonna forget all his Makaton?" (2;103-107)

Mina's reference to dreaming of the child and wonderings of substantial change over a six-week period led me to think about the role of phantasy (Spillius, 2007) in managing unconscious fears, such as loss. Mina's wonderings suggested ideas that the child would have grown and learned a new language to communicate, revealing an anxiety that he would no longer need her, forget the language to communicate with her, or worse, forget her. Mina's recollection of the reunion highlighted her apprehensions and how they were dispelled:

"It didn't feel like we was away for five, six weeks, he just came, hug me, he looked normal. And he remembered everything" (2;108-110).

4.3 Aya

Aya is a Black British woman in her twenties, who began her first TA role in her current post. Aya lives on her own and shared she has younger siblings, and her parents are divorced. She told me about her career aspirations, and her plans to move onto another role at the end of the academic year.

The key child Aya works with on a 1:1 basis is in Key Stage 2. He has a diagnosis of ASC and communication needs; Aya's full time role supporting him includes speech and language interventions, developing his social communication skills, helping him to manage his emotions and supporting his learning.

4.3.1 Role

4.3.1.1 What is the role?

Aya shared how she had initially grappled with the definition of role in her first TA, and 1:1 TA post. Throughout the interviews, Aya made reference to the concept of a 'true 1:1', suggesting a difference in 1:1 roles *"I would describe myself as a true 1:1, I spend, my entire day apart from break time and lunch time with the same child"* (1;11-12)

I was curious about what this distinction meant for Aya, and what represented 'true' for her. Exploring this in the second interview, Aya spoke of fulfilling a role akin to a teacher; teaching the child and being responsible for his learning:

"I guess I would say that I feel like a true one-to one in the sense that, I am like, the one adult that is responsible for him, and his learning … so like, everything that he learned is like, pre-taught through me if that makes sense, rather than being able to like sit and listen to what the teacher saying" (2;38-43)…"can feel like his teacher in a way because.. I am the one that's like delivering his lessons, rather than his teacher" (2;49-51)

4.3.1.2 Responsibility

The idea of responsibility in role, with similarities to other roles for children were thought about by Aya, and the impact of the expectations upon her:

"this is a lot of expectation as well I think, like, (pause) at the end of the day, obviously he has a class teacher but I feel like I am the one that's responsible" (1;162-164)

Aya's language around expectation, responsibility and the idea of 'everything' led me to wonder about what was unspoken about the other roles in school, their responsibility towards the child, and how responsibility was placed on and taken up by Aya:

"you kind of feel like his parent, because, you know, I am helping him with pretty much everything, erm so yeah it can be that kind of an in-between, like I know I am his teaching assistant, but it can feel like more than that…erm so yeah, I don't know" (1;30-34)

Aya described the challenge of feeling responsible for the progress of the child, in her pedagogical and caring roles:

"if things are going well or aren't going well I feel like, you know it's kind of like the buck stops at me, so yeah, that can be, (pause) erm, I don't know the word for it, like, can be, difficult sometimes (uplift)" (1;164-167)

Exploring this further, Aya mentioned that she would feel she *"wasn't doing my job properly" (2;208),* if responsibility did not sit with her, because of the substantial amount of work she did with him. I was curious about the uplift in Aya's voice; suggesting it may be hard to name difficulty, and framing it as a question rather than a statement may allow her to test this idea.

4.3.1.3 Conflict in role

Aya's work with the child moved from being outside of the classroom, to supporting the child at a desk in the classroom, separate to his peers. The change in her work environment to being with other children presented her with more positive challenge in her work:

"I'll have... children that, like behaviour difficulties, find learning difficult, so that's nice, so it is like even though I have the child I work with sat next to me still, I'm also able to, work with other children, so that's really helped with that, yeah" (2;214-217)

When noticing the child's capacity to complete a task independently, Aya described how she would withdraw her support, and sought to offer support to other children. However, this appeared to cause some conflict for Aya, as she battled with task given to her, and a task she identified (Lawrence, 1977, in Obholzer & Zagier-Roberts, 2019):

" should I be doing something with <u>him</u> right now, even though he's getting on fine or, yeah, but I'm just trying not to think like that, which is a bit difficult" (2;255-258)

Aya's wish to include other children within her primary task conflicted with how her role was identified by the title "1:1"; she experienced a guilt when not being in a 1:1 role with her child, even when she felt it was not needed. Through the interview process, Aya appeared to have reached a 'depressive position' (Klein, 1946), being

able to acknowledge and sit with the difficulty whilst making and qualifying her choices:

"I guess because, it's so like, not drummed in but like, I know that my job title is a one-to-one. But obviously, if you have children that need help, I'm not going to ignore them, but it can be difficult to balance it sometimes" (2;239-242)

4.3.1.4 Working with a parent

In the first interview, Aya mentioned the *"good working relationship" (1;62)* she had with the child's mother. She described receiving feedback from the mother that the child had told their mother; the child was not yet speaking with this level of ability to Aya. This topic appeared to be moved away from by both of us in the initial interview; when reflecting on the transcription, I sought to ask a little more about how this felt for Aya in the second interview. What I had wondered about in relation to Aya's feelings, transpired to relate to the role and interaction with the mother. Aya shared her interpretation of why the mother may have told her the child had spoken at home:

"if I tell her... that he did this amazing thing today, that he's not doing at <u>home</u>...[she] will be like "Oh, but why's, he not doing that with me?" So, I think that's why she does the reverse…because it makes her feel, you know, like, which is 100% true, but you know, he is making progress at home as well" (2;98-103)

Aya shared that the school relationship with the parent was *"difficult"(2;89)* and the parent was described as *"confrontational" (2;122).* Aya spoke about how she managed the relationship with the parent:

"so I came in... and just tried to be like, okay, you know, "what can you teach me about" you know "about your child" and I think that approach worked quite well.

Erm I think now she's at the point she's, like, comfortable,...with me, with me being with her child" (2;119-126)

Working in this way led to Aya reflecting on how the mother of the child had managed and accepted the presence of another adult in her child's life; in a role that Aya described as having both parental and educational functions:

"I don't have children (laughs) I'm not at the stage where I'm like, ready for kids at all, but I can imagine that you'd, feeling quite like, terr- I don't know, if territorial is the word but you know, I mean, you know, wanting him to do well so I just try and look at it, look at it, from a place of understanding, like using her as someone that's, you know really knowledgeable, you know, I'm sure there's no one that knows, their child better than her" (2;107-113)

Aya's descriptions appeared attuned to the possible feelings of the mother, noticing the conflict between hearing of her child doing well and the feelings evoked by not being present or part of this development. I became curious about the extent of the role with the parent, and whether Aya was providing 'containment' for the mother, helping her think through her difficult experiences:

"for example, the trip today, was the first trip that she hadn't been on with him...and she was <u>happy</u> that he did really well on the trip, and he was like, happy. But I think in a way, she would have liked if there had been a bit of, you know, "oh but my mum wasn't there" kind of thing" (2;94-97)

4.3.2 Emotional Experiences

4.3.2.1 Isolation

The feeling of isolation in the role was profound for Aya; initially experienced as part of her understanding of the role and realising she did not have anyone doing the

"exact same thing" (1;173). Aya noticed her isolation working mostly outside of the classroom, with the child who was not able to use words to communicate:

"it was really isolating for me, I felt, erm in the sense that you know I was spending all my day, talking to a child who is not really talking back to me" (1;147-149)…"I was like, I was just spending all day with this one child, who's, and at the time, it felt like progress wasn't really being made" (1;152-155)

Her sense of isolation was compounded by the time alone with the child without verbal communication, and when others were not able to receive and understand her experiences "*it did sometimes feel like "oh I didn't have anyone that I could talk to about this" (1;176-177):*

"I think, it felt isolating, yeah, even when I, like, even when I talk to people outside of school, that have, like my friends or like my mum even, who I have a really good relationship with, it would be like "oh, okay" like "yeah, okay that does sound difficult" but because they haven't, experienced it (uplift)" (1;179-183)

In the description of isolation, I noticed a feeling of distance from Aya, and wondered if the experience of isolation was an overwhelming experience that was not previously contained by others when she had shared her feelings, and if I was being identified as another person who did not understand what it was like.

Reflecting on the child's capacity to work and stay in the classroom, Aya noticed she was less isolated as she worked alongside other children in the class:

"I mean I am still definitely a 1:1, but it felt more like isolating before, whereas now, because he is in the classroom a lot, I do have the other children, that come with (breath change) their own (inhale) challenges or whatever yeah" (1; 232-235)

4.3.2.2 'Comfortable'

During the second interview, I noticed Aya's use of the word 'comfortable' to describe different aspects of her experience, and where questions sought to explore her feelings. Her initial use of comfortable related to wanting experiences of difference in her work, whilst routine helped to reduce stress:

"But then in a way, sometimes it's a bit like, "Oh, you know, it'd be nice if something a bit different happened", which is nice, like to say that having a trip today was nice, you know, that kind of thing. But yeah, most of the time it's like, comfortable, is the word I would use, yeah" (2;79-83)

The concept of comfort also related to predictability of the child's emotional state, and how well he could manage in the classroom setting:

"I'm less concerned about him being like, "oh I wanna leave the classroom" and stuff, I am able to, you know, feel...like comfortable, in the classroom, there's a, he is completely fine in there" (2;264-267)

as well as Aya's ability to have separation between work and her personal life:

"the fact that I feel so comfortable helps that I'm not, you know, some people would go home and stress over the weekend about their job, you know, I don't have that, which is nice, because it means that once I leave, I've left" (2;288-291)

Contrasting with the positives of comfort, Aya reflected on the potential for change for both her and the key child, and having different views to those who felt a child's 1:1 should be the same person throughout primary school:

"I think... you get to a point where you're... too comfortable because eventually, you know, I'm not going to be his teaching assistant from Year One to, .. you know, (laughs) whenever he finishes school" (2;161-164)

4.3.2.3 Bored

Aya's admission of feeling bored felt furtive, and as though she was voicing something she should not think, laughing slightly and speaking in a lower tone when she mentioned it. I wondered about what emotions were connected to this word, as she had sought for a 'nice way' to describe her feelings:

"I say sometimes (slight laugh) I wanna put this in a nice way and not a, but you can, sometimes, I do find myself, I don't know if bored is the word, (outbreath) but, maybe like not challenged? (1;209-211)…"it is lovely to see how much progress he has made but yeah, some days can be <u>slightly boring</u> (quieter)" (2;228-229)

Her boredom was alleviated when working with other children, in what she viewed as outside her role: "*But then it's fine because you have all the other children in the class to deal with as well (laughs)*" (1;229-230).

Aya connected this boredom with the reduction of challenge in her role; the child she had worked with outside of the classroom because of his distress, was now working more independently. I wondered about the potential for unconscious communication between the dyad; how Aya noticed he was doing well independently and what feelings the child might have about being supported 1:1; if he was also 'bored' of being supported:

"*Because everything is going so well, he's doing all his interventions, he's making such good progress, erm, that it is kind of like, you come in everyday, you know what to expect, which I know some people love, but I think I just get bored quite <u>easily</u> (laughs) so I am kind of a bit like "ohh, yeah this is <u>lovely"</u> (extension of sound) but like, you know, what's the next step" (1;211-216)*

4.3.2.4 Guilt

As part of managing her boredom and isolation, and the growing independence of the child, Aya sought to support other children in the class once knowing her key child was *"set off" (2;253).* She expressed a feeling of guilt, in balancing other children's needs and the definition of her role as a 1:1:

"Erm, it can be difficult, so, (pause) because he's doing so well, and other children are struggling, for example, in maths, whatever, so I might spend the lesson, (pause) not just working with them, but focusing on them, and sometimes I feel like a little bit guilty, like even though he's fine and he's getting on with his work, it's like "oh but my role is a 1:1 and I've just had", you know "I haven't really spent that much time with him in maths" like, so, I can feel guilty, and I don't even think I should feel guilty, like I have made sure he is fine and I haven't left, you know, but...oh, I don't know, I guess, yeah, that's, I could feel guilty sometimes, but...not for helping them but for not being exclusively with him" (1;238-247)

Aya appeared to be processing her thoughts about the definitions and different beliefs of her role, leaving her with guilt and feeling she was not completing her role, despite assessing the child as competent to work alone for specific tasks. Aya appeared to be navigating thoughts of relating to a 'paranoid-schizoid' position and struggling to achieve a 'depressive' position; (Klein, 1946); acknowledging the 'either/or' thinking in the polar ways of interpreting role, her conflict and worry that she was abandoning the child when rationally she had identified he could be left alone.

This sense of guilt eased when Aya was given a set table of children to support alongside her key child, (*"I'm like, "okay, I work with these guys" whereas before it would be a bit like "oh but they are not on my t- no, should I be helping them, should I be working with them or not?" (2;243-244)*) and that there were perceived benefits

of him seeing her work with others *("I think it's a good skill for him to have the child I work with, in terms of you know, waiting knowing that I'm not always going to be available that second or that minute, you know?" (2;246-248)* although Aya noticed she still experienced some guilt:

"it's like an internal battle, I guess…But…I don't know, in the back of your head, I'm like, "Oh, but should I be someth- like should I be doing something with <u>him</u> right now, even though he's getting on fine or, yeah, but I'm just trying not to think like that, which is a bit difficult, yeah" (2;251-258)

Although Aya had accepted the presence of uncomfortable feelings, she realised that she wasn't asked about her emotions in work, and that speaking her thoughts had been part of realising *"how much you think or feel something…made me think "Oh I am feeling guilty (laughs) Maybe I should stop feeling guilty"(2;330-334).* Whilst Aya was able to reflect on this experience, I was curious how her sense of not being asked about her emotions connected to the experience of isolation and not having others who understood to share with.

4.3.3 The Relationship

4.3.3.1 Intensity of the relationship

Alongside defining and establishing the role boundaries of 1:1 work, Aya considered the meaning of the relationship with the child, describing it as a "*a close relationship" (1;19).*

Aya considered the caring aspects of the relationship which represented parental roles, although created a distinction between herself and assuming a parental identity:

"a weird relationship where it is like, you are not, (pause) obviously you are not his parent, but.. during those school hours you kind of feel like his parent" (1;29-31)

and the distinction of the relationship from that with a teacher:

"(in breath, laugh) erm I think it is more, (pause, out breath) I don't know if more is the right word, more different than a teacher-student relationship" (1;91-93)

4.3.3.2 Emotions in the relationship

From the beginning of the initial interview, Aya shared her awareness of the impact of the child's emotions on her own feelings, describing the experience as *"intense"* (1;9) and how she used her feelings to understand him:

"So, when the child I work with is having a really good day.. that really affects my mood and when he is having like not such a good day, then that affects my mood as well, erm, yeah I feel like, it can be, sometimes <u>emotional</u>" (1;14-17)

"I do know him <u>really well</u>, I would say, so it's easier in that sense that, it is easier for me to identify, oh he's not in, such a good mood, or he is in such a good mood, and like the reasons why, which is good because it makes (slight intake breath, laugh) my job a lot easier" (1;20-24)

She described his awareness of her thoughts about his behaviour, suggesting "*I guess he cares more about what I <u>think</u> of his behaviour"* (1;104), recalling times when the child only became upset if Aya set boundaries, and was not worried by other adults 'telling him off'.

The length of the relationship made Aya feel like she should understand the child and his emotions: "*I have known this child for over a year, I should know the reason <u>why'</u> erm, so yeah, that can be, challenging, but it is also amazing"* (1;26-28). Aya shared how things had been *"really, really tough"* (1;145) in the early stages of the relationship and felt *"it was important to mention that"* (1;161) as she felt she had

been quite positive in the interview. I wondered what Aya wished for me to know, by communicating the change in experiences.

As well as receiving the emotional communication received from the child, Aya shared how she made efforts not to communicate her negative feelings to the child:

"I try and remain pretty <u>consistent</u> (uplift) in terms of even I am not in a great mood, to him, I want it to appear that I am… so that, you know, he knows, okay… this is Aya and this is what I expec, this is what I am going to get with her" (1;52-56)

4.3.3.3 Attachment

Although Aya described the relationship between her and the child positively, and at a *"really good stage in the relationship"(1;144),* she spoke about the challenges of being too close, and concerns for dependency:

"I would say maybe, (outbreath) towards the like, end of last year, it was, he was almost too <u>attached to me</u> (uplift), where it was like, I would go for my lunch which is 30 minutes and it would be a big deal for him, and I would have to really talk him through that process" (1;76-80)

She described the dilemma of balancing dependence and independence, and how to identify it:

"it can be difficult to judge, like you know, having a really good bond, which means you can work really well, and having like…too much of an attachment, I would say, where it is like, too reliant and dependent <u>on me</u>" (1;82-85)

I was curious about who could help Aya think about the attachment in the relationship and how to respond to the dependency she felt. In the interview, Aya's reflection on the job description and the wider experience of 1:1s whilst describing

herself as isolated made me wonder about whether the reliance of the child on her

may be too difficult to name and think about:

"I guess is like the struggle for all 1:1s, because, they are reliant on you, like it's part
of your job description, but it is like trying to, kind of form some independence as
well" (1;85-87)

4.3.4 Preparation for Endings

4.3.4.1 Independence

Returning for the second interview, Aya described her progress in developing the

child's independence skills, gradually introducing time away from her into his day:

"we're just doing little things. So, like him not having a one-to-one. So, I still get a
break in the morning, so, before I would be covered, so he'd still have a one-to-one in
the playground, he doesn't <u>anymore</u>, which works quite well, so it means that he's not,
looking for someone, you know, at play times and at lunch times to be with him. That
gives me a bit more, like breathing space (laughs), which is nice, to know that he can
be out in the playground, pretty much <u>independently</u> (uplift) which is nice" (2;133-
139)

Aya's mention of 'breathing space' made me wonder about her reflections on reliance

in the previous interview, and whether the use of this description represented feelings

she had previously, connected to guilt and wanting some relief from the intensity.

Aya also referred to the mother's thoughts of independence, suggesting that the

mother may have shared some of her anxieties about the child's development with

Aya:

"I want to him, to be able to be, independent, like his mum has asked me quite a lot.
You know, what do you think he'll look like in 10, 10 years or five years when he's a
teena-, you know, when he's a teenager" (2;147-149)

Although Aya spoke of developing independence in response to the feeling of the child being reliant upon her, her personal circumstances were also a reason to think about increasing his capacity to be without her:

"And obviously, I'm aware in the back of my head that, you know, past July, I probably won't be working with <u>him</u>. So, I wouldn't want him to be at the stage where it's like, I'm the only adult that he can do this, this, and this with, because, it will make it more difficult for him come September" (2;150-154)

4.3.4.2 Leaving

Aya's career aspirations were spoken about in the first interview; describing her longer term goals outside of a TA role. In the second interview, her concerns about the impact of her personal choices were apparent in her thoughts:

"I'm not leaving because I don't like the job, if that makes sense, it's just because you know, I wanna eventually go into [career]. So yeah, it will be difficult, but... I think I will feel better like knowing that I've tried to like, make him as independent as possible, so that when I leave, he should you know, do well next year" (2;165-169)

Aya acknowledged the different feelings which emerged for her; her excitement at the new opportunities alongside the sadness of leaving others:

"Erm, like mixed emotions, like it's exciting in the sense, that you know, I'll be going on to a new chapter ...it will definitely be sad because we have built like a good relationship and not even just him, but like, you know, worked at this school for, so you have a good relationship with a lot of the children, yeah" (2; 172-176)

I noticed a brief reference to the child and the consideration of the relationships with the wider group of children in the class; I wondered whether broadening the sense of loss to many children helped Aya to manage a personal sense of loss with a single child:

"emotionally, it's difficult, like, I don't know how I'm gonna feel it like come July,

when I'm leaving, but I feel like, it's life?" (2;292-294)

4.4 Jenna

Jenna is a woman in her forties, of Asian and British heritage. Jenna has worked as a

TA for a number of years and has been engaged in a course as part of her career

aspirations. Jenna is from a family with many older siblings; she does not have

children. When describing her family in interviews, Jenna spoke of coming from a

family that was 'hard to reach' and that she was a child that was 'written off' by

others.

Prior to the interview, Jenna shared how pleased she was about the research, and her

feelings that TAs had been overlooked in research, when she had gone to look further

into research herself; *"it's nice to know that, somebody is doing something about*

them, about us" (2; 783-784). Jenna works on 1:1 with a number of children each

day, and the key child she works with most on a 1:1 basis was the focus in her

interviews. He is a Key Stage 1 child, with needs relating to a developmental delay.

By the time of the second interview, the key child had transitioned to a new setting,

and Jenna continued her work with children she had established 1:1 roles with and

started working with a new child.

4.4.1 Role

4.4.1.1 The Needs and Progression of the Child

Adapting learning to the needs of the child to help them progress was an apparent part

of Jenna's role, and something she sought to understand deeply:

"if it's something that I've struggled with, trying to sort out at school, if I can think of, I'll do some research when I'm not here or whatever, and or I'l speak to a friend, that say for instance my friend is a play specialist, and get some advice from her and things like that" (2;282-285)

Jenna recognised her commitment to the work often meant it went home with her; and how friends often reminded her she was not in work: *"ooh that will be really good for such-and such" and they will be like "you're not working"* (1;71-73)

There were times where her commitment to the child's needs impacted her wellbeing; losing sleep and returning to work when unwell:

"I came back early even though the doctor had signed me off...because I knew that, the children were struggling" (1;59-60)…"if I'm, I'm concerned about something that's going on or the behaviour, and how am I going to change this, and how am I going to help, and that does, it can affect my sleep no matter what I try" (2;272-275)

Noticing the impact on Jenna's wellbeing, and her frustration when she was not able to help the children achieve, I wondered about the sense of 'good enough' for Jenna, and the impact of idealised practice. Stamenova (2019) reflected on Klein's (1957) work on frustration; how the experience of frustration remains within the individual without 'splitting' taking place and instead, the object of frustration delays the individual's gratification. After *"really frustrating" (1;13)* times when progress was not be sustained, Jenna described "*jubilation*" and "*pride" (1;17)* when progress was made after much effort, and her own involvement in progression:

"when something they've been struggling with for so long, they finally get, and they realise it as well. And it's just this amazing feeling" (1;17-18)

4.4.1.2 When needs aren't met

Frustration was a dominant feeling for Jenna, relating to challenges when trying to understand the child's needs, and managing the difficult feelings that emerged:

"it's frust, so frustrating because it's, I want, I wish we knew what, what his needs were, because it might give us an insight on how I can help him better, because I almost feel like...we're failing him" (1;312-314)

I was curious about the sense of failure Jenna spoke of, and how this related to a sense of omnipotence when feeling out of control; a wish to solve all problems and challenges that emerged to manage the anxiety of not getting it right.

Jenna described a difficult time when she worked with a colleague whom she felt was not adapting teaching for the children with SEN/D. Jenna described trying to work with the colleague and requesting guidance to adapt or plan ahead for lessons which were not differentiated for her children. She felt she was *"protective"* of the children and described that the Teacher she had previously worked with did not know the children's levels, *"Oh, they can't read" at the end of the year. And I was like I'm not in that class and I know that he can read" (1;214-217).* This connected with a sense of responsibility; that Jenna's role was to do more to meet the needs she felt were unmet, and take up other's responsibilities. I wondered whether Jenna had a valency for 'helping', meaning that she was more likely to take up responsibilities placed onto her, or left by others:

"And in the past...there's been people that have just not understood their needs. And...I then have to go the extra....extra length kind of make sure their needs are being met" (1;122-124)

Through the interviews Jenna's beliefs about care and not giving up were apparent: *"whatever I can to make sure that they feel that there's somebody that is that's not giving up, that's there, that cares"* (1;394-396). This appeared to make a distinct 'split' between those who really cared and wanted to make a difference to the children, and those who did not seem to care. Jenna was surprised when her sense of who cares and who doesn't was challenged, by unexpected help:

"Because I'm not used to that. Not used to, the teacher doing it". So, it's so nice to actually know, that there's somebody else there, that cares as much" (1;167-169)

This was in comparison to 'not caring' being represented as 'not being listened to about the child's needs', with Jenna positioning herself as an advocate for the children when needs were not met by a different colleague:

"it frustrated me, because it felt like she just didn't care and didn't want to listen and didn't care about his anxiety" (2;585-587)...*"if their needs aren't being met, I'm, I'm not one to just sit...and watch it not happen. I will speak up"* (1;206-210)

4.4.1.3 Wanting to feel appreciated

Jenna described the effort and commitment to her work, with the progress of the children making it "*worthwhile*" (1;283). She referred to the efforts to achieve small steps of progress for the children she worked with:

"I know how hard I've worked to get there, and you know how hard, they've worked to get there as well"(1;19-20)…"it kind of almost emotional, when they get to that point where something they've worked with, they've worked on so hard for so long"(1;26-28)

Reflecting on the child she had supported to transition to his new school, she shared the *"bittersweet" (2;58)* feelings, as others would benefit from her work:

"Because without all that support, the extra support that I've given, he wouldn't have achieved as much. I mean, yeah, somebody else maybe. But as in whilst I'm here, it was me, that helped him to achieve those" (2;752-754)

Jenna found it difficult when a parent did not praise her child for achieving a substantial goal in his behaviour and was focused on academic outcomes:

"well if, if he doesn't want to make you pr-, if he knows he's not gonna make you proud, what chance has he got, what's he gonna do? He's just going to give up" (1;375-379)

I reflected on the experience of annoyance I had felt in the interview, and wondered what was communicated in the 'transference'; whether the parent's response was not a reflection solely on the child, and whether the hurt felt also related to Jenna feeling that her efforts were not 'good enough'

Witnessing times where she felt TAs were treated negatively, Jenna reflected *"it's horrible when you kind of, don't get appreciated" (1;502-503).* Jenna's sense of being valued extended to her experience and views being respected as professional:

"Just kind of knowing that people take on board what your, your experience, your knowledge, and just your opinion really, that that makes, it makes you kind of wanna work hard…somebody, listens to what you're saying and doing and takes your opinion onboard. Then it makes you work harder. Because you know that you're appreciated in your job" (1;418-423)

4.4.1.4 Power and Position of role

In her reflections of wanting to be valued, Jenna spoke of times where she had felt in a lower position to others, despite her knowledge:

"when you're, you're experienced, your views aren't taking in consideration, it's like, well you are just a TA…you know, "we're the teacher of the class", erm, you know, it doesn't count, this is, "I'm doing it this way" and that's it" (1;404-407)

This was an experience she felt was replicated elsewhere; describing stories of friends who had experienced similar and the hierarchy present at social events with whole school teams. Jenna recalled a time where she had implemented ideas and credit was not attributed to her:

"And they'll take the credit for it, and you're like "Hang on a minute. How does that work? And, you can voice that, I've voiced it, I've just give it up now when it happens because it's like, they're not gonna listen anyway because that's the teachers, the teacher have said it so that must be right" (1;425-432)

Jenna described feeling *"resentful"* at being *"pushed aside" (2;632-635),* when not feeling part of a team or encouraged. Although the immediate connection between Jenna's emotional experience in a 1:1 role was not apparent to me, I attempted to attend to the 'unconscious logic' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012) connecting Jenna's thoughts and free-associations to my questions. I noticed Jenna had shared another time where she had not felt listened to about the children's needs, connected to her

TA role: *("I don't know if it's because it was me that was saying it, but just didn't get it at all" (2;584-585).* Jenna's sense of stuck-ness with not being heard led me to think about other times when she described 'not being listened to', and the replications in relational interactions. Conversely, she felt that she was listened to by her key children, and that they *"wouldn't listen to anybody other than me" (2;91-92).*

4.4.1.5 Personal Experiences

Jenna's passion for caring, and not giving up on children stemmed from her own experience. She described being:

"one of the children that was written off...I come from one of those hard to reach families. And I never wanna have, another child feel how like I did" (1;133-136).

In the first interview, I noticed Jenna moved quickly away from reference to her own personal story, speaking of the children she worked with, and their similar experiences. I wondered whether this connection had been painful to acknowledge once thought, and whether Jenna's swift return to the children represented an avoidance.

In the second interview, Jenna recalled feeling like *"scum" (2;389)* as a student, in relation to her experience of feeling less worthy of support from a teacher. She referenced the power of this experience and her career:

"*That's always been in the back of my mind of kind of how... I don't want a child to feel that way...and that's one of the things that keeps me doing this job" (2;414-416).*

Jenna reflected on how it felt to share her early life experiences:

"I've realised how much of an impact, and why it's led me down the streets, and that the paths that I've taken, so I suppose that been a, not an eye opener as such, but kind of a nudge going "oh, yeah, I remember now" (2;771-774).

4.4.2 Emotional Experiences

4.4.2.1 "Rollercoaster" (1;7)

The joy experienced when the children Jenna worked with achieved their goals, or did something well was evident *"Oh my god, you're amazing. You've come so..."… this is great, this is fantastic" (1;245-247)* Jenna often spoke of feeling both positive and negative feelings at once, describing the experience as a "*rollercoaster" (1;6-7, 119)*:

"There's more ups than there are downs. You know, it can be hard, but the, the,... there's more positivity in it most of the time, than there's negativity..." (1;158-161)

I wondered about the choice of the word 'rollercoaster' and the metaphorical connection with excitement and fear; making a choice to get on but being out of control of the experience. When speaking of the mixed feelings as a 'rollercoaster', Jenna spoke of working with several children in different 1:1 relationships, with different levels of need, wanting the children to *"succeed",* as well as feeling *"quite defensive" (1;121-122)* of them. This led me to think about lots of different, unprocessed feelings being received by Jenna from the children as being disorientating, and I wondered how she made sense of these feelings.

4.4.2.2 Worry

Jenna described worrying and thinking about the children outside of work, when she was not in. This included times when she was poorly, as well as in her free time: *"because I've got kind of, I've always, in the back of my head, not at the forefront" (1;72-74)* The sense of worry she experienced when "*I'm not in" (1;56)* led her to come in whilst ill, because of concerns for the impact on the child and the class:

"thinking "oh god", especially [child] because I know, how awful he can be" (1;75-76)

Out of work, Jenna noticed times where events related to the children would appear in her mind, and where her friends would comment on her working in non-work times:

"And there's (laughs) other times when, like literally, yesterday, the observation for [the EP] coming in popped into my head and I was just like, "it's <u>Sunday night</u>!", and it was literally because I clocked the date. So, it's Sunday night, what are you thinking about, Jenna, get a life" (2;264-269)

I wondered about responsibility for the children; connecting Jenna's feelings of failure when needs are not met, and her high expectations for meeting their needs. She described attempts to manage worry:

"I shouldn't be taking it home". But, when you're asleep, you can't, control what's going through your head. And I've tried meditating and all sorts beforehand. It just, doesn't work" (2;275-278)

4.2.2.3 Why am I doing this?

Doubts came up for Jenna, particularly when hurt by a child:

"Sometimes you think, "Why the hell am I doing it? Why am I putting myself through this?"…You know, when a child's hitting you and you being screamed in the face, when there's a member of staff that just doesn't appreciate any of the work that you do, or you can't work with them" (1;283-287)

Most instances of these questions were followed by a moment of revelation, where another event or feedback would soothe her distress:

"but then when you get somebody that thanks you for your work, and then you know, or see the progress that the children are doing, or you get the parents that go, in a

TAC meeting and just go, "Oh Jenna's done this, that and the other" and you think "This is why I do this job. Because it's, it's for them, it is for them" (1;287-292)

Jenna appeared to manage difficult feelings through recollections which demonstrated her commitment and effort:

"it was me, that helped him to achieve those. And that's why, that's what reminds me of that's why I am doing my job. And they're the good things that I hang on to" (2;754-756).

Although Jenna would often describe a negative experience and then apply the salve of a positive experience, she shared that it did not always work out this way:

"Because I was being kicked and punched and screamed at and totally ignored. I'm like, "pfft, am I doing the right job? Am I doing the right job?" Erm and I didn't, I didn't unfortunately didn't get to the, "Yes, this is what I'm doing it" at the end of it as much" (2;728-732).

At the end of the second interview, Jenna wondered about whether she had been too negative in the previous interview, sharing she had *"felt like I'd come away quite negative" (2;21).* I wondered about the interview process and what feelings had been evoked in Jenna by the process, particularly as her negative statements had been followed by positive ones. Her reflections made me curious about the potential for as yet unprocessed anxieties to emerge through the psychosocial processes, and whether it had provided Jenna a space to think about her feelings.

4.4.3 Relationships

4.4.3.1 Relationships with the child

Jenna's different 1:1 roles meant that her responses had a different aspect to them, compared with TAs primarily talking about one child. At times, she drew the three children into collective statements, and at others, identified specific aspects of her relationships to individual children. Speaking about all of the children first, she commented on the closeness in the relationships:

"it's kind of...not your, they're not your babies, but when you work with them for so long with a kind of, big- you become really close, you know" (1;24-26)

Having developed close relationships with individual children, Jenna spoke of the impact on how one child expressed his emotions to her, and how she would receive all his feelings:

"he's very, very, very emotional. And I'm his one that, I get all his frustrations. So, he will, something will happen and he will walk past people and hit me (throat sound) so I am like his safe place" (1;106-108)…"I get the brunt of it all, whether it's happy, sad, angry, whatever, I get it all" (2;210-215).

At times, the emotions had an impact on Jenna and led to her frustrations, particularly when being hurt by a child. Once Jenna understood the feelings of the child:

"the frustration that had built up inside me was just, it literally just melted, I was like "I hate him feeling frustrated. I hate him feeling anxious about the work, thinking he can't do it, he can't achieve" (1;404-407).

By understanding and interpreting the feelings of the child, I wondered if Jenna was experiencing the 'projected' emotions of the child, and whilst she had 'identified'

with the frustration at first, using a 'container' role (Bion, 1962a), she had attempted

to make sense of the emotional content expressed.

4.4.3.2 Relationships with parents

Jenna's work had a distinct involvement with parents. She shared the sense of

dependency on her, from both the parents and children:

"All of them, including parents, and children can become a bit dependent. So, you're trying to, kind of have that, get that barrier where they don't become...reliant on you...so that (pause, outbreath) they can work independently they don't think "ah, it's alright, Jenna can do it all" (1;30-34).

Jenna's support for the parents related to managing their worries; at times, these

worries appeared to be located with the child, when the parents would describe their

child as distressed, when they were visibly worried. Jenna appeared attuned to this

potential 'projection' taking place, holding the parents' feelings in mind and having

to warn them in advance when she would not be in school:

"they were worried, because they didn't see me and they were like, "Oh, oh he was crying". But when I asked, they were like "oh no he wasn't"(laughs) it was, it was their anxiety, and they feel, kind of, because, I think I've been there for so long, that if I'm not there, their child is not going to cope" (2;436-441)

Jenna described the connection between her and the family as feeling *"almost like an*

extra bit of family" (1;343) reporting the affection and home-cooking received from

parents. Alongside parents seemingly nurturing Jenna, she also described times when they relied on her for support beyond the emotional worries:

"then they came back and they were like, "oh, could you help us with this as well" so it's like, "(whisper) 'Okay, but this has got to be the last thing (laughs), he's moved on". So, it's almost kind of like breaking (pause) breaking the ties with them as well almost, without them thinking I'm pushing them away. Because they had kind of an attachment (laughs) as well" (2;130-134)

Considering Jenna's wish to increase the independence of the children and her thoughts about the parents needing *"weaning them off me as well" (2;480)* I was curious about her relationship to the parents, and the containing relationship she offered; supporting their needs and holding their emotions when distressed whilst thinking about the potential need for independence through weaning (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005)

4.4.3.3 Relationships with colleagues

Jenna's difficult experience with a colleague had highlighted to her what she found challenging about relationships with colleagues in schools. She described an encounter where she had been shouted at by the teacher, and I noticed her language around setting boundaries:

"she would shout at me about things, in front of the children and I'm like "I'm not having this conversation with you now. I will talk to you at the end of the day, but I am not having this conversation in front of the children" (1;198-201)

I noticed a parallel between the description of Jenna's attempts to set boundaries during similar experiences of being hurt. She gave an example of where she had

witnessed a Teacher experiencing a similar situation with a parent, and wondered about their capacity to empathise with her pain:

"they'll kind of make a TA or support member of staff feel like that. But yeah, they don't think about how a parent or member of management has made them feel like that and think "oh, hang on, I don't want them to feel like it" It doesn't kind of transpire down" (1;518-524)

I wondered Jenna potentially experiencing 'displacement' (Freud, 1937) of another's emotional experience, as a potentially less threatening person, in both an assistant and caring capacity in the classroom.

Jenna's more positive experience this year related to her feelings of being involved alongside the Teacher, and the Teacher completing tasks to support Jenna in her role:

"I actually said, "Oh, thank you" to her for something and she went "they are my class, why I wouldn't have done it? (1;165-169).

Being seen as a respected professional was echoed when Jenna shared the teacher making an effort to involve her *"But she came and said to me what she had done, rather than just doing it" (2;558).* As Jenna had stark narratives between the two Teachers she had worked with, I wondered about the potential for 'splitting' locating the 'good' aspects within her current colleague and 'bad' in her former colleague. By the end of the interviews, Jenna appeared to have resolved some of the conflict with her former colleague:

"we're nicer to each other now (slight laugh) we'll actually, kind of ask each other how we're, how each other are and 'did you have a good break' and just, you know,

passing comments whereas before, (laugh) just didn't, didn't want to talk to each other at all. (2;619-624)

4.4.4 Transitions, Change and Endings

4.4.4.1 Supporting the transition to a new school

By the second interview, the main child Jenna supported on a 1:1 basis had transitioned to their new school. Jenna had been pleased to be part of the experience and reflected on sharing knowledge and being part of the handover to the child's new team. I wondered about Jenna's experience of validation; her reflections on hierarchy and power in systems, and how this experience connected with her desire for TAs' position to be respected:

"they wanted me, the school wanted me, to be very much part of it, which I really appreciated" (2;30-32)…" the two weeks that I did the transition for, picking my brains. I took er, more and more of a backseat and they took, control of it all" (2;45-47)…"they were really nice. They made me feel really welcome.., and yeah were really kind" (2;50-51).

Through her involvement with the transition and being seen as someone as important to the child, I wondered whether Jenna had felt a sense of 'containment' from the school, which helped to manage the uncertainties of the transition and the loss of the relationship.

Jenna spoke briefly of her feelings about him leaving *("ach, I've done a lot of work with him. I'll miss him" (2;57);* although appeared to quickly 'intellectualise' the move as positive, and spoke of the other children and how they had missed him (*"it was like, it was very sad, but it was, you know, it was a good thing" (2;137-138).*

Having seen the child since the transition, Jenna shared that the child had not shown any affection towards her and had spoken of his new uniform and bag. She described thinking *"oh great, you don't even miss me". At the same time. I'm like, "Yes, that transition works and you're happy and it's working" (2;159-161).* I was curious about the feelings of being forgotten, and Jenna's desire *"to be, I've always wanted to be…the teaching assistant that they remember, that believed in them" (2;419-421)*

4.4.4.2 A different setting

Jenna's experience at the new school appeared to have resonated with her, as she described sharing values and experiences to the staff she had observed at the specialist provision:

"some of those children gave them <u>hell</u>. Erm, but it's funny, because they, yeah, they love them, absolutely love them, you know, they've just been punched in the face… It was like, "he just didn't know what it was doing" (laughs). It's like, this is what I face here with some of these guys" (2;667-672)

She spoke of a different type of support that the team were able to offer through 'swapping out':

"You know, one of them was just like, "right, go out. He needs to know you can't do that to you" He'll then be removed from him for the rest of the day. "And who wants to swap with her?" and one of them went "I'll come in, I'll do it, you can go and be me". And that was it. They literally swapped to give her a break, ..and to make him realise that he couldn't.. do that to her, he couldn't hurt her" (2;674-679)

Jenna had laughed whilst describing some of the types of incidents in the specialist provision. I wondered about the defence of 'reaction formation' (Freud, 1937) in

response to the difficult feelings of being hit, unconsciously hiding the difficult feelings underneath an opposite reaction. Jenna's description of the support centres on the boundaries set by the staff in the specialist provision and giving staff time away from the situation. When she said 'he couldn't hurt her', I wondered if this resonated for Jenna.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has utilised a case-study approach to analysing the data gathered from interviews with four TAs, working 1:1 with a child. The case studies highlight the similarities and differences in the emotional and relational experiences for each TA, and through further analysis of the generated themes, psychoanalytic theory has been used to add to understanding the unconscious processes of emotional experiences in the relationships. The analysis demonstrates that TAs experience emotional communications from children they work with and the experience of working 1:1 brings a range of positive, challenging and sometimes conflicting emotions. To fulfil the quality assurance criteria, the reflections in and on the analytical process, in supervision and through my research diary have been embedded in the analysis to demonstrate the importance of reflexivity for the researcher, and the contribution of this process to interpretation. The following chapter will discuss the findings of this study, using current research to provide the context, and will present the limitations of the study, implications for future research and relevance to EP practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The final chapter provides a discussion of the findings, connecting and relating them to the pertinent psychoanalytic theories and literature presented in previous chapters. The discussion will also refer to the individual context of the participants, and present areas where similarities and differences may exist within the TAs' experiences. As presented in the analysis, themes pertaining to emotions, and circumstances or events which connect with emotions are differentiated. The discussion of the findings will represent the transferability of the individual case-studies as contributing to the literature about the TA experience, drawing on comparative psychoanalytical literature pertaining to teachers and other educators. Alongside the positioning of the study within the current theories and literature base, limitations of this study will also be explored, highlighting areas for further development and potential directions for future research. The study will also be reflected on for the implications for practice for EPs, and relevance to the wider school context.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Role

5.1.1.1 Beginnings

The beginnings of any new experiences are connected with feelings of anxiety, and the potential for individuals to relive previous experiences of worry when facing something new is as present for TAs as it is for children when starting school (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005). This personal experience for the TA is in addition to the unconscious impact of systemic stresses in school, pertaining to budgets, inspections and public portrayal of performance that can infiltrate across the

system (Hinshelwood, 2009). Beginning a new role, either from a similar TA experience or from having no experience as a TA was referenced throughout interviews by the participants. For Aya, coming to the role without prior experience contributed to her uncertainty in role; feeling unclear on what to do and having no other 1:1 TA to explore this with. Later in the role, uncertainty remained in how Aya expanded beyond the 1:1 definition of the role; feelings of guilt emerged as her key child's independence grew and they became increasingly separate as he no longer needed her, and she attended to other children in the class.

Mina described an initial avoidance of the role, having previously told others she would not be happy in a 1:1 role and was concerned about the impact on her life. She was surprised at how much she enjoyed the role once she began, and the role gave her a connection in the community; sharing how she had become more aware of difference in others, and what role she could play in supporting others in society. Starting the role of a 1:1 TA was the best thing Bella felt she had ever done and was an important factor in managing her responsibilities towards her own children. Bella shared the experiences of anxiety experienced during school holidays and during unanticipated change. Anxiety was lessened for Bella when she had realised during the interview that she experienced feeling more settled as she was working in the same school as where her own children attended, reflecting the crossover of the personal and professional.

Presenting a different narrative, Jenna did not describe her beginnings as a TA, nor her prior roles with children. I wondered whether the length of time Jenna had worked in role presented a difference to other participants, akin to not being a first-time parent (Youell, 2006). Jenna's focus in role was on the needs of the children, and the challenges of experiencing unmet needs of the children; advocating on their

behalf. Jenna's emotions centred around frustrations relating to factors that impacted how she completed her role, such as TAs not being seen as professionals with knowledge, and impact of unsupportive colleagues. Jenna's sense of frustration for children she felt unable to help and understand appeared parallel to feelings of not knowing and helplessness that can be experienced by children with additional needs (Britzman, 2003).

5.1.1.2 Responsibility

Aya's sense of responsibility was all encompassing; she identified how she fulfilled all roles for the child. Describing the less intense relationships the child had with the teacher, and feeling that she had assumed the teacher's role to teach the child rather than support, Aya's comment of the buck stopping with her brought to mind Ramvi's (2017) psychoanalytically informed paper, called "Passing the Buck" (p139). Ramvi (2017) described a teacher who experienced others in the school unconsciously 'turning a blind eye' (p149) to her challenges. Positioned as entirely responsible and under the pressure of the defined, normative primary task of a 1:1, Aya navigated the guilt of wanting to leave the child to work independently, justifying her decisions relating to independence and working with other students. Whilst the rationale for the decision may be well-evidenced, Aya's description of the responsibility feeling 'difficult' is evident.

Mina's commitment to understanding and supporting the child's needs and of 'doing the right thing' expanded into her own time; describing researching the child's needs, and purchasing resources out of her own finances. These experiences were shared by Jenna; her responsibility towards the children meant she thought of them outside of

work and was reluctant to take time off because of the impact on the child and the colleagues having to meet their needs. Bella expressed similar feelings, coming to work whilst unwell and bereaved rather than leave the child with a change that might overwhelm her.

5.1.2 Emotional Experiences

All TAs shared the joy experienced when seeing their child succeed. Their role in empowering and supporting students to overcome learning challenges and progress was rewarding and satisfying (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. 2005). Youell (2006) suggests that an outcome of an educator containing and processing the emotional communications of the child means that the child may have greater capacity to engage in their learning. However, the openness of the adult to act as a container for the emotional communications does not mean the received feelings or their own responses are immediately bearable without the time and opportunity to think and process them (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. 2005). In response to their work, the TAs described challenging feelings and preoccupations; Mina described stress and exhaustion, Bella reported being upset at times, Jenna described frustration and Aya occasionally felt guilt, and bored in her role. This connects with the 'negative emotional impact on self' presented in Knight's (2015, p110) study as a considerable impact upon 1:1 TAs.

5.1.2.1 Keeping feelings in

All of the TAs shared aspects of emotional attunement to the child; Aya spoke of her emotions being high and low, mirroring the child's mood. This was echoed by Bella, who spoke of the holding in emotions she brought to school and the importance of passing good feelings to the child. Jenna described the 'rollercoaster' of emotional ups and downs of the relationships. The TAs spoke of keeping their feelings in and not wanting the child to know of their own personal distress; either from outside of work or in response to difficulties in working with them. Ramvi (2012) described the challenge for educators to remain positive in their work with students, particularly in response to evocative situations. Ramvi (2012) draws on the concepts of power to think about the need for Teachers to feel in control in relation to a conflict of what emotions are permitted to be seen, akin to Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (2005) reflections on the fear of losing control Teachers may experience when faced with the emotions of children. There is a distinct difference between unconscious defences against feelings and containing one's feelings purposefully. Winnicott's (1971) idea of the 'moment of hesitation' can be applied in an adult context, noting the active process between the emotion felt, drives to act and the individual's thoughtful response to it. Described by the TAs as something they do in role, the awareness of keeping feelings in may suggest a coping strategy and attempting to not pass unprocessed feelings to the child (Ramvi, 2012). Unconsciously, defence mechanisms of repression and denial of feelings (Freud, 1937; Curtis, 2015) may occur, connected with an implicit expectation of being 'professional.'

5.1.2.2 Isolation

Mina's sense of isolation emerged by implication, as she referenced 'no longer feeling lonely' by spending time with other children alongside her child when he was allowed to join other children. I wondered whether the isolation also related to her description that colleagues referenced how happy she looked and her successes, despite her sharing difficult emotions with them. Aya experienced a different form of isolation, working on her own with a child with communication difficulties away from others, she had enjoyed the challenges of working with other children when her key child was settled with his own tasks. Conversely, Jenna's sense of isolation connected with feeling outside of the professional team and unheard by others. Ramvi (2008; 2017) described how avoidance of feelings can expand to operate at a systems level, with different members unconsciously avoiding the emotions together, akin to the description of Maliphant (2008) in her reflections of being an LSA. The feelings of 'isolation' and 'not being heard' may give some indication to experiences where the system is unconsciously defending against the TAs' expressed emotions.

5.1.2.3 Both/and experiences

All of the TAs shared experiences of both positive and challenging feelings; often voiced in the same sentence, referencing difficulties faced and rewarding outcomes. Although offering balance in their spoken answer; the shift away from the negative emotions potentially representing an avoidance of difficult feelings. Manning-Morton (2006) speaks of the challenge for educational professionals having to face both the positive and challenging aspects which come with the role; the rewards with the emotional distress and level of need of the children. She posits that an issue of

working through the challenging experiences may link to the training programmes for practitioners, where reflection on the emotive experiences may not be established practices (Manning-Morton, 2006).

5.1.3 Relationships

5.1.3.1 Relationship with the child

'Attachment' was used readily to describe the bond between the TAs and their key children, suggesting they were sensitised to the ideas of attachment theory and how they contribute to relationships with children. All of the TAs made references to occupying parental roles in their 1:1 capacity; Mina noticed she felt like a mother, Bella referred to the key child as 'like her own child', and the TAs without children (Aya and Jenna) acknowledged aspects of parenting in their relationships. The familial aspect of the 1:1 relationship with a child as part of interactions between care and education is likely to evoke past feelings in relation to one's own parental experiences as a child, affecting the way the adult interacts and responds to the child (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005). Both Mina and Jenna made explicit references to their own experiences of an emotional aspect of their earlier lives, and connected this with their current roles and relating to others, similar to the TAs in Mackenzie (2011) and Watson et al (2015) studies.

Alongside the concepts of love and bonds in the relationship with the child, three TAs experienced emotional and physical pain in their relationships with children. Descriptions were shared of being hurt in role; Bella had been taken aback when she was hit, the pinches and bites Mina had experienced had been shocking and for Jenna, she had been kicked, punched and screamed at. Most occasions in these descriptions

of physical pain, the TAs sought to understand the reasons for the child's behaviour or referenced the overall, rewarding reasons for their work, to salve their feelings. Different to the experiences of teachers in Ramvi's (2007, 2008) work, the TAs' avoidance of difficult feelings did not mean difficulty was located within the child, and represented a defence against feeling, to sustain the relationship. This may point to a need for careful consideration of roles, power and context when using psychoanalytic theory previously applied to Teachers to conceptualise the TA experience, as experience of unconscious communications may differ across different positions in systems.

5.1.3.2 Relationships with parents

Isolation in the school system was present for TAs who explicitly identified this feeling, and through absence of reference to professional others highlighting separateness from the system. Relationships with parents were discussed more than relationships with colleagues. Aya described her awareness of the rivalry communicated between the parent and herself, noticing the parent's implied wish for the child to not behave when she was unavailable for school trips and identifying a territorial feeling. By navigating to a 'one-down' position (Fisch, Weakland & Segal, 1982), inviting the expertise in the parent and knowledge of their child, Aya negotiated the complexity of rivalry (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005), avoiding idealising and denigrating of the mother and TA roles through cooperation. Jenna's relationship with parents evoked in her a containing role; taking on the parents' emotional states and helping them with tasks separate to her role for their child. This mirrored the role with the child; containing his emotions, supporting his learning.

With both parents and child, Jenna was attempting to negotiate an increasing independence although she noted her lapses back into the helping dynamic with them, which may point to a valency for a certain role (Bion 1961). By working with parents in schools, TAs may experience transference relating to the parent's historical experiences of relationships with adults in schools; evoked by attending familiar school settings (Freud, 1930). As well as having her own unconscious leanings to accept particular roles, Jenna may also be enacting the countertransference from the parent's transference of feeling vulnerable.

5.1.4. Change, Transitions and Endings

As crucial as beginnings in psychoanalytic thinking is the importance of endings; through change or loss (Youell, 2006). Schools are replete with experiences of changes and endings, daily, termly and yearly. These changes are experienced by TAs; supporting children through these transitions and endings as well as their own parallel experiences (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al, 2005).

Transitions and endings were represented in different ways for the TAs, with two participants thinking about their professional futures beyond their current role, alongside the end of relationships with children. Bella shared her reflections on the end of the relationship with her child, whom she had been with for over 3 years. Whilst Bella had rejoiced at remaining with the child to manage her anxiety about change in each academic year, she had reflected that once the child was leaving the school, she had concerns about starting a new 1:1 relationship with another child, and the impact upon her. Whilst Bella was thinking about a future ending, Jenna experienced the departure a child during the research and reflected on the transition of

the child to the new provision. Jenna's perception of not being missed by the child, and his loss came alongside her positive descriptions of the ideal setting she had visited, with all the resources needed to support the children she wanted to make a difference for, indicating she was splitting all the 'good' in the new school, with a potential for phantasy about what the ideal school may offer her (Klein, 1946; Spillius, 2005)

Youell (2006) posits that anxiety connected to uncertainty, change and loss is linked to what Klein (1957) called 'memories in feeling', where previous experiences of loss resurface in the face of current challenge. This was evident in Mina's narratives, where she recollected the loss of her mother, the emotional impact and connection to her own child's needs through a free-associative response. Loss and change are frequently accompanied by difficult feelings for individuals yet are part of developmental process that establish capacity to manage other losses and changes in life (Youell, 2006). Aya acknowledged the sadness the ending would bring, following the substantial amount of time with the child. Aya's acceptance of this as part of the process, without denying the difficult feelings suggested a sense of integrated, depressive position (Klein, 1946); having overcome the difficulty of the idea of loss and accepting of the potential to hurt when it takes place.

5.2 Theoretical Considerations

The application of theory as a second layer of analysis to the inductive coding has provided a way to conceptualise the emotional experiences of TAs, demonstrating the value of using psychosocial methods and connected theories. The psychosocial

paradigm posits that further meaning may be identified from exploring beyond the 'face-value' of interview transcripts, considering the omissions, avoidances and contradictions that are present in the responses of participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). By following the 'unconscious logic' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p34), it was possible to connect the personal experiences of Aya, Bella, Jenna and Mina to their professional lives, and use the unconscious communications to attempt to make sense of the emotions in the interviews.

Applying psychoanalytic theories from Bion (1961, 1962a, 1962b) and Klein (1946, 1957) has provided an awareness to the relational processes as part of a relational dyad with a child, reflecting on how maternal functions can be taken up by adults supporting children to learn. The use of these concepts presents an alternative position to the dominant focus on the pedagogical functions of TAs (Blatchford et al, 2012; Webster et al 2013) and precise investigations into the language and instructional methods used by TAs (Radford et al, 2015); Applying the understandings gained from this study to the other functions of the TA role may invite further curiosity into the findings by Blatchford et al (2009) of unconscious processes impacting TAs offering more help than is required for their students, or limiting exposure to academic challenge. By considering the unconscious processes experienced by the TA working 1:1 with a child, the beliefs, personal narratives and experiences of understanding and processing the emotional content of children may elucidate further aspects of the pedagogical relationship between TAs and children.

5.3 Reflection and Reflexivity

Being introduced formally to psychoanalytic theories as part of my training has added an additional lens to understand the emotional experiences of children, their families and professionals working with them in schools and the community context. Using this approach to think about the emotional worlds of others, I have endeavoured to apply this perspective to myself and self-in-role; using supervision to reflect on unconscious communications, potential valences and how to use one's self as a tool for knowing about myself and others in the professional context (Dennison, Shaldon & McBay, 2006).

5.3.1 Becoming a Psychosocial Researcher

This new role highlighted my emotional experiences in the context of relationships; with the participants, with my research supervisor and parallel relationships with clients and supervisors in my practitioner, TEP role. The interactions of experiential learning and the application in both roles highlighted the intertwined nature of practice and research; the transferability of developed skills, the application of theory and evidence to both contexts and underpinning philosophical values and principles of the psychologist. My work alongside (other) TAs whilst completing this research piqued interest further, as I witnessed TAs sharing their emotional experiences in a group supervisory context. The shared understanding voiced within the group, of the challenges brought by individual TAs heightened my focus on the emotional impact on TAs, and the availability of containment for them, as containers of children's emotional communications.

Developing my self-awareness in the research process enabled me to listen to the stories told by participants, notice my responses to spoken and unspoken communications and use a reflective space separate to the research encounter to navigate the unconscious logic. I was aware of my anxiety during the initial interviews, when responses to questions were brief and I found it difficult to orient participants to specific events from which free-associations could take place (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). I became concerned with the exact phrasing of questions in my earlier interviews, trying to hold in mind avoiding of 'why' questions and the curiosity that I draw on in my consultative practice. Through supervision, the exploration of the high expectations I held of myself and the challenge of accepting 'good enough' drew to the foreground painful realities of my own, and how to be attuned to these feelings in the research context; useful learning I will extend to my practice as a TEP.

5.3.2 Post-Interview Experiences

At the end of each interview was a noticeable difference in the tone and exchanges between the participants and me. This suggested the potential for the continuation of free-associative responses and unconscious communications, after the interviews ended. This information is not included in the transcripts or analysis of interviews as this unanticipated experience was not part of the informed consent for participants. I explored how to ensure a commitment to informed consent, whilst acknowledging the phenomena as connected to the research encounter; deciding to refer to the experience as a separate event from the interview, of procedural interest and avoiding individual reference.

As two participants shared longer reflections after the formal interview about their personal and professional experiences, potentially evoked by the free-associative approach to interviewing, I wondered about the boundaries and structures of an interview, in a less formal conversation, and impact on the communications of participants. I also briefly saw three of the TAs with their key children, unrelated to the research context. I was conscious of any adulteration to the research process; attempting to circumvent direct contact or taking in information that may influence my interpretations and involvement in the research process alongside navigating the confidentiality of children not formally part of the research. Following both of these experiences, I was curious about the potential for reflection on post-interview experiences, and what possibilities may exist for contracting for this within informed consent, in future psychosocial research.

5.3.3 'Social Graces' (Burnham, 2013)

Through exploring the literature, I noticed the predominant representation of TAs from white, working-class backgrounds; often mothers and part of the local community of the school (Barkham, 2008; Watson et al, 2013). Whilst all of the participants for this study identify as women, there are differences between them, represented in ethnicity and heritage, age, family and relationship circumstances alongside their experiences. From the information shared, the visible and less visible diversities reported may be reflective of an inner city context. However, the findings do not assume to represent all the individual participants' visible and less visible differences; participants were invited to share information about themselves and

where not shared, this information is considered 'unknown' (such as whether the participant identifies within a class group or identifies as disabled).

One constant aspect in this group of participants, and the wider participants within the established literature base is gender. All participants identify as female, and although sampling was not targeted, it was anecdotally noted that within the schools approached for the research and where TAs were recruited, there were no TAs identifying as male within 1:1 roles. Whilst not the focus of the study, the previous research cited in the literature alludes to TA roles as women's work (Barkham, 2008; Mackenzie, 2011) with references to motherhood and maternal feelings as a 1:1 TA (Barkham, 2008; Watson et al, 2013). Although all participants referenced parental language in their interviews; not all participants identified as mothers, demonstrating the capacity for experiencing relational bonds as parental is not restricted to experience of parenthood. Additionally, the application of the theoretical maternal function is not limited to women; as Maliphant (2008) describes herself to occupy both maternal and paternal functions to care for the child. Therefore, the constructs of gender relating to language and roles in education are important for EPs and researchers to reflect on, when considering concepts of 'maternal', application of psychoanalytic theory and roles of TAs.

5.4 Implications for EP Practice

This research presents the importance of the emotional experience of being a TA working 1:1 with a child, and how the emotional experiences relate to personal experiences of the TAs, the relational dyad between the child and the TA, and the wider system. There are key indicators from the findings that present opportunities

and considerations for EPs working with TAs individually and in groups, as well as EPs working with senior leaders and whole school systems to think about TAs and their roles.

EPs may be currently providing roles to TAs throughout different services across the country; a challenge for considering the current context is the limited EP-led research published, as demonstrated in the Literature Review. As previously highlighted, limited studies demonstrate the EP evidence base for working with TAs (Davison & Duffy, 2017; Hayes, 2011; Higgins & Guildford, 2014). These studies offer considerations of practice-based evidence for specific contexts of supporting teams of Teachers and TAs working in nurture groups, (Davison & Duffy, 2017) using Video Interaction Guidance to develop positive behaviour management skills for TAs working in secondary schools (Hayes, 2011) and developing self-efficacy in TAs through training, coach-consultation approaches and supporting whole-school change (Higgins & Guildford, 2014). These implications seek to consider EP roles and practices pertaining to the 1:1 TA role, with potential for work at an individual, group and system level.

5.4.1 Support for Teaching Assistants

TAs in the research shared how the interviews had given them a space to talk about their feelings in their work, and some mentioned difficulties in being able to discuss their experiences with others. EPs are well positioned to be able to offer individual or group supervision, to provide a reflective space for their work and development (Farouk, 2004, Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). EPs are proficient in supervision practices and offer supervision to different agencies as part of their roles (Wedlock & Turner,

2017) with supervision also being recommended for teachers to think about their emotional experiences with children (Ramvi, 2017). The use of a relational model of supervision (Kennedy et al, 2018) offers the potential for TAs to be supported by EPs to explore the emotional impact of role, reflect on unconscious communications of transference and projection, and think about the interaction of the TA's personal and professional experiences with the child and in the wider school context. EPs can offer a 'containing' function, using 'reverie'(Bion, 1962) to help TAs to think whilst feeling, make sense of their experiences and be able to use the thinking from supervision, in their role. Furthermore, EPs can provide a confidential space to explore difficult feelings as an external professional to the organisational dynamics of the school. EPs offer value through their theoretical input and psychological skills to thinking spaces in schools (Davison & Duffy, 2017); suggesting an additional benefit through specific attention to psychoanalytic theories brought by EPs in an educational context.

5.4.2 Involvement of TAs

Evident in the views of the TAs was their intimate knowledge of the child, the sense of responsibility in their roles and the challenges relating to making professional decisions pertaining to their practice, when reflecting on position and power in the school system. Furthermore, the discussion of isolation by participants highlighted how 1:1 TAs' experiences could mirror the isolation of a SEN/D child, from peers and teachers (Blatchford et al. 2009), when their access to a thinking space about the emotions and impact of the work is limited. Ramvi (2017) posits that the active involvement of teachers in problem-solving supported their sense of professional

identity in relation to the child, which may also extend to TAs. EPs are well placed to use their role as change-agents, and principles of collaboration and independence (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2017) to encourage Senior Leaders, SENDCos and other stakeholders invite TAs and their views into consultation processes. TAs can then be part of information-sharing, formulation-generating and decision-making processes for the children they work with, offering their professional knowledge as well as sharing the responsibility with the professional team.

5.4.3 Whole-School Level

Within the EPS context where I have completed my placement, the LA promotes attachment and trauma informed practice, centring self-care and emotional regulation on the part of the adults as a first step in whole-school practices. Therefore, the relevance of the emotional experiences of 1:1 TAs to the model of whole-school approaches to staff practice and wellbeing is evident. Training is an established method of EP service delivery (Farrell, Woods, Lewis, Rooney, Squires, & O'Connor, 2006); supporting schools to develop greater knowledge and understanding in identified areas for development. The provision of training for the whole staff team would sensitise staff to the presence of emotional and unconscious processes in relationships with children, contributing towards TAs and colleagues being able to converse about the experiences in their work and act as a mechanism to embed the concepts in their practice. Supporting whole teams to make use of the training through application in practice, EPs could also facilitate work discussion groups (Jackson, 2008); expanding the supervision offer to TAs to provide group spaces for a range of professionals within the school. By engaging in reflective spaces

that attend to emotions and unconscious processes with other colleagues, the understanding of the 1:1 TA role and their experiences may be understood across the school system, and offer both a learning experience for other colleagues, and for 1:1 TAs of other emotional experiences in the school context.

5.5 Limitations

In keeping with the 'data-as-a-whole' principle (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), a case-study approach was adopted to avoid the fragmentation of data leading to a separation of context from the analysis. Although qualitative approaches focus on the transferability and sympathy of the research alongside the sensitivity to context over principles of generalisability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Yardley, 2017), it is recognised that individual voices presented in this research may not be representative of all TA experiences. However, the 'Discussions of Findings' presents areas of commonality in wider experience between the four participants; where concepts of roles, relationships, transitions and endings may represent transferability of findings.

A further limitation of this study is my position as a novice in psychosocial research; alongside the emerging use of application of psychoanalytic theory to data analysis in EP research. Taking this approach required tolerating the uncertainty of navigating a road less travelled; checking for errors in an incomparable process and the potential for the interviews to be unintentionally impacted by my wish to manage anxiety. I also noted my initial desire to use more than one approach to data collection, such as observations used in other psychosocial work (Hollway, 2015), seeking to triangulate, from a concern that the interview data would not be 'enough'. Returning to my

supervision reflections on 'good enough' and the research paradigm taken; the striving for precision and removal of uncertainty may relate to myself as a defended researcher (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) and the legacy of the 'ghost of positivism' (Brown & Baker, 2007, p43) in my own research journey.

5.6 Dissemination

Jenna's reflection that there were few papers on the experience of TAs and being pleased that this research was showing interest in TAs led me to consider the importance of dissemination of findings for groups who are less represented. For all participants who expressed an interest in seeing the outcomes of the research, this will be shared with them once the final copy of the thesis has been approved and opportunities to discuss the findings in person will be available if requested. It is intended that a publication will be generated, forming the principal messages and outcomes from the study.

As this research has a specific relevance to EP practice, the findings and outcomes of the research will be offered as a presentation as part of an EPS Team Development Day. The presentation will invite EPs to consider the findings, reflect on their experiences of working with TAs and generating recommendations for 1:1 TA practice as well as discuss how EPs may contribute their psychological knowledge and skills to supporting 1:1 TA, through the established Emotional Literacy programme for TAs, and other opportunities. It is intended that a presentation of the findings will also be offered to the wider LA, with a focus on commissioned services which consider attachment and trauma informed practices as central to their offer. Whilst the findings are drawn from a small sample size and are presented as

individual case studies, it is intended that the in-depth understanding of the TAs experiences, connected with a clear theoretical framework will establish the relevance for the LA. It is also hoped that a presentation to my training peers and cohorts at the Tavistock and Portman will also take place.

5.7 Future Research

The intention of this research was to offer voice to the experience of TAs working 1:1, adding to the limited literature of TAs views. The existing body of research evaluated in the Literature Review demonstrates several qualitative methodologies used to explore TA views; findings demonstrated the emotional experiences of TAs; although this was not central to many of the studies' investigations. Knight's (2015) research specifically highlighted further research pertaining to the 'negative emotional impact on self' (p110), of which this research has presented further evidence, as TAs referenced their commitment to their roles outside of working hours, coming to work when unwell and impact on their emotional wellbeing. As the emotional experiences of TAs has been established with this research, future research to consider the impact of the reflective and supervisory spaces offered to TAs would establish the potential for group and individual support in managing the emotional challenges of work, akin to other professional roles (Wedlock & Turner, 2017).

Other psychosocial methodologies focus on different aspects of experience; namely the Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM; Wengraf, 2008). This approach has an intended focus on individual's life histories, connecting the psychological experiences with societal circumstances and contexts, and has been utilised in research in education (Tucker, 2010). As most of the participants revealed

life events that have a connection to their roles and experiences, a purposeful investigation which explores life histories of TAs may further elucidate the connection between the personal and professional.

In this study, I have privileged the psychoanalytic theories which relate to the unconscious communications with a relational dyad, and how the emotional experiences of another can be understood through exploration of transference and countertransference. Using these theories focuses on two individuals in a relationship; whilst existing in a social and organisational context of a school. Further research could consider the experience of TAs within a systems-psychodynamics framework; expanding further the concepts of power, position considered by some participants of this study, with reflections on intersections of Social Graces (Burnham, 2013) alongside concepts of the 'organisation-in-the-mind' (Armstrong & French, 2005) of the 'primary task' (Lawrence, 1977, in Obholzer & Zagier-Roberts, 2019) for individuals and groups, and the unconscious defences against anxiety evoked within groups and systems (Stokes, 2019).

5.8 Conclusion

This research utilised a psychosocial approach to explore the emotional experiences of TAs working on a 1:1 basis with children in primary school settings. The focus of this research grew from a connection of personal experiences, witnessing and supporting TAs with the emotional impact of their work, and an identified area for further research within a limited literature base. The insight generated from this research presents implications for the EP role; when engaging with TAs as part of individual casework, and when working with SENDCos, Senior Leaders and whole-school systems to invite attention to the emotional and professional needs of TAs receiving, responding to and experiencing the emotional needs of children. The use of the FANI to explore the psychological and unconscious experiences of TAs in a relational dyad, in the context of school invited TAs to think about their emotions in relation to their work, identifying the connections of the personal and professional through free-associative responses. Through the findings of this study, it is hoped that awareness of the emotional lives of TAs leads to greater reflection and consideration of TAs' professional needs, and the value of psychoanalytic theory in understanding emotional experiences is embraced within EP practice.

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Winnicott, D.W. (1990). *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment.* London: Karnac

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the views of pupils with SEN and TAs within mainstream primary schools. *Support for Learning*, 32, (*1*), 4-19

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Appendix A: Search Strategy for the Literature Search Question *What is known about the perspectives of Teaching Assistants, working directly with children, in schools, in England?"*

Database	Preliminary Search iterations using: Search Terms and Boolean Operators	Returns, (duplicates) & comment on potential relevance/change in literature
EbscoHost (encompassing PsyInfo, PsyArticles, PEP, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Eric and Education Source) Limitations for all searches includes: • Dates: from January 2008 to April 2020 • Peer Reviewed • Academic Journals • Study completed in the United Kingdom/England	("Teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning support assistant" OR "special needs assistant") AND (perspective OR view OR experience OR narrative OR account) AND ("One to one" OR 1:1 OR "in class support")	1 paper (relevant)
	(Teaching assistant OR classroom assistant OR learning support assistant OR special needs assistant) AND (perspective OR view OR experience OR narrative OR account) AND (one to one OR 1:1 OR in class support)	8 papers, 1 paper from initial search relevant, more Graduate Teaching Assistant Papers
	AB ("Teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning support assistant" OR "special needs assistant" OR "key worker") AND AB child	40 (39) 2 papers with reference to Teaching Assistants in United Kingdom; neither papers exploring views/experiences
	AB ("Teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning support assistant" OR "special needs assistant" OR "key worker") AND AB school	125 (67) 9 papers with reference to Teaching Assistants in United Kingdom; none exploring their views / experiences
	AB ("Teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning	139 (84) 6 papers with reference to

	support assistant" OR "special needs assistant" OR "key worker") AND AB education	Teaching Assistants in United Kingdom; none exploring their views / experiences; all repeats of previous papers
	AB ("teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning support assistant" OR "special needs assistant" OR "key worker") AND AB (perspective OR view OR experience OR narrative OR account)	216 (143) 13 papers found relating to Teaching Assistants, with new papers identified; none exploring their views / experiences; Increased numbers of graduate Teaching Assistants and adult social care papers
	AB ("teaching assistant" OR "classroom assistant" OR "learning support assistant" OR "special needs assistant" OR "key worker") AND AB (perspective OR view OR experience OR narrative OR account) NOT graduate	151 (91) 11 papers, no new papers identified. Continued articles referencing Graduate Teaching Assistants and Adult social care roles
	AB (Teaching assistant OR classroom assistant OR learning support assistant) AND AB school	517 (318) 24 papers collected views of Teaching Assistants in a UK context generally; new papers did not collect TA views

		re: emotional experiences
	AB(Teaching assistant OR classroom assistant OR learning support assistant) AND AB child*	297 (177) 7 papers collected views/experiences of Teaching Assistants generally, no new papers identified

Appendix B: Search Strategy for the Literature Search Question *What is known about the perspectives of TAs working in schools in England?"*

Database utilised	Strategy comprising of Search Terms, Boolean Operators and Limitations	Identified Papers (duplicates/removed)
EbscoHost database, accessing APA PsyInfo, APA PsyArticles, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences, PEP, Education Source & ERIC	AB (teaching assistant OR learning support assistant) AND (Experience OR Perspective OR View OR Account OR Narrative) AND (AB School OR child) Limitations: • Dates: from January 2008 to April 2020 • Peer Reviewed • Academic Journals • Study completed in the United Kingdom	261 (144)
Ethos Database	"Teaching Assistant" OR "Learning Support Assistant"	5 (5), no identified papers
Tavistock Library	Hand search of staff publications	1 identified, relevant thesis

Appendix C: Papers included for Critical Review following Search Strategy for the Literature Question *What is known about the perspectives of TAs working in schools in England?"*

Author/s	Title of Paper
Syrnyk, C. (2018)	Knowing nurture: Experiences of teaching assistants for children with SEMH
Watson, D., Bayliss, P., & Pratchett, G. (2013)	Pond life that "know their place": Exploring teaching and learning support assistants' experiences through positioning theory.
Mackenzie, S. (2011)	"Yes, but…" rhetoric, reality and resistance in teaching assistants' experiences of inclusive education
Maliphant, J. (2008)	The triad in mind: An exploration of what is needed by the learning support assistant to facilitate integration of the child with special educational needs into mainstream education
Barkham, J. (2008)	Suitable work for women? Roles, relationships and changing identities of 'other adults' in the early years classroom.

a. List of additional papers from Hand Search for theses

Author	Title of Paper
Knight, J. (2015)	Thesis: The experiences of primary-school teaching assistants working one-to-one with looked-after and adopted children who present with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties: an exploration with the use of attachment theory

Appendix D: Papers from Search Strategy Screened and Excluded at the Title, Abstract and Full Paper for Literature Review Question *What is known about the perspectives of TAs working in schools in England?"*

1. **Papers screened and excluded at the title**

#	Author/s	Title of Paper	Reason for exclusion
1	Krause, N., Blackwell, L., & Claridge, S. (2020)	An exploration of the impact of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme on wellbeing from the perspective of pupils	Not focused on views/experiences of Teaching Assistants; pupil perspective of specific Learning Support Assistant role
2	Mitchell, S., & Higgins, A. (2020)	Minority within a minority: Stakeholders' perceptions of deaf education in Wales	Not focused on views/experience of Teaching Assistants
3	Sterman, J., Villeneuve, M., Spencer, G., Wyver, S., Beetham, K.S., Naughton, G., Tranter, P., Ragen, J. & Bundy, A. (2020)	Creating play opportunities on the school playground: Educator experiences of the Sydney playground project	Not focused on views/experience of Teaching Assistants; not based in the UK or England
4	Wigford, A. (2019)	Wellbeing in international schools: Teachers' perceptions	Not focused on views/experiences Teaching Assistants; not based in the UK or England; teacher views
5	Lim, J., McCabe, P., & Purcell, A. (2019)	Another tool in my toolbox: Training school teaching assistants to use dynamic temporal and tactile cueing with children with childhood apraxia of speech	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of training in role
6	Van Herwegen, J. Ashworth, M. & Palikara, O. (2019)	Views of professionals about the educational needs of children with	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants;

		neurodevelopmental disorders	views in relation to children's needs
7	Joffe, V.L., Rixon, L. & Hulme, C. (2019)	Improving storytelling and vocabulary in secondary 8school students with language disorder: a randomized controlled trial	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants, intervention for secondary aged children
8	Rutledge, C.D., Bullard, M.B., Kohler-Evans., P., & Filer, J.D. (2019)	The effects of cue-do-review on teaching assistant and student perceptions of learning	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of training in role
9	Curcio, R., & Ascetta, K. (2019)	A bridge between Teacher Education and School: Professional Development School District Sets Goals for an Entire District	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
10	Moy, M.K., Hammrich, P.L., & Kabnick, K. (2019)	Research and Teaching: Developing a Tiered Mentoring Model for Teaching Assistants Instructing Course-Based Research Experiences	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
11	Smith, P.H. (2019)	Enhancement and constraint: student-mothers' experiences of higher vocational education, emotion and time	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; mature student experience
12	Love, T.S. (2019)	Safety perspectives and resources from across the Pond	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England

13	Shaw, P.A.(2019)	Engaging with Young Children's Voices: Implications for Practitioners' Pedagogical Practice	Not focused on views of Teaching Assistants; children's' perspectives
14	Webster, R., & Blatchford, P. (2019)	Making Sense of 'Teaching', 'Support' and 'Differentiation': The Educational Experiences of Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans and Statements in Mainstream Secondary Schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
15	Chua, B.Y.E., & Poon, K.K. (2018)	Studying the implementation of PECS in a naturalistic special education school setting	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; intervention study
16	Bowles, D., Radford, J., & Bakopoulou, I. (2018)	Scaffolding as a key role for teaching assistants: Perception of their pedagogical strategies	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of role
17	Nicholson, L.J., Rodriguez-Cuadrado, S., & Woolhouse, C. (2018)	Reframing peer mentoring as a route for developing an educational community of practice	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
18	Wahl-Alexander, Z., & Curtner-Smith, M. (2018)	Influence of Negotiations on Graduate Teaching Assistants' Instruction within University Activity Courses	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
19	Maher, A.J. (2018)	"Disable them all": SENCo and LSA conceptualisations of	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants;

		inclusion in Physical Education	related to a specific facet of role
20	Broadbent, E., Feerst, D.A., Lee, S.H., Robinson, H., Albo-Canals, J., Ho, S., & MacDonald, B.A. (2018)	How could companion robots be useful in rural schools?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
21	Dunne, L., Hallett, F., & Kay, V. (2018)	Spaces of Inclusion: Investigating Place, Positioning and Perspective in Educational Settings through Photo-Elicitation	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; using photographs to elicit perspective
22	Wood, P. (2018)	Social and Emotional Learning Schemes as Tools of Cultural Imperialism: A Manifestation of the National and International Child Well-Being Agenda?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
23	Ferrante, C.A. (2017)	An Insight into a Whole School Experience: The Implementation of Teaching Teams to Support Learning and Teaching	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
24	DellaVecchia, M.J., Claudio, A.M., & Fairclough, J.L. (2017)	A pharmacy student's role as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate medicinal chemistry course- Implementation, evaluation and unexpected opportunities for educational outreach	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
25	Bennett, M., Ng-Knight, T., & Hayes, B. (2017)	Autonomy-supportive teaching and its antecedents: Differences	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants;

		between teachers and teaching assistants and the predictive role of perceived competence	related to comparisons with teachers in adult learning contexts
26	Maksimovic, A., & Vuletic, S. (2017)	Primary school teachers' views and opinions about the idea of the national levels of student attainment: "Case study England"	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; perspectives of teachers
27	Myklebust, J., & Mykebust, V. (2017)	Mental health among former students with special education needs who are now in their mid-30s	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to adults with previous SEN/D as children
28	Maher, A.J. (2017)	"We've got a few who don't go to PE": Learning support assistants and Special Educational Needs Coordinator Views on Inclusion in Physical Education in England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of role
29	Landor, F., & Perepa, P. (2017)	Do resource bases enable social inclusion of students with Asperger syndrome in a mainstream secondary school?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; students with Asperger syndrome in secondary school
30	Kwan, V., & Cheung-J.C-S. (2017)	Social work initiatives for the inclusion of students with special educational needs	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in school
31	Ayebo, A., Ukkelberg, S., & Assuah, C. (2017)	Success in Introductory Calculus: The Role of High School and Pre-Calculus Preparation	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in school

32	Brown, T.S., & Stanton-Chapman, T.L. (2017)	Experiences of Paraprofessionals in US Preschool Special Education and General Education Classrooms	Not based in the UK or England
33	Smith, P.H. (2017)	The Triple Shift: Student-mothers, identity work and engagement with low-status, vocationally related higher education	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in school; student mothers
34	Basford, E., Butt, G., & Newton, R. (2017)	To what extent are Teaching Assistants "really managed?": "I was thrown in at the deep end really; I just had to more or less get on with it"	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in school
35	Haley, A., Hulme, C., Bowyer-Crane, C., Snowling, M.J., & Fricke, S. (2017)	Oral language skills intervention in pre-school – a cautionary tale	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in school
36	Hills, R. (2016)	An evaluation of the emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) project from the perspectives of primary school children	Not focused on views/experience of Teaching Assistants; pupil perspective of specific Learning Support Assistant role
37	Wadman, R., Glazebrook, C., Parkes E., & Jackson, G.M. (2016)	Supporting students with Tourette Syndrome in secondary school: A survey of staff views	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary school
38	Lofthouse, R., Flanagan, J., & Wigley, B. (2016)	A new model of collaborative action research: theorising from inter-professional practice development	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary school

39	Lee, W., & Pring, T. (2016)	Supporting language in schools: Evaluating an intervention for children with delayed language in the early school years.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; intervention study
40	Maher, A.J. (2016)	Special educational needs in mainstream secondary school physical education: Learning support assistants have their say.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary school
41	Starcevic, J., Dimitrijevic, B., & Macura-Milovanovic, S (2016)	Rethinking the Role of Pedagogical Assistants: Establishing Cooperation between Roma Families and Schools in Serbia	Not focused on the views/ experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
42	O'Neill, G., & McNamara, M. (2016)	Passing the Baton: A Collaborative Approach to Development and Implementation of Context-Specific Modules for Graduate Teaching Assistants in Cognate Disciplines	Not focused on the views/ experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England; adult education
43	Heidenrich, M.J., Musonza, T., Pawlina, W., & Lachman, N. (2016)	Can a teaching assistant experience in a surgical anatomy course influence the learning curve for nontechnical skill development for surgical residents?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; adult medical education
44	Yawson, N.A., Amankwaa, A.O., Tali, B., Shang, V.O., Batu, E.N., Jnr, K.A.,Fuseini, A.D., Tene, L.N.,	Evaluation of changes in Ghanaian students' attitudes towards science following neuroscience outreach activities: A means to identify effective	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the

	Angaandi, L., Blewusi, I., Borbi, M., Aduku., L.N.E., Badu, P., Abbey, H., & Karikari, T.K. (2016)	ways to inspire interest in sciences careers	UK or England; adult education
45	Lehane, T. (2016)	"Cooling the mark out": experienced teaching assistants' perceptions of their work in the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream secondary schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
46	Webster, R. (2015)	The classroom experiences of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream primary schools – 1976-2012. What do data from systematic observation studies reveal about pupils' educational experiences over time?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants
47	Wu, W-C.V., Wang, R-J., & Chen, N-S. (2015)	Instructional design using an in-house built teaching assistant robot to enhance elementary school English-as-a-foreign-language learning	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England
48	Fortner, K.C., Kershaw, D.C., Bastian, K.C., & Lynn, H.H. (2015)	Learning by doing: The characteristics, effectiveness and persistence of teachers who were teaching assistants first.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not based in the UK or England; adult education

49	Myklebust, J.O. (2015)	How disability and school-related variables influence social security dependence among vulnerable young people in their late twenties	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to adults with disabilities and previous SEN/D as children
50	Lewis, K., & Demie, F. (2015)	Raising the Achievement of White Working Class Pupils: Good Practice in Schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; white working class pupil attainment
51	Dymond, S.K., Rosenstein, A., & Renzaglia, A. (2015)	The High School Curriculum: Perceptions of Special Education and Secondary Education Preservice Teachers	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; Teachers views
52	Lightfoot, S., & Frost, D. (2015)	The professional identity of early years educators in England: Implications for a transformative approach to continuing professional development	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; Teachers views
53	Graham, L.J. (2015)	A little learning is a dangerous thing: Factors influencing the increased identification of special education needs from the perspective of education policy makers and school practitioners	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; identification of SEN/D
54	Dow, C-R., & Huang, L-H. (2014)	Context-aware and LBS learning systems using ubiquitous teaching assistant (u-TA): A case	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; computer based assistance

		study for service-learning courses	
55	Gilmore, J., Maher, M.A., Feldon, D.F., & Timmerman, B. (2014)	Exploration of factors relating to the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduate teaching assistants' teaching orientations	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; adult education
56	Spangler, J. (2014)	Costs related to a flipped classroom	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
57	Webster, R. (2014)	2014 Code of Practice: How research evidence on the role and impact of teaching assistants can inform professional practice.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants
58	Mayer, G., & Hendricks, C. (2014)	Interaction Patters in Synchronous Online Calculus and Linear Algebra Recitations	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not in the UK or England; adult education
59	Graham, E. (2014)	What Do You Think You're Doing? An Examination of an Evolving Praxis of Teaching Teachers	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not in the UK or England; adult education

60	Maher, A.J. & Macbeth, J. (2014)	Physical Education, resources and training: The perspective of special educational needs coordinators working in secondary schools in North West England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
61	Trent, J. (2014)	"I'm teaching, but I'm not really a teacher". Teaching assistants and the construction of professional identifies in Hong Kong schools	Not based in the UK or England
62	Davies, O., & Lewis, A. (2013)	Children as researchers: An appreciative inquiry with primary-aged children to improve 'talking and listening' activities in their class	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; children's views
63	Webster, R., & Blatchford, P. (2013)	The educational experiences of pupils with a Statement for special educational needs in mainstream primary schools: Results from a systematic observation study.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools
64	Maher, A.J. (2013)	Statements of special educational needs and mainstream secondary physical education in north west England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
65	Houssart, J. (2013)	"Give me a lesson and I'll deliver it": Teaching assistants' experiences of leading primary mathematics lessons in England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of role

66	Fricke, S., Bowyer-Crane, C., Haley, A.J., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M.J. (2013)	Efficacy of language intervention in the early years	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; intervention study
67	Bullough, A., & Booth, J. (2013)	Science for all	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; teachers of science
68	Jurkic-Walls, D. (2013)	All the Jobs I've Ever Had from the Perspective of My Cat(s).	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
69	Jay, E.A., Starkman, S.J., & Pawlina, W. (2013)	Developing Medical Students as Teachers: An Anatomy-Based Student-as-Teacher Program with Emphasis on core Teaching Competencies	Not focused on views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; adult medical education
70	Houssart, J. (2012)	Teaching assistants' roles in daily mathematics lessons	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of role
71	Bland, K., & Sleightholme, S. (2012)	Researching the pupil voice: what makes a good teaching assistant?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; children's views
72	Williams, H. (2012)	Fair pairs and three-part praise – developing the sustained use of differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role
73	Skokauskas, N., Doody, B., Gallagher, L., Lawlor, M., Moran, T.,	Problem-based learning in child and adolescent psychiatry at Trinity	Not focused on views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; adult medical

	Fitzgerald, M., & Gill, M. (2012)	College, Dublin, Ireland	education; not in the UK or England
74	Vickerman, P., & Blundell, M. (2012)	English learning support assistants' experiences of including children with special educational needs in physical education	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific topic
75	Williams, K.E., and O'Connor, M. (2012)	The views of children and parents towards higher level teaching assistants who teach whole classes	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; parent and children's views
76	Keller, T.E., & Pryce, J.M. (2012)	Different roles and different results: How activity orientations correspond to relationship quality and student outcomes in school-based mentoring	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; outcomes of relationship between volunteer worker and mentee
77	Ng, Y.L. (2012)	Spiritual development in the classroom: pupils' and educators learning reflections	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants
78	Smith, P.H. (2012)	Troops to Teaching: Lessons from English Teaching Assistants' Experiences of Foundation Degree Study	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; views on Teaching Assistants attending higher education
79	Leach, T. (2012)	Researching Graduates' Lived Experiences of Vocational Learning	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; views on attending higher education
80	Makol, S. (2012)	Teaching Artist Development Studio: A Teaching Artist's Experience in a Forty Hour	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants

		Professional Development Programme	
81	Hutton, E., & Coxon, K. (2011)	Posture for learning: meeting the postural needs of children with physical disabilities in mainstream primary schools in England – a research into practice exploratory study	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role
82	Hayes, B., Richardson, S., Hindle, S., Grayson, K. (2011)	Developing teaching assistants' skills in positive behaviour management: An application of video interactive guidance in a secondary school	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role and intervention study
83	Symes, W., & Humphrey, N. (2011)	The deployment, training and teacher relationships of teaching assistants supporting pupils with Autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) in mainstream secondary schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
84	Feiler, A., & Watson, D. (2011)	Involving children with learning and communication difficulties: the perspectives of teachers, speech and language therapists and teaching assistants	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role and includes views of other professionals
85	Page, M., Wilhelm, M.S. & Regens, N. (2011)	Preparing Graduate Students for Teaching: Expected and Unexpected Outcomes From Participation in a GK-12 Classroom Fellowship	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; adult education; not in the UK or England
86	Bell, S., McPhillips, T., &	How do teachers in Ireland and England conceptualise dyslexia?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants

	Doveston, M. (2011)		
87	Abbott, L., McConkey, R., & Dobbins, M. (2011)	Key players in inclusion: are we meeting the professional needs of learning support assistants for pupils with complex needs?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; discussion of training needs
88	Gorsuch, G.J. (2011)	Improving Speaking Fluency for International Teaching Assistants by Increasing Input	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; not in the UK or England
89	Li, H., Wang, X.C., & Wong, J.M.S. (2011)	Early Childhood Curriculum Reform in China: Perspectives from Examining Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Chinese Literacy Teaching	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; not in the UK or England
90	Haycock, D., and Smith, A. (2011)	To assist or not to assist? A study of teachers' views of the roles of learning support assistants in the provision of inclusive physical education in England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; teachers views
91	Tawfeeq, D.A.L. (2011)	Teaching Assistants who instruct preparatory mathematics to academically challenged first year college students	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; secondary education; not in the UK or England
92	Rubie-Davies, C.M., Blatchford, P., Webster, R., Koutsoubou, M., & Bassett, P. (2010)	Enhancing learning? A comparison of teacher and teaching assistant interactions with pupils	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants

93	Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Qualter, A. (2010)	Chasing improved pupil performance: The impact of policy change on school educators' perceptions of their professional identity, the case of further change in English schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; position paper
94	Smith, P.H. (2010)	Teaching Assistant Apprentices? English TA's perspectives on apprenticeships in schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; specific investigation into Teaching Assistant training
95	Hancock, R., Hall, T., & Cable, C. (2010)	"They call me wonder woman": the job jurisdictions and work-related learning of higher level teaching assistants	Focuses solely on the role of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant
96	Marquart, M., Rizzi, Z., Jones; P., & Amita, D. (2010)	Using E-Learning to Train Youth Workers: The Bell Experience	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; specific investigation into Youth Worker training
97	Demie, F., and Lewis, K. (2010)	Raising the achievement of Portuguese pupils in British schools: A case study of good practice.	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; specific focus on achievement for Portuguese children
98	Leach, T. (2009)	Maybe I Can Fly: Nurturing Personal and Collective Learning in Professional Learning Communities	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; specific focus on adult training and learning
99	Emam, M.M, and Farrell, P. (2009)	Tensions experienced by teachers and their views of support for pupils with autism spectrum disorders in mainstream schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; focus on teacher views

100	Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., Brown, P., Webster, R. (2009)	The effect of support staff on pupil engagement and individual attention	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; impact study
101	Hutton, E. (2009)	Occupational therapy in mainstream primary schools: An evaluation of a pilot project	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; occupational therapy study
102	Herold, F., & Dandolo, J. (2009)	Including visually impaired students in physical education lessons: A case study of teacher and pupil experiences	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; teacher and pupil views
103	Fraser, C., and Meadows, S. (2008)	Children's views of teaching assistants in primary schools	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; children's views
104	Graves, S., & Jones, M. (2008)	Enabling the Journey from Experienced Practitioner to Paraprofessional: Using Reflective Dialogue in Action Learning Triads	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in their roles; specific focus on adult training and learning
105	Davies, J.D., & Howley, M. (2008)	Editorial: Special needs and inclusion: Voices, narratives and stories.	Introduction to journal by editors
106	Humphrey, N. and Lewis, S. (2008)	What does 'inclusion' mean for pupils on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools?	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
107	Sidler, M. (2008)	Rhetoricians, Facilitators, Models	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools
108	Chang, S.H.H., & Smith, R.A. (2008)	Effectiveness of Personal Interaction in a Learner	Not focused on the views/experience of

		Centered Paradigm Distance Education Class Based on Student Satisfaction	Teaching Assistants in primary schools; adult education
109	Bowyer-Crane, C., Snowling, M.J., Duff, F.J., Fieldsend, E., Carroll, J.M., Miles, J., Gotz, K., Hulme, C. (2008)	Improving early language and literacy skills: differential effects of an oral language versus a phonology with reading intervention	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; intervention study
110	Bedford, Jackson, Wilson (2008)	New Partnerships for Learning: Teachers' Perspectives on Their Developing Professional Relationships with Teaching Assistants in England	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in primary schools; teachers views

2. Papers screened and excluded at the Abstract

#	Author/s	Title of Paper	Reason for Exclusion
1	Martin, C. (2020)	From LSA to teacher: the value of classroom experience in shaping a 'teacher' identity	Participants were previously Learning Support Assistants, commenting on their experience of becoming a Teacher; not focused on the experience of being a Teaching Assistant
2	Van Themaat, J.V.R. (2019)	Thinking together changes the educational experiences, provision and outcomes for SEND pupils – professional learning communities, enhancing practice, pedagogy and innovation	Study is centred around learning communities and not TA views
3	Benstead, H. (2019)	Exploring the relationship between social inclusion and special educational needs: mainstream primary perspectives	From a larger thesis; children's views in relation to social inclusion and SEN/D
4	Baker, L. (2018)	From Learner to Teacher Assistant: Community-Based Service-Learning in a Dual Language Classroom	Not based in the UK or England
5	Lapping, C., & Glynos, J. (2018)	Psychical contexts of subjectivity and performative practices of remuneration: teaching assistants' narratives of work	Focus on TA pay; however, does utilise free-association methods
6	Maher, A.J & Vickerman, P. (2018)	Ideology influencing action: Special educational needs	Not focused on the views/experience of

		co-ordinator and learning support assistant role conceptualisations and experiences of special needs education in England	Teaching Assistants; related to a specific facet of role
7	Hark-Weber, A.G. (2015)	Four Questions	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants in schools; not in the UK or England; adult education
8	Webster, R., & Blatchford, P. (2015)	Worlds apart? The nature and quality of the educational experiences of pupils with a statement for special educational needs in mainstream primary schools	Data and findings drawn from Webster & Blatchford's (2013) MAST study; not focused on TA views
9	Martin, T., & Alborz, A. (2014)	Supporting the education of pupils with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities: the views of teaching assistants regarding their own learning and development needs	This paper focused on TAs in specialist provisions for children and young people with PIMD
10	Baker, F.S. (2014)	The role of the bilingual teaching assistant: alternative visions for bilingual support in the primary years	Whilst discusses Teaching Assistant views, the data pertaining to the UK was collected 20 years prior to the publication of the study
11	Moore, J. (2013)	They throw spears: Reconciliation through music	Focus of the study was 'indigenous' and 'non indigenous' students and staff in schools in Australia
12	Attwood, T., & Bland, K. (2012)	Deployment and impact of higher level teaching assistants – how do small-	Focuses solely on the role of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant

		scale local studies fit into the bigger picture?	
13	Smith, J., & Elspeth, S. (2011)	Answer this simple question	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; discusses Author's PhD
14	Emira, M. (2011)	"I am more than just a TA!"	Specific focus on views of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants on Leadership, Management with a view to exploring potential roles for them in leadership.
15	Greenstock, L., & Wright, J. (2011)	Collaborative implementation: Working together when using graphic symbols	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role
16	Mistry, M., & Sood, K. (2010)	English as an additional language: assumptions and challenges	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; both Teacher and Teaching Assistant views related to a specific practice in role when working with English as an Additional Language in schools
17	Black-Hawkins, K. (2010)	Educational Meanings, Consequences and Control	Focuses solely on the role of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant
18	Wright, A.M. (2009)	Every child matters: Discourses of challenging behaviour	Position paper on the experiences of children who experience social, emotional and behavioural needs and

			would be considered vulnerable in relation to the Every Child Matters Agenda
19	Veck, W. (2009)	From an exclusionary to an inclusive understanding of educational difficulties and educational space: implications for the learning assistant's role	Study exploring views of LSAs in Sixth Form college
20	Drake, P. (2009)	Working for learning: teaching assistants developing mathematics for teaching	Not focused on the views/experience of Teaching Assistants; related to a specific practice in role
21	Wilson, E., and Bedford, D. (2008)	New partnerships for learning: Teachers and teaching assistants working together in schools – the way forward	Focus on developing teacher capacity to work with Teaching Assistants

3. Papers screened and excluded at the Full Paper

#	Author/s	Title of Paper	Reason for Exclusion
1	Wren, A. (2017)	Understanding the role of the Teaching Assistant: Comparing the views of pupils with SEN and TAs within mainstream primary schools	The primary focus of the paper was the views of children with SEN; from the analysis it is not clear if the Teaching Assistant interviews were derived from themes from the children's responses, or separate interviews. As the themes are compared, the study is less focused on the experience of the Teaching Assistant
2	Efthymiou, E., and Kington, A. (2017)	The development of inclusive learning relationships in mainstream settings: A multimodal perspective	Focus on pedagogical practices; paper is about adult-child interactions and focuses primarily on teachers
3	Wood, (2016)	"It's something I do as a parent, it's common sense to me" – Non-teaching staff members' perceptions of SEAL and their role in the development of children's social, emotional and behavioural skills	This paper briefly referenced a few quotes from TAs with other support staff roles in school although focused on the utilisation of the SEAL intervention
4	Cockcroft, C., & Atkinson., C. (2015)	Using the Wider Pedagogical Role Model to establish learning support assistants' views about facilitators and barriers to effective practice.	This paper sought TA views in relation to a pedagogical framework
5	Roffey-Barentsen, J., and Watt, M. (2014)	The voices of Teaching Assistants (Are we value for money?)	The study explored views of TAs in secondary and specialist settings as well as primary school

6	Edmond, N., and Hayler, M. (2013)	On either side of the Teacher: Perspectives on professionalism in education	Authors describing prior studies
7	Tucker, S. (2009)	Perceptions and reflections on the role of the Teaching Assistant in the classroom environment	Position paper; does not discuss primary data of Teaching Assistant views
8	Rees, M. (2009)	Developing specialist expertise: an unanticipated learning trajectory	Author views and experiences; data from TAs exceeds inclusion criteria

Appendix E: Records of SURE checklist for critical review

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation Barkham, 2008: Suitable work for women? Roles, relationships and changing identities of 'other adults' in the early years classroom.
Study Design: case study, autoethnographic approach

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	Yes　　　　　**Not Clear**　　　　　No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school – Early Years
Perspective?	Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Head Teacher
Intervention or Phenomena	Teaching Assistant views, Teacher views
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	Using ethnographic approach and assuming the role of the TAs as part of understanding their experiences prior to interview Paradigm – values subjectivity and diverse views. Acknowledging marginalised voices, particularly women's voices.
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants?	The school was selected through personal connection between researcher and head teacher. Four participants were interviewed, although it is not clear how they were identified or selected. There is very limited data about participants and no information about those who did not choose to participate

Is detailed information provided about participant characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	Individual interviews with TAs, teacher and head teacher as well as individuals in the wider community – with limited information about wider interviews. No further detail about what type of interviews or interview schedules provided regarding questions, topics. Observation of school and role informed interview and analysis. No record of pilot interviews. Potential triangulation between observation and interview although lack of transparency and detail around the interview process does not confirm whether the interviews would act as a robust method Interviews recorded in written form rather than on tape due to perception of intrusiveness Participants checked interview data after interview, and were invited to suggest changes or provide clarifications
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation	The researcher is known to the Head teacher of the setting. Through an ethnographic approach to research, the researcher was present in school and in role with the participants as a known observer, before interviewing them. The role of the known observer may have impacted the participants and their interview data, although this is not discussed in the paper

to formulating research questions and collecting data Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could influence in the way in which participants respond?)	The researcher kept a field work diary. No further reflections on relationships or power presented
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	Reference to transparency of process through description of Head Teacher introducing researcher to school. However, collegiate relationship with a Senior Leader may impact informed consent with staff
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	No
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)?	The credibility of the findings is affected by few quotes, limited transparency and detail of the data processes

Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent? Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	
9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	Not reported
10 Finally…consider Did the author identify any limitations? Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	Not reported

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation: Maliphant 2008: The triad in mind: An exploration of what is needed by the learning support assistant to facilitate integration of the child with special educational needs into mainstream education Study Design: case study, autoethnographic approach

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	Yes **Not Clear** No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school
Perspective?	Learning Support Assistant
Intervention or Phenomena	Learning Support Assistant view – Psychoanalytic theories applied
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	Application of theory to an individual case study experience of working one to one with a child
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants? Is detailed information provided about participant	The study is a case study and describes an autoethnographic approach, therefore participant selection is less relevant What is not clear is whether the child is an active participant in the research as the subject of a case study, and the process of selecting and consenting case study participants when the researcher is reflecting on self in role

characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	The data collection was from the researcher's own viewpoint. The article suggests this is a summary of a thesis although the thesis could not be found or accessed online. It is not clearly described how the observer recorded their reflections across time to inform this study. The reflections are the sole data source within the article
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could	The relationship with the child, the subject of the case study is the focus of the research. The power relations pertain to her in a caring role for the child, although may also relate to the researcher writing about him as a child without ability to give consent to a detailed (whilst anonymous) case study The researcher discussed their thinking about the child as part of infant observations and work discussion groups as part of their

influence in the way in which participants respond?)	psychoanalytic masters, although it is not clear if this related to research thinking, or support for their role which has been utilised into the research paper
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	It is not clear if the parent gave ethical approval or was approached about their child being the subject of a detailed case study Anonymity of the child and school was preserved
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	The analytical process is not detailed clearly; psychoanalytic ideas are applied to a collection of reflections. It is not clear how these reflections were collected, selected for research or how theory was applied to them (such as through a supervisory or group reflective space or in the individual capacity of the researcher)
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)? Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent? Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	The findings demonstrate a single person's perspective on their experience of working with a child. It is a rich narrative with a range of applied psychoanalytic theories to her experience, therefore the criteria of credibility are unsuited to this study As the methodological approach to reaching the conclusions is not transparent, it is not clear whether the theoretical applications resonate in other aspects of the data. The data presented is in a single, narrative reflection, rather than quotes from reflective accounts or process notes, which does not provide access to the raw data of the study. It is not clear how specific accounts of experience

	were selected or any data which did not fit the presented narrative
9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	Not stated
10 Finally…consider Did the author identify any limitations? Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	Not stated

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation: Mackenzie, 2011. "Yes, but…" rhetoric, reality and resistance in teaching assistants' experiences of inclusive education Study Design: focus groups and individual, life histories interviews	

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	Yes **Not Clear** No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school
Perspective?	Teaching Assistants
Intervention or Phenomena	Focus group interviews, individual life histories
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	The focus of the study is experiences and the authors speak of the TA role. Reference to emancipatory perspectives The method for data analysis is unclear The methods used are focus groups and individual life histories interviews. These methods are not presented as within a specific paradigm
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these	Convenience sampling – all of the participants were known to the researcher as students from her courses by sending emails. An advert was also placed in a SEN magazine to obtain participants not known to her.

particular participants? Is detailed information provided about participant characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	The stories of the participants were selected by the researcher, although it is not clear how this take place. Individuals who declined to participate are not referenced
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	The researcher discusses focus groups and the challenges for speaking in front of others and anonymity impacting approach to data collection The life history interviews did not have clear stipulations of the questions or how the interviews generated data; no specific model such as BNIM (Wengraf, 2008) mentioned. No reference to pilot studies Triangulation of data is implied by using two forms of data collection approaches although this is not described explicitly
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data	The researcher refers to her role in selecting participants, and that participants who knew her as their lecturer took part. Whilst this is mentioned, it is not clear how the researcher reflected upon this or considered the impact on power dynamics

Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could influence in the way in which participants respond?)	The researcher speaks about emancipatory views although is otherwise limited in discussions of epistemological or philosophical leanings which guide this The reference to the participants being students is brief and not explored in depth
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	Ethics of anonymity is discussed Ethical approval not explicitly stated
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	Themes identified in the study were briefly mentioned although it is not clear what approach to analysis or interpretation has been used, or what informed the process The data was presented within case studies
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)? Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent?	The findings are a summary of themes drawn from a few quotes from each participant in a case study format which the author has curated from a range of interviews, therefore it is not clear what other themes may have been generated and where Findings do not resonate in other aspects of the interview. The presented quotes are rich. There has been some application of theory to interpret the quotes,

Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	however, there appears to be some inference required to make the connection between the quote and the theory as they do not appear to directly relate
9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	Not stated
10 Finally…consider Did the author identify any limitations? Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	Yes yes

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation: Watson, Bayliss & Pratchett (2013) Pond life that "know their place": Exploring teaching and learning support assistants' experiences through positioning theory. Study Design: group discussions, workshops and individual interviews

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	**Yes** Not Clear No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school
Perspective?	TLSA and Teacher
Intervention or Phenomena	Group discussions, workshops and individual interviews
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	The authors clearly explaining positioning theory and the relevance of their approach to the theoretical and epistemological positions taken. There is reference to social constructionism post modernism and relativist position
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants? Is detailed information provided about participant	The sampling is purposive and it is clear how the project's development connected with the identified population. Information about the TA participants is provided in context to their individual interviews and where personal or demographic information pertains to the point being made in the analysis

characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	There is no information about participants who declined to participate
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	The process of the connection between workshops and individual interviews is clear, although it is not clear how interviews were constructed and how data was recorded in interviews/workshops The data was presented to the participants in cycles of workshops, using the data to inform the discussions. The observed data related to the researchers' experience of the witnessing the workshops
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could	The relationship between the participants and researchers is not explicitly explored, as the focus of the researchers was to background their voices and not impose narratives. However, what is not discussed is how the process of the individual interviews being fed back to whole group impacted the group dynamics in the workshop, and the role of the researchers in the individual and group dynamics

influence in the way in which participants respond?)	
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	Anonymity is provided, and participants are checked in with, with regards to their data being represented However, ethics are not explicitly discussed, neither is ethical approval
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	The theoretical and philosophical positioning informing the analysis is present; however, the procedural aspect of analysis is unclear. Quotes are used in the text to suggest data recording and transcription, basing interpretations on evidence. The researchers also presented participant views where the participant disagreed with the information/narratives
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)? Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent? Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	There is sufficient data for the size of the study and number of participants that conclusions can be drawn. Quotes are selected from a number of TA participants in individual interviews, and brief recollections of the workshop experiences, although these do not include quotation. The participants' voices are foreground and the data are rich The interpretations are plausible; data is also presented in a descriptive format as well as an interpretive format
9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	The study was funded by a local government project

10 Finally…consider	
Did the author identify any limitations?	
Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	yes

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation: Syrnyk, 2018 - Knowing nurture: Experiences of teaching assistants for children with SEMH
Study Design: TAs and Teachers – mixed methods questionnaires individual interviews

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	**Yes** Not Clear No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school
Perspective?	Teaching Assistant & Teacher
Intervention or Phenomena	Mixed methods: interview and questionnaire
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	Interviews and questionnaires used. The data collection method is appropriate in that it collects both qualitative and quantitative views for triangulation; however, the author does not present their epistemological position so it is difficult to ascertain if it is appropriate for purpose
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants?	The school was specifically selected because of the focus of the nurture context in a specialist primary provision. All of the TAs in the school were invited to participate. Information on gender, age, length of service and qualification was described as well as previous mainstream experience noted. It is

Is detailed information provided about participant characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	not clear if any TAs declined to participate
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	Interview questions were presented within the article and there was a reference to content analysis, although no explanation of this analytical approach. Use of the TTFN – teacher questionnaire that had been adapted for teaching assistants There is reference to manual coding in the article, although it is not clear if this represented predetermined themes to code interviews or if themes were generated inductively from the data There is reference to a % coverage of themes, suggesting frequency is used as part of the analysis Themes from interviews and questionnaire data is triangulated
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data	The researcher did not personally anonymise, transcribe the text/interview data in case of bias, although the researcher interpreted and analysed the data The researcher acknowledges bias and generalisability limitations

Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could influence in the way in which participants respond?)	There is no explicit reference to power or reflexivity in relation to self and staff interviewed
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	Ethical approval was given in Canada although this is not made transparent how the researcher is at a Canadian university and has ethics from the Canadian university and is completing a study in an English school. The data was anonymised by an external research assistant, although the school may remain highly identifiable because of the region and specialist nature of the provision
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	A content analysis is referred to briefly and how often a theme occurs is calculated in a percentage It is not clear how themes were identified
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)? Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent? Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	Comparisons of themes using coverage value give suggestions of similarity of experience across different professionals however it is not clear if this % relates to predetermined codes or if the themes were inductively generated. The focus on the % reduces the richness of the quotes and focus on the views / narratives Quotations are used in each question presented and quotes appear to relate to themes with higher percentages

9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	None stated
10 Finally…consider Did the author identify any limitations? Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	No explicit limitations although future research suggests are given Yes although the abstract does not cover the role conflict between the teachers and the TAs, or the emotional impact of role referenced in the discussion

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies

Citation: Knight, 2015 - Thesis: The experiences of primary-school teaching assistants working one-to-one with looked-after and adopted children who present with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties: an exploration with the use of attachment theory   Study Design: IPA interviews

Does the study address a clearly focused hypothesis?	**Yes** Not Clear No
Setting?	Mainstream primary school
Perspective?	Teaching Assistant
Intervention or Phenomena	IPA interviews
Comparator/control (if any)?	n/a
Evaluation/Exploration?	Exploration
2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate? Is it an exploration of e.g. behaviour/reasoning/ beliefs)? Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?	Yes – the researcher's paradigm for the research is clear and describes their position on meaning making, hermeneutics and the focus on perspectives of TAs
3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified? Is it clear how participants were selected? Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants? Is detailed information provided about participant	Yes – as this is a thesis, a whole chapter is dedicated to the methodological approaches of the study, the researcher's rational for selecting participants and information is given about each participant as part of contextualising the findings and their experiences

characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?	
4. was the setting appropriate for data collection? Is it clear what methods were used to collect data? Type of method (e.g. focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g. notes, audio, audio visual recordings) Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g. how many topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances? Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explaining? Is there triangulation of data (i.e. more than one source of data collection)? Do the authors report achieving data saturation?	The methodological approach of IPA is clear and there are substantial appendices for further information. Whilst this helps to elucidate the approaches for this study, it is not comparable for journal articles to provide this level of data
5. Is the relationship between the researcher (s) and participants explored? Did the researcher report critically examining / reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e. relationships that could	The author discusses researcher reflexivity and their role in relation to the participants; as an EP and researcher, as well as in a power position The paradigm for IPA posits that researchers 'bracket off' their experiences, which the researcher reflects upon

influence in the way in which participants respond?)	
6. Are ethical issues explicitly discussed? Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to the participants Was ethical approval sought? Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?	Ethics has a distinct section in the thesis and NHS ethical approval and local authority approval is granted for this study There are clear processes of providing participants with information to make decisions around informed consent
7. is the data analysis / interpretation process described and justified? Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data? Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher? Are negative / discrepant results taken into account?	The approach to IPA analysis is clear and the link between the coding process and the written analysis is evident The single researcher for this doctoral study presents both concordant and discrepant results in the analysis
8. Are the findings credible? Are there sufficient data to support the findings? Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g. quotation) and were these fairly selected? Are the data rich (i.e. are the participants voices foregrounded)? Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent? Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?	The findings are positioned within a context of methodological rigour for a doctoral study and the small scale of the IPA. The researcher makes clear statements of her findings and uses substantial quotations to support her analysis The data is compared to the studies identified in the literature review and positioned within the wider literature for the topic
9 is there any sponsorship / conflict of interest reported?	None stated
10 Finally…consider	Limitations are clearly stated

Did the author identify any limitations?	
Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	yes

This checklist should be cited as:

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) 2018. Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies available at:
http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/specialist-unit-for-review-evidence/resources/critical-appraisal-checklists

Adapted and updated from the former Health Evidence Bulletins Wales (HEBW) checklist with reference to the NICE Public Health Methods Manual (2012) and previous versions of the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists.

Appendix F: TREC Ethics Confirmation

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699
https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/

Laura Kelly

By Email

23 May 2019

Dear Laura,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: The psychosocial experiences of TAs who are working directly with a child in the classroom

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Best regards,

Paru Jeram
Secretary to the Trust Research Degrees Subcommittee
T: 020 938 2699
E: academicquality@tavi-Port.nhs.uk

cc.   Course Lead, Supervisor, research Lead

Appendix G: TREC Ethics Application form

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS

Project title	The psychosocial experiences of TAs who are working directly with a child in the classroom		
Proposed project start date	April 2019	Anticipated project end date	July 2020

SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS

Name of Researcher	Laura Kelly
Email address	lkelly@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Contact telephone number	

SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
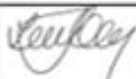
Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research? YES ☐   NO X If YES, please detail below:
n/a
Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES ☐   NO X If YES, please detail below:
n/a

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

*Is your research being commissioned by and or carried out on behalf of a body external to the trust? (for example: commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation). *Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)	YES ☐ NO X NA ☐
If YES, please supply details below: n/a	
Has external* ethics approval been sought for this research? (i.e. submission via Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) to the Health Research Authority (HRA) or other external research ethics committee)	YES X NO ☐

1

'Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation/body which is external to the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) If YES, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies:	Local ethical approval has been sought and given by the Local Authority where the research will take place following a meeting to discuss the research with the Principal Educational Psychologist. I am currently awaiting a letter of approval from the Principal Educational Psychologist to express this approval in writing.
If your research is being undertaken externally to the Trust, please provide details of the sponsor of your research? Islington council	
Do you have local approval (this includes R&D approval)?	YES X NO ☐ NA ☐

SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS

APPLICANT DECLARATION

I confirm that:
- The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date.
- I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research.
- I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding our University's Code of Practice for ethical research and observing the rights of the participants.
- I am aware that cases of proven misconduct, in line with our University's policies, may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.

Applicant (print name)	Laura Kelly
Signed	
Date	09.05.2019

FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

Name of Supervisor	Gemma Ellis
Qualification for which research is being undertaken	Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology

Supervisor –
- Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research?
  YES ☒   NO ☐
- Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate?
  YES ☒   NO ☐
- Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient?
  YES ☒   NO ☐
- Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance?
  YES ☒   NO ☐

Signed	Gemma Ellis
Date	09.05.2019

COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD • Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed? YES ☒ NO ☐	
Signed	*A Styles*
Date	09.05.2019

SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

1. Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)

Within primary schools in the United Kingdom (UK), many children are supported by Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the classroom (Brown and Devecchi, 2013). In addition to classroom wide support, TAs can be assigned to work directly with one child ("1:1"), often to support their Special Educational Needs (SEN). Whilst there is a significant evidence base exploring the educational role of TAs working 1:1 in the research projects (Blatchford et al., 2009; Webster and Blatchford, 2013), there is little research which explores the emotional and relational aspects of the TA role when working 1:1 with children. This psychosocial study will explore the experiences of TAs who have worked directly with at least one child, intending to consider the 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983) of this role. This approach will explore both the interacting psychological and social factors for Tas and the researcher, to understand the experience and then go on to consider implications for EP practice.

For the purposes of this research, the term "Teaching Assistants" will be used to describe classroom-based staff who work with children and support teachers. The term 'Teaching Assistant' will represent multiple terms, including learning support assistant, and classroom assistant.

193 words

2. Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)

The research aims to explore the experiences of TAs who have worked directly with one child in a school, using a psychosocial approach to understand the experiences of a group of professionals working closely with children. This research will have an exploratory focus, as there is no known previous research looking into the views of TAs who are working 1:1 with children in mainstream primary schools, with a focus on the emotional and relational aspects of the 1:1 work. The predominant position of research exploring the role of TAs focuses on the educational aspect of the role and TA effectiveness (Blatchford et al., 2009; Webster & Blatchford, 2013). Recent research has demonstrated that when the

TAs are interviewed about their pedagogical role with children, a theme emerged which highlighted TAs perception of their role as focusing on the emotional wellbeing of children they work with (Cockcroft & Atkinson, 2015). Further research into TAs views also demonstrates the emotional aspect of working with children as a theme, although the research may not have begun with this as a primary focus (Salisbury, 2017; Watson, Bayliss & Pratchett, 2013) However, specific research which begins with the premise of exploring the experience of TAs supporting children outside of a pedagogical role has not been completed with TAs working with children in primary settings. Knight's (2017) study is the only known study into TAs lived experiences working directly with one child, however, the population focus for this study was TAs working with Looked After Children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The author posits that this proposal would expand the focus to TAs working with children in mainstream primary schools and would invite a psychosocial understanding of the TA experience, which has not previously been completed. The research does not begin with a specific hypothesis and will look to analyse and interpret the experience of the TAs using a psychosocial approach.

The wide variance in the TA role can make it difficult for professionals (such as EPs) working in schools to 1) understand the remit of the TA role, 2) co-create appropriate recommendations for children which draw on TA knowledge and input and 3) consider TAs in the wider school system. An awareness of TAs experiences in context of working directly with children will help EPs to work with TAs, school staff and systems, particularly in the context of increasing emotional and mental health needs in school and whole-school approaches which draw on all staff involvement.

Whilst TAs may be engaged in training and learning opportunities about children's development, learning and special educational needs, current research suggests that there is limited investigation into the TA perspective on the TA-pupil relationship. The potential outcomes for this research are to understand how TAs make sense of the emotional aspects of being a TA, when working daily with a child. This may lead to understanding about relationships with children in schools and help inform EPs practice when working with TAs who support children directly, and the school system around the TA and child.

I suggest, despite historical connections between psychoanalytic perspective and education, this knowledge is less visible within education, which may be due to the perception that psychodynamic thinking is "unscientific" (Pellegrini, 2010, pg 257). There are several publications drawing on psychoanalytic theory (Bower & Trowell, 2001; Colley & Cooper, 2017; Salinger, 2012, Youell, 2006) which could promote psychoanalytic thought in education, yet there is limited published use within EP

4

practice. This study would intend to offer the value of exploring experience using psychoanalytic theory and demonstrate its relevance in educational psychology.

The findings from this study will be disseminated as follows:

- Written summaries for participants who wish to be contacted
- Written summaries and presentations of the analysis to the Educational Psychology Service and the Local Authority
- A submitted thesis, for publication in the Tavistock and Portman Library
- Articles for professional consumption within psychological and educational journals
- Presentations at conferences pertaining to EP or educational practice
- Summaries to be made available to TAs and schools who employ TAs

673 words

3. Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, tasks assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)

The researcher's theoretical perspective in this research is informed by the theories and work of Bion, Winnicott and Klein. This has informed the methodological choices for this research.

Methodological Perspective

The Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI; Holloway and Jefferson 2012) will be used to elicit the participants' experience of working directly with a child, daily. Two interviews will be conducted, to establish an initial understanding of the TA's experience and using the second interview to seek further understanding and information for testing initial hypotheses and themes drawn from the first interview (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). The initial interview can follow a semi-structured plan, with the second interview having tailored questions to prompt further consideration of emerging themes from the first interview (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). It is anticipated that the first interviews will take place during Summer 2019, with the second interviews being arranged in Autumn 2019. This will intend to allow participants the opportunity to reflect 'in' role during the interview, and reflect 'on' their experience in the second interview, taking place in the next academic school year (Schon, 1983; Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). The interview sessions will be audio recorded for later analysis using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher will seek supervision with EP research tutors at the Tavistock Clinic who are experienced in the use of psychosocial approaches in research. The use of a Psychosocial methodology (Hollway, 2009, Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) aims to explore a world-view where psychological (internal) and sociological and cultural (external) experiences are held in equivalence of

importance, whilst attempting to access the internal, unconscious experience of a person, and the external experiences which become internalised (Hollway, 2015). Hollway and Jefferson (2001) posit that many qualitative approaches to interview hold the assumption that the initial 'telling' of the experience provides a singular, coherent narrative, which do not account for the contradictions, conflicts and emotions present. The Psychosocial methodology takes the Kleinian position that subjects of research are 'defended', and that exploring relations with others may elicit unconscious defences against anxiety. The aim of using the Free Association Narrative Interview is to elicit free associations which can highlight conflicts and contradictions in the unconscious and conscious experience, providing an opportunity to look for meaning and make sense in both parts and whole of a given narrative and for further exploration in the second interview. This understanding will be used to consider the TAs experience, both as an individual with a relational experience with a child in role, as well as an individual with a role in a wider system and context of a school and education system.

Prior to attending the interview, each participant will have met the researcher, given an information sheet about the purpose of the research and informed about the interview session structure. Informed consent will be obtained prior to any research taking place. The interview duration is anticipated to last no more than one hour. An additional, second interview will be arranged and will also last no more than one hour. Following data collection, the analysis of the data will be conducted over approximately 6 months.

SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

4. Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why this criteria is in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Participants will be primary school TAs, working directly with one child, daily. The exclusion criteria for participants will include TAs who are not working directly with one child, daily. Purposive sampling will be used to obtain participants. Initially, the size of this group will be scoped to identify approximate numbers of TAs who meet the inclusion criteria. This will be done by contacting senior leaders in Local Authority (LA) schools to provide anonymous information of the population size. Following the scoping exercises, permission will be sought from schools in the area to recruit participants. I will be present at training to TAs in an LA context; with LA permission, the research opportunity will be verbally presented at the end of the training, with a voluntary contact sheet provided for individuals to consent to initial contact from the researcher. Individuals at the training will be informed of the limit to the number of participants of the study, and, if more than the number of participants required sign up to initial contact, the names of individuals will be drawn through randomisation and initial contacts made until 6 participants are achieved. The author understands that for some potential participants, this may be disappointing if they wished to take part and were not

selected. The author will contact the remaining individuals to inform them of the process and offer to provide them with the research findings following publication, should they be interested in the topic area.

Should the recruitment via the TA training programme not elicit enough participants, direct contact with schools (where scoping exercises suggested there may be participants who meet the criteria for the study) will be made. Senior Leaders will be asked to disseminate information sheets and contact details for the researcher to TAs who meet the inclusion criteria. Schools will be contacted at separate times to prevent over recruitment to the study and disappointing potential participants. Due to time constraints, participant requirements for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the requirement to meet participants twice using the chosen methodology, no more than 6 participants will be selected.

TAs will be invited to participate in the study, although no expenses for time or travel will be offered. It is anticipated that participation will involve out of school time, due to the cost and time implications of releasing TAs from their duties in school. This will involve liaising with schools, EPS and the LA to access appropriate venues in schools. Retention of participants may be affected; therefore, the level of commitment will be discussed with participants

424 words

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5. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?*(Tick as appropriate)*

☐ Students or staff of the Trust or the University.
X Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
☐ Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)[1]
☐ Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
☐ Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.
☐ Adults in emergency situations.
☐ Adults[2] with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
☐ Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).
☐ Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
☐ Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
☐ Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
☐ Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent[3] relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
☐ Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
☐ Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
☐ Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

[1] *If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability[2], any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.*
[2] *'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.' (Police Act, 1997)*
[3] *Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which*

is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.

6. Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES ☐ NO X

For the purposes of research, 'vulnerable' participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from the participant's personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment) or from their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness). Where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable.

Adults lacking mental capacity to consent to participate in research and children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable. Studies involving adults (over the age of 16) who lack mental capacity to consent in research must be submitted to a REC approved for that purpose. Please consult Health Research Authority (HRA) for guidance: https://www.hra.nhs.uk/

6.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

If YES, the research activity proposed will require a DBS check. (NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance)

7. Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES ☐ NO X

If YES, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

n/a

8. What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)

Participants for this study will be Teaching Assistants working in an English speaking, mainstream primary school, who will be using English to communicate with children during the school day. Participants recruited by schools are likely to have a minimum qualification level, capacity to understand written and spoken English, as well as communicate in English. All participants will be over the age of 18.

The author will aim to create information sheets which explain the information pertaining to the study in plain English (see Appendix 1). The information sheet will explain the purpose of the research and what will happen if the TAs take part, emphasising that they can ask to stop taking part until after the data has been anonymised, following transcription. The researcher can offer to read the information sheet to each person (if this is preferred). The potential participants will then be able to ask questions. The TAs can

then take the information sheet away with them. The TAs will be made aware of the anonymity process, and the use of pseudonyms within the work.

The author will also create an informed consent sheet (see Appendix) which checks in with the participant about the information which is understood and seeks their initials at the end of each statement to demonstrate this (along with a final signature at the end of the document).

224 words

SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

9. Does the proposed research involve any of the following? *(Tick as appropriate)*
☐ use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy) ☐ use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection ☐ use of written or computerised tests X interviews (attach interview questions) ☐ diaries (attach diary record form) ☐ participant observation ☐ participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research X audio-recording interviewees or events ☐ video-recording interviewees or events ☐ access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes ☐ administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process ☐ performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfiture, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction ☐ investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs) ☐ procedures that involve the deception of participants ☐ administration of any substance or agent ☐ use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions ☐ participation in a clinical trial ☐ research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached) ☐ research overseas (copy of VCG overseas travel approval attached)
10. Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life? YES ☐   NO X If YES, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.
n/a
11. Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.
The author has previous experience in adult mental health services, with specific experience (2 years) of conducting research within the community, working with service users who have experienced significant mental health difficulties. This role included visiting service users within their own homes, using interviews to assess their mental health needs over a period of 9 months and listen to their

experiences. The author has worked with adults, children and families for over 10 years within community-based settings, supporting children and adults with distress, helping to signpost individuals with needs which can be met locally and referring to safeguarding procedures and other agencies when children and adults have required imminent support from specialist professionals. The author regularly uses lone working policies and ensures that systems are in place to determine her own safety when working with others in the community. The author will aim for all research sessions to be conducted within a school or other LA building, to provide additional protection and safety for both the participant and the author.

12. Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words) NOTE: Where the proposed research involves students of our University, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

Teaching assistants are employed in considerable numbers yet are part of a group of employees who are 'vital' and 'invisible' (Dyer, 1996, p187; Wood, 2016, pg 7). Research which values the perspective of often unheard voices has the potential to make visible previously unconsidered experiences, and may benefit the participants if they have been heard, and experience being listened to. It may also be empowering to participants to know that whilst remaining unidentifiable, that their views and experiences will be heard through dissemination of the findings in their LA, and through academic journals.

Experience in research as participants and being invited to be part of the research process may encourage participants to reflect on the role of research within their profession and further ways in which they can contribute to the knowledge within their profession. It is hoped that the research would have a positive impact on how TAs feel in their role and the pupil they work with.

158 words

13. Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)

The author acknowledges the potential for any participant to experience upset or discomfort within the research process, relating to internal or personal experiences for the participant, which the author/researcher would not necessarily be aware. Therefore, the author has included the potential for this to happen in the information leaflet to be provided for the participants, so they are aware that the researcher will be available following the interviews, should upset be experienced.

The author has worked therapeutically for 5 years prior to the professional doctorate and has a range of skills for listening and attuning to another's emotional experience, managing her own emotional responses to others when supporting them, providing containment and using consultative skills to support the individual to think about what support they would like from another who has heard their concerns. It is intended that this support may help a participant who has experienced upset manage their feelings until they decrease, or further support is accessed. Where appropriate, the author will provide a list of supportive services and signpost the participant for specialist advice. The author appreciates that reflections on relational and emotional experiences which TAs are asked to consider in the Free Association Narrative Interviews may lead to TAs drawing on and speaking about their wider relationships and emotional lives outside of work, as well as experience which may . The author will not be seeking this information in the initial interview and will respond to participants raising this information when brought by the participants themselves. For participants who may need further support following the interviews, I will signpost participants to relevant services, including employee assistance programmes and other support services.

The author has included a section about safeguarding within the information leaflet will discuss this with the participant, so the participant is aware of the contract of confidentiality and when it may be broken to ensure safety. Where concerns for the safety of the participant or others are highlighted, the safeguarding procedures for the LA will be followed. It is not anticipated that the research itself will lead to harm, however, if harm to self or another is disclosed, the safeguarding procedure will be followed.

300 words

14. Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Participants will be debriefed using a script providing disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, relating to the data analysis, how themes will be generated from their data and other participants. As the research consists of two interviews, the participants may have had opportunity to explore some of these ideas within the two interviews; however, a further opportunity to ask questions outside of the interview experience will be offered. British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017) guidelines on debriefing research participants will be upheld.

Where appropriate, the author may offer information relating to external support and counselling which the participant may access, should the participant share experiences of distress or any thoughts or feelings which may exist beyond the context of the interview. The researcher will schedule time after the second interview to be available for the participants so that the researcher does not leave them without offering the opportunity to discuss thoughts and feelings outside the interview.

The participant will be informed that the results of the research will be some time after the interviews, and that with their permission, they can be contacted with the findings, and if they wish, can meet with the interviewer to talk about the results. This will be arranged on an individual basis and will offer the opportunity for further debriefing and support where appropriate. Any printed summary of the findings will also be made available to participants who wish to receive this. Participants will be informed that they will not be identified in any report or publication. Participants will be reassured that the results of the research do not relate to performance and are separate to any work-related evaluation or development. Outcomes will be discussed with care to avoid unintended meaning or value being placed on statements given by the researcher.

305 words

FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN AWAY FROM THE TRUST OR OUTSIDE THE UK

15. Does any part of your research take place in premises outside the Trust?

☐ YES, and I have included evidence of permissions from the managers or others legally responsible for the premises. This permission also clearly states the extent to which the participating institution will indemnify the researchers against the consequences of any untoward event

16. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK?

☐ YES, I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/

☐ YES, I am a non-UK national and I have sought travel advice/guidance from the Foreign Office (or equivalent body) of my country of origin

☐ YES, I have completed the overseas travel approval process and enclosed a copy of the document with this application

For details on university study abroad policies, please contact academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

IF YES:

17. Is the research covered by the Trust's insurance and indemnity provision?

☐ YES ☐ NO

18. Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place.

NOTE:
For students conducting research where the Trust is the sponsor, the Dean of the Department of Education and Training (DET) has overall responsibility for risk assessment regarding their health and safety. If you are proposing to undertake research outside the UK, please ensure that permission from the Dean has been granted before the research commences (please attach written confirmation)

SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

18. Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.
   YES x   NO ☐

   If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

19. Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in *plain English*]? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.
   YES x   NO ☐

   If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

20. The following is a participant information sheet checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.
X Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher or Principal Investigator and other researchers along with relevant contact details.
X Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.
X A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC.
X If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.
X A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.
X Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
X Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.
X A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
X Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk
X Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

21. The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

X Trust letterhead or logo.
X Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
X Confirmation that the project is research.
X Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
X Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
X If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.
X The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.

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☐ Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
☐ Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.
X Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

22. Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.

☐ Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?

☐ The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).

X The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).

☐ Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.

X Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (I.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)

☐ The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.

☐ Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

23. Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.

YES x   NO ☐

If NO, please indicate why this is the case below:

NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.

SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

24. Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES x   NO ☐
If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

25. In line with the 5th principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.

☐ 1-2 years   ☐ 3-5 years   X 6-10 years   10> years

NOTE: Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance currently states that data should normally be preserved and accessible for 10 years, but for projects of clinical or major social, environmental or heritage importance, for 20 years or longer. (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/gro/gropoldraft.pdf)

26. Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.

X   Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.
X   Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.
☐ Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See 23.1).
☐ Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the European Economic Area (EEA).
☐ Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). (See 28).
NOTE: Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).
☐ Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.
X Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.
☐ Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops). NOTE: This should be transferred to secure UEL servers at the first opportunity.
X All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.
NOTE: For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.
X All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.
NOTE: For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

27. Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.

n/a

28. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the European Economic Area (EEA).

n/a

29.   Will this research be financially supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programs? YES ☐   NO x

If YES please provide details:

n/a

SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

30. How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? *(Select all that apply)*

x   Peer reviewed journal
x   Non-peer reviewed journal
☐   Peer reviewed books
☐   Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)
X   Conference presentation
X   Internal report
☐   Promotional report and materials
☐   Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations   x Dissertation/Thesis
☐   Other publication
X   Written feedback to research participants
X   Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
☐   Other (Please specify below)

SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES

31. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?

n/a

SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

32. Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

Letters of approval from any external ethical approval bodies (where relevant)
X   Recruitment advertisement
X   Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
X   Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
☐   Assent form for children (where relevant) n/a
☐   Evidence of any external approvals needed
☐   Questionnaire n/a
☐   Interview Schedule or topic guide
☐   Risk Assessment (where applicable)
☐   Overseas travel approval (where applicable) n/a

34. Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.

Appendix H: Information Sheet for Participants

Appendix:

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Participant Information Sheet

Information for Teaching Assistants

Thank you for your interest in my research project. If you are interested in volunteering to be involved, please read the information below.

What is the study about?

I am interested in what Teaching Assistants think about their experiences of working with one child on a daily basis. For this project, I am focusing on TAs who mostly work with one child during the school day, and regularly support the same child through the week.

By asking for your views, I hope to develop an understanding of what being a TA and working with one child is like, and means to you. **I am interested in the relationships which develop between TAs and children over time, and the emotional experiences of TAs working regularly with the same child. The interview will focus on this experience, and how you make sense of it personally.** This information, with views from other TAs, can then be used to help TAs, schools and other professionals think about what is important to TAs when working with children, and how this information may help school staff and other professionals work together.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been asked to be involved as a Teaching Assistant, working directly with one child, at a primary school in the Local Authority. You may have been asked if you wanted to participate when you attended a training session for TAs in the local authority and given your contact details to Laura, or you may have received this information from a member of staff in your school. The project is taking place over a short period of time, and a small number of TAs will be interviewed.

If I agree to take part, what happens next?

If you would like to take part, I will invite you to meet with me for two interviews. Each one will last for no more than one hour. I will ask you some questions about your experiences of being a Teaching Assistant working with a child on a daily basis, and what this means for you. I will try to arrange a time for the interviews which is convenient for you.

Is this something I have to do?

Taking part is voluntary, and is not a requirement connected to any role within schools, or working with children in the Local Authority. Taking part, or not taking part will not have an effect on your role within schools.

Looking after your personal information

I will be the only person who has access to your identifiable information in this study. During our conversations, I will use an audio recording device so I can listen to the interviews and write them up. This is so that all the words said are taken down, and I can look for any themes which come up in the interviews. As part of writing up the interviews, the information will be made anonymous, so that you will not be identified. Once transcribed, the recordings will be deleted. Any information collected will be kept following the Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR guidance.

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Your confidentiality

When writing up the interviews, I will change details so that anyone reading the study will not know who you are, which school you work in or which child you work with. I will be making these changes as I am interviewing a small number of people, and I want to ensure that your experiences do not identify you to anybody in my write up. I think your views are valuable and will provide important information about the role of Teaching Assistants which will be helpful to developing practice in schools and for other professionals working with school staff, children and families. If any information is shared which affects the safety of yourself or others, I have a duty of care to share this information under safeguarding procedures. I will tell you if there is information which I need to share.

What happens if I no longer want to take part?

At any point in the study, during or after being interviewed, you can withdraw yourself and the information you have shared in the study. You do not have to give a reason or say why to do so.

After the interviews have been written up and the information is made anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw the information. This will be approximately 2 weeks after the second interview.

What happens to the research findings?

When the research is completed, the information will be written into a thesis, which is held at the Tavistock and Portman library. The general themes from the research will be shared with you (if you would like to), professionals in the Local Authority, and with the tutors on my course. I hope to publish the general themes from the study in the future. All publications will be anonymised, and information may be amended to protect your anonymity further.

Ethical Approval

This study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (TREC). My supervisor, Gemma Ellis, can be contacted relating to any questions about the study via gellis@tavi-port.ac.uk

If you have any queries about the ethical approval of this research, or other aspects of this project, please contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk) at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

Further information

If you have any questions after reading this information sheet, please feel free to contact me on my email below.

Email: lkelly@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Appendix I: Consent form

Appendix:

Participant Consent Form v1

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Researcher's Name: Laura Kelly

Research project: Teaching Assistant's experiences of working 1:1 with a child in primary school

Please read and complete this form carefully, signing your initials next to each statement. If you would like more information or to ask a question, please ask and I will discuss this with you.

	Please circle:	Initials in each box:
The study has been explained to me, and I have had an opportunity to read the participant information sheet	Yes / No	
I have had the opportunity to ask any questions, and seek further information about the study	Yes / No	
I understand what I am being asked to participate in, and what I am being asked to do	Yes / No	
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. I understand that withdrawing from the study will not affect any involvement I have in schools	Yes / No	
I know that all information about me will be treated in confidence and that my information will be made anonymous in any written work. In the event of a safeguarding concern, information relating to that concern will be shared.	Yes / No	
I understand that Laura will attempt to minimise my experiences being identified by people who know me, when the research is written up. Any quotes used in publications will be anonymised.	Yes / No	
I have been informed that all audio-recorded and written information will be used only for this research project, and it will be destroyed once the study is completed.	Yes / No	
I am aware that the anonymised findings from this study will be written in a thesis for Laura's doctorate. This anonymised information may be discussed by professionals in educational psychology and with Laura's tutors.	Yes / No	

Having understood the above information, I give my informed consent to participate in two interviews

Signature..
Name..
Date..

Researcher signature...
Researcher name..
Date..

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Appendix J: Initial contact list for recruitment

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Thank you for expressing an interest in the study "Teaching Assistant's experiences of working 1:1 with a child in primary school". Laura, the researcher for this study, is hoping to interview **6 Teaching Assistants** who work with the same child, daily.

If you would like to be contacted by Laura, the researcher, to discuss this study further, please write your name, telephone number and email address below. If you have specific times which it is better to contact you, please also add this information underneath.

Name	Telephone Number	Email	Best times to telephone

Once completed, please fold your contact sheet in half and place within the envelope offered. After speaking to Laura, if you no longer wish to be contacted about this study, or receive any information from Laura following the study publication, please let her know and she will confidentially destroy your personal information and attempt no further contact

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Appendix K: Recruitment letter for schools

Appendix
Recruitment letter through schools

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Are you a Teaching Assistant?

Do you work with one child on a daily basis, and regularly through the week?

Would you be interested in volunteering in a research study about your experiences?

What is the study about?

My name is Laura, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist working in the Local Authority. I am completing a research project as part of my training.

I am interested in what Teaching Assistants think about their experiences of working with one child on a daily basis. For this project, I am focusing on TAs who mostly work with one child during the school day, and regularly support the same child through the week.

By asking for your views, I hope to develop an understanding of what being a TA and working with one child is like, and means to you. **I am interested in the relationships which develop between TAs and children over time, and the emotional experiences of TAs working regularly with the same child. The interview will focus on this experience, and how you make sense of it personally.** This information, with views from other TAs, can then be used to help TAs, schools and other professionals think about what is important to TAs when working with children, and how this information may help school staff and other professionals work together.

Where can I find out more?

I have given this letter to schools to share with TAs who work directly with one child. If you are interested in further information, I can send you an information letter, and arrange to meet with you if you would like to find out more. I can be contacted at lkelly@tavi-port.nhs.uk, or by telephone on: [redacted]

Thank you for your consideration

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Appendix L: Pilot Interview with Colleague with prior TA experience

(consent given to present anonymised interview)

So my first question, about the child that you have got in mind, can you tell me what it is like to work 1:1 with the child?

Erm, (*pause*) do you mean building the relationship or do you mean the actual, what you are doing with them?

Well, what comes to mind?

Erm, I think probably spending time erm, building a relationship with them so that you can work 1:1 more effectively, so spending time (*laughs*), yeah, making the relationship with him, probably is what comes to mind when I think about that, and with this particular child, that was probably what I spent most of my time doing, so that we could actually do any work in the first place, it was trying to find a way to work together that would, work for both of us

Ok. And can you tell me how that made you feel?

Erm, I think it made me feel (*pause*) well, obviously the child was extremely challenging, so, (*pause*) like some days it would be extremely frustrating and some days it would be, (*pauses*) rewarding, and it really depended on the day and his mood, erm, yeah, how he was feeling, so on the days that he was frustrating that was because he wouldn't do anything I wanted him to do or he would be extremely aggressive, beat the shit out of me (*laughs*) and if it wasn't (*pause*), and it would be like, (*pause*) just, not getting anything done all day, and on the days it wasn't frustrating, it would be really rewarding, he would be able to do something that he couldn't do before, or actually get through a piece of work or write a sentence, that would be enough, to be honest

Ok. And can you tell me what it is like being with the child?

Erm, it is like, (*pause*) like being on your edge all day, waiting for him to snap, and I would say, probably really anxiety provoking most of the day cos you are just waiting for something to happen that is going to kick him off or upset him and then you end up dealing with a situation, and yeah, it is actually, very anxiety provoking to be honest, being on edge all day.

Ok. You said anxiety provoking, can you tell me what that feels like?

It just feels like, even if you are having a nice time, in the back of your head you are like 'when is he going to kick off?' and 'when am I going to have to deal with it' and 'when am I going to get punched' or 'when am I going to have to pull him off another child', so even if you are having a good, a nice, a nicer time, you are waiting, you

have got the worry or the fear that he is going to do something that you are going to have to interrupt, erm and stop. Erm yeah, so it feels like being on edge all day until he goes home, and you are like (*breathes out heavily, body slumps) (laughs) (silence*) Do you want some more? [pause in the interview]

So, can you tell me about the relationship, you have talked about it a little bit already, can you tell me about the relationship with the child you currently work with?

At the beginning it was rocky, and what I mean by rocky is, erm, he would, I dunno, I don't think it was a secure relationship, he didn't know me that well and I had to build up trust, and now, the relationship would be more, its secure probably, so he can go away and come back, and he knows I am still there, so the relationship feels, it feels like a nice relationship, even though I would probably be the one he would, beat up or be, but that is through, I suppose, I am the trusting adult, so it is a nice relationship and we can have a laugh, and we can have a nice time together, erm, and he doesn't, I find him easier than I used to find him, (*in-breath*), he doesn't, if he beats me up obviously that's really hard, but, the relationship is secure enough that I know that I can let that go and he lets it go, yeah. It's a nice relationship

It is interesting that you talk about it being nice and being hard and I wonder what that feels like?

Well, hard feels like you are hitting your head against a brick wall, and, nice feels like when you have those nice moments when you laugh together or something funny happens or erm, he comes to you to tell you something or after the weekend, he is waiting for you outside the door, or ringing reception asking where you are, they are nice parts of the relationship and then the hard parts are when he is annoyed with you or you are the person that (*laughs*) he is going to come after when he is upset.

And, thinking about your relationship, and you have talked a little bit about things that have kind of, from memories, can you tell me about a time in the relationship with the child that stands out to you?

Erm, (*pause*) there was a time, a nice time, where we were doing something, I don't know, something like a literacy task, and we were working on it together, and, I was writing something on the board and he went to say something and I went to say something and we both said the same thing at the same time, and we looked at each other and we both laughed, and erm, I don't know what it is about that time, but it was, it was a really, it probably, I don't know why it stands out, but it was just a really nice moment where we were probably really attuned to each other and focused on the same thing (*in-breath*) and, yeah, that, I don't know why that stands out, actually, to be honest, but it was an obscure thing to say, both of us said as well, I can't remember what it was anymore, but, I dunno, maybe that, because we have

spent so much time together, that it became, like we knew what each other was thinking, but, that stood out as, like a really nice memory from working with him.

And how does it make you feel

It makes me feel that we, it makes me feel that, it's a ni-, its rewarding, it's a nice feeling because we obviously knew each other well enough that that would, that we knew what each other was going to say and it was nice that you get to know a child, that you spend so much time with them that, that happens, that you kind of know what they are thinking a little bit, *(Researcher: mm)* and so it is a nice feeling, I don't know what the feeling is, but probably rewarding.

Are there any other times that stand out to you?

Ermmm (*pause*) ermm, (*pause*) mmmm. There are so many, I don't know. Errmm. Let me think. There was a time when I first met him when I hadn't been in in the morning and I came, because I had to do something, and I came in and he had had a really bad morning, and he was really happy to see me, and it was all going well, and then something happened and he ran down the corridor with a knife, it was only a bread knife and he was attempting to throw it at a child's face, and I think the memory stands out because I had to run, and run at his legs and smash him to the floor to stop him hitting the child's face with a knife, and I think probably that was one of the worst, then the restraint was appal- awful, and I think that was one of the worst memories of, that's probably why it stands out. It was one of the worst memories with him, because, it was just so extreme, erm, it was fine afterwards but it probably stands out as one of the most extreme memories of him because he was so aggressive that day and I restrained for probably about an hour and he just kept going on and on and on, so probably that would be, one of the most, one of the things that stand out.

And how did it feel at the time?

It felt, just like an adrenaline rush to be honest (*laughs*) just like, it was kind of scary but it was only a bread knife, but, the fact that another child could have got really severely hurt, you could hurt someone doing that, it was scary and obviously the restraint was horrible so it wasn't a nice, day, erm, but it yeah, it didn't feel good but, there were lots of people around so that made it a lot better.

And is there anything else, thinking about working 1:1 with this child, and having a relationship with him, is there anything else you are thinking about or would want to say?

That's all I've got to say. I think the relationship is key, the key to all of this, the key to it all. You really get to the nook of what is important.

Appendix M: Demographic Questions to inform Pen Portrait

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnic identity / cultural identity:

Please describe your family circumstances

Length of time in TA role:

Key child's age:

Key child's primary need:

Does the key child have a SEN support plan or EHCP?

Appendix N: Questions used for First Interview

- Can you tell me what it is like to work one to one with a child?

- Can you tell me what it is like to work one to one with the child you currently work with?

- Can you tell me what it is like being with the child?

- *(if the word 'relationship' is mentioned)* Can you tell me about the relationship between you and the child?

- Can you tell me about a time that stands out for you?

- Is there anything I haven't covered or that you would want to say about your experience?

Prompt Questions

- Can you say / tell me more about that?

- (repeat a given word) – can you tell me more?

- How does it/that make you feel?

Appendix P: Interview Schedule for Second Interviews

Bella

The last time we met we talked about your experience of being a TA working 1:1 with a child

1. What thoughts or comments would you like to make about the previous interview? Or was there anything that you left the interview thinking about?

2. What thoughts or feelings have you had about returning to take part in the second interview?

Further questions

- Would it be helpful for me to mention some of the things that we discussed last time?
- I listened back to our conversation together, and there are a number of things that you mentioned last time, that I would explore more:

1. Last time we spoke, you mentioned feeling you "actually wanted to cry" and feeling "guilty" when you were apart from the child that you work 1:1 with. (Can you tell me more about that?)

2. You shared with me time about your children and the morning routine, and you said, "they are my own children, I feel like I can sort of do that to them" and I wondered what this meant for you, in relation to the child you work with?

3. You talked about feeling "quite deflated" and "a bit upset" when you are not able to help the child you work with (Can you tell me a little more about that?)

4. I am curious to understand more about when you said: "I talk about her like she's my child".

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in both of the interviews and sharing your experiences with me

- Is there anything you would like to mention, that I did not ask and you may have expected to be asked?

- What thoughts do you have about the interview process? What has it been like?

- Is there anything that has come up for you in the interviews that has upset you or you would like to discuss with someone?

- Is there anything in the interview which you have told me that you would not wish for me to use in the analysis?

- Are there any other comments that you would like to share?

Mina

The last time we met we talked about your experience of being a TA working 1:1 with a child

- What thoughts or comments would you like to make about the previous interview? Or was there anything that you left the interview thinking about?

- What thoughts or feelings have you had about returning to take part in the second interview?

Further questions

- Would it be helpful for me to mention some of the things that we discussed last time?
- I listened back to our conversation together, and there are a number of things that you mentioned last time, that I would explore more:

- Last time we spoke, you shared that on some days you felt "exhausted" and that it was "challenging"

- You talked about feeling "lost without him"

- You said sometimes you "wanted to be with other children"

- You shared a time when your son said to you, "you love him so much, sometimes I feel like you love him more than me"

- You talked about not wanting "to think about what's going to happen"

- You spoke about being "pinched" and feeling "upset" with the child last time we spoke

  (Can you tell me more about this?)

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in both of the interviews and sharing your experiences with me

- Is there anything you would like to mention, that I did not ask and you may have expected to be asked?

- What thoughts do you have about the interview process? What has it been like?

- Is there anything that has come up for you in the interviews that has upset you or you would like to discuss with someone?

- Is there anything in the interview which you have told me that you would not wish for me to use in the analysis?

- Are there any other comments that you would like to share?

Aya

The last time we met we talked about your experience of being a TA working 1:1 with a child

- What thoughts or comments would you like to make about the previous interview? Or was there anything that you left the interview thinking about?
- What thoughts or feelings have you had about returning to take part in the second interview?

Further questions

- Would it be helpful for me to mention some of the things that we discussed last time?
- I listened back to our conversation together, and there are a number of things that you mentioned last time, that I would explore more:

    1. You said you would describe yourself as a "true 1:1". Can you tell me a bit more about that?
    2. You said "I know I am his teaching assistant, but it can feel like more than that".
    3. You mentioned "pretty much knowing how the day is going to go" although you said "not always" and laughed
    4. You talked about the parent of the child telling you what he says to her, and you said "because those aren't things that he is saying to me"
    5. You spoke of the child being "reliant on you" and then "trying to, kind of form some independence as well"
    6. "He has a good relationship with the, teacher in his class but not the same as he would have with me"
    7. "The buck stops at me"
    8. You mentioned feeling "bored" and "maybe not challenged"
    9. You talked about "feeling guilty, even though he is fine and getting on with his work"
    10. You spoke of being "pretty much always classroom based" and you mentioned the other children in the class

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in both of the interviews and sharing your experiences with me

- Is there anything you would like to mention, that I did not ask and you may have expected to be asked?

- What thoughts do you have about the interview process? What has it been like?

- Is there anything that has come up for you in the interviews that has upset you or you would like to discuss with someone?

- Is there anything in the interview which you have told me that you would not wish for me to use in the analysis?
- Are there any other comments that you would like to share?

Jenna

The last time we met we talked about your experience of being a TA working 1:1 with a child

- What thoughts or comments would you like to make about the previous interview? Or was there anything that you left the interview thinking about?
- What thoughts or feelings have you had about returning to take part in the second interview?

Further questions

- Would it be helpful for me to mention some of the things that we discussed last time?
- I listened back to our conversation together, and there are a number of things that you mentioned last time, that I would explore more:

  1. You spoke about the children you have worked with 1:1 as "not your babies" although you mentioned becoming "really close"
  2. You mentioned "worrying about them when I'm not in", also thinking of them when you are "shopping"; they are "always in the back of my head"
  3. "He will walk past people and hit me"….. "I'm like his safe space"
  4. "I was one of those children that was written off"

  5. "all of them, including parents…can become a bit dependent" and "his mum comes up and gives me cuddles and brings food in for me"

  6. "nice to actually know that there's somebody that cares as much" and ""they're not going to be supporting"

  7. "as I said I am aiming to go on to become to a teacher"

  8. "why the hell am I doing it" and "why am I putting myself through this" – and "this is why I do this job, because it's for them" and "I love my job…rewarding" "So yeah, I still like the job"

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in both of the interviews and sharing your experiences with me

- Is there anything you would like to mention, that I did not ask and you may have expected to be asked?

- What thoughts do you have about the interview process? What has it been like?

- Is there anything that has come up for you in the interviews that has upset you or you would like to discuss with someone?

- Is there anything in the interview which you have told me that you would not wish for me to use in the analysis?

- Are there any other comments that you would like to share?

Appendix Q: Example Transcript with Coding

and

34 I'm like "what?" and nothing's, nothing's happened, we could have just been

35 doing work and all of a sudden, this, something just takes over and she can
36 become quite upsetting, and for me then I will leave and feel, quite deflated
37 and feel a bit upset because I couldn't help her, so it can be a little bit
38 frustrating for yourself, but, we had a lot of them days when I first started
39 working with her but I think I understand her so much more now (=R: Mhmm) but we

40 don't really have them days. You know obviously now we are coming to the end of

41 term there's a lot of upset every now and then because, things are different
42 every day and that's obviously, but I just make sure that I've prepared
43 everything the day before so she knows exactly what she's walking into the next

44 day, what's happening, so, so yeah, so, yeah I, I, I mean, obviously, I think
45 with any job you do, you have good days and bad days, (mouth sound) and it is a

46 little bit different when you are working so closely with a child you sort of
47 feel like you really want to do, be able to help them and you can't like, if
48 they're having a little, a bad day, but apart from that, I really enjoy it (=R:
49 yeah?) yeah.

50 Researcher: That's really good. And can you tell me something about the
51 relationship, because you mentioned the word relationship, so what's that like?

52 Bella: Yeah, so we're, we've really got a positive relationship, it's, its
53 really nice because (mouth sound) it's quite, I f-, I talk about her like she's
54 my child, and I know that's probably a bit, but I think you are working with
55 someone everyday and that is just how, you treat the child, you know I would

56 want someone to treat my child like that if they was wor-, needing a one to one,

57 so I treat her as I would treat my own child because I just think that that's
58 the way, working with any child though I do feel you know, they are innocent and

59 they deserve that.

60 Researcher: And what does that feel like, what you have just spoke about?

61 Bella: Yeah it fee- you know, it feels really positive and happy, it does make
62 me happy. I really enjoy this, you have got to understand I was in publishing
63 for a very long time, so I wor- and once I had children myself I was like 'I've

64 got to change my career' because it was like long hours and lots of social,
65 outings, so I have been doing this now for four years and it's the best thing I
66 ever done, I am just so, you know, unfortunate that I didn't do it sooner but
67 obviously these things are meant to be and, yeah, so I am really enjoying,

2/9

what

68   I am doing.

69   Researcher: And how do you feel that, so you talk about that change, how do you

70   feel about that?

71   Bella: As in how do I feel (=R: to being a TA?). Yeah, I love it, I jus- I just

72   think it is such a rewarding job, it's just something that, you can walk away

73   and fe- and you, and I think working somewhere closely with someone you see

74   their progression you see how that per- like I sit back and think 'oh when I was

75   in Year 2 and this, and if we would have tried to do that it could have never

76   worked' and now, you know, she is staying in class for the whole day, she does

77   what everybody else does, whereas then, it was like every ten minutes had to go

78   out for a break, and, so it's like I have built this relationship with her where

79   she understands me and I understand her, and just, it is just so positive and

80   that's why I think I feel so happy about what I am doing (=R: Mhmm, sounds

81   really good, thank you).

82   Researcher: And I am wondering if you could tell me about a time that you were

83   with her, that really stands out for you?

84   Bella: Okay, so we was having erm, our class photos done, (pause) and, she was

85   very distressed with this, erm, because obviously she wanted to see the picture,

86   and she couldn't see the picture, but then, (pause) everything, all the children

87   had to go into one playground so she was then getting, really, you know, anxious,

88   and a bit, 'what's happening, what's happening' and I had explained that this

89   was going to happen, but then all the teachers had to get into, a photo, (pause)

90   and I just remember her sitting on the bench and she was really upset and you

91   know I was hugging her and then it was like 'right, I've got to quickly jump in

92   this photo and just get back to her' and that really sticks in my head because

93   it made me feel really upset, like I literally felt like I was going to cry

94   myself, like (=R: ohh), and I do remember going onto my break and just thinking

Margin annotations (left side):

- ."rewarding"
- ..seeing progress up cl...
- ..progress because of e
- ..progress because of me
- .positive feelings ab...
- ..it is "positive"
- .happy
- .Career
- ."knowing" the child
- .feeling the need to be wi...
- .managing separation
- .feeling upset / crying

...feeling upset / trying	95	'I actually wanna cry' like watching her (=R: Mhmm) it's making my cry now
	96	(laughs and wipes tears away; =R: I'm sorry) yeah, but yeah, so that's the only
	97	time that I think I have ever felt, really sad about it, because she's got such
	98	a lovely life and she- her family are so lovely as well that, I don't think that,
...about children	99	you know, to me I just think she is a gift from God, like the way that she
...it is "positive"	100	handles things now it's just, you know, sh, she is doing so well (=R: Mhmm) so
	101	it's, it's a really nice feeling
	102	Researcher: And what was it like at the time, because I notice that you just got
	103	a bit upset about that
	104	Bella: Yeah, I, mean I am emotional (=R: do you want a tissue, by the way?)
..."emotional"	105	(laughs) I am quite emotional when it comes to, I do cry quite easily so things
	106	that, like if I am seeing someone distressed, I'll cry for them half the time,
...Child upset then I am upset	107	and I think it was just there watching her being so distressed just made me feel
	108	like 'oh this is just not fair' like, why would she have to be feeling like this,
	109	like, I don't know, I probably felt a bit guilty as well that I am having to
...feeling guilty abou	110	get in the picture and thinking, 'no, why should I be in this picture' like, I
...feeling the need to	111	should be sat out there with her, so, yeah, but that's the one time that I think
...managing separati	112	that I have ever got upset about it, because other times I just keep upbeat for
...bringing only posit	113	her, like and keep positive, but I don't really sit back and go, 'oh, this is
	114	really like, soul destroying and' because before I went into the job, I used to
...about the job /what oth	115	hear a lot of people who had done one to one go 'oh don't do it for too long
...it is "positive"	116	because it is really soul destroying, it will do this to you, that to you' and
	117	I'm like ' I'm yet to have that experience', maybe because of the child I am
	118	working with, I am seeing such a positive outcome that it is not doing that to
...about the job /wha	119	me, (=R: Mhmm), but yeah so I am not really having any negative side of this job
...it doesn't upset me	120	at the minute (laughs) but you know still, four years is not that long, (=R:
...it is "positive"	121	Mhmm) yeah, so.
	122	Researcher: And, you mentioned, erm, I'm trying to hold it in my mind now
	123	because I was listening to you talk about the positives, about keeping upbeat,
	124	can you tell me what that's like?
...bringing only positivity t	125	Bella: Yeah, I just make sure that I come to school with the attitude that I
...keeping hard feelings in	126	want her to feed off of me, and she is not going to feed off of me if I come

4/9

281

127 in
like 'urghh' and I think she actually makes me feel happy just seeing her,
128 because she will come in and she's like all happy and, and, you start your day
129 like that, and you could go and, you know we could have parts of the day where
130 she might get a little bit, but now, I can sort of 'oh, come on, let's do this
131 instead' and then it's forgotten about, (=R: Mhmm) you know so it's, but that's
132 because I know the way she works now, and I can do that, whereas before, it was
133 like "oh, maybe if I do that, it's going to make things worse, maybe I shouldn't
134 say that' (=R: Mhmm) and over time, you sort of learn, what to say and what to
135 do, what's going to make things easier (*intake of breath*).

136 Researcher: And thinking about the feelings, what does that feel like for you?

137 Bella: Yeah, it makes you feel really good and I think that's why I probably
138 enjoy it so much because I do feel like, I come out of here some days and I am
139 like, oh, I feel really, I've done something or like I am helping someone, it's
140 just, I think this is the vocation that obviously I should have done, because, I
141 used to come out of my work and go 'oh, I've had a really bad day' but you- I
142 never have a day where I walk out of here and go "that was really tough today,
143 that was a horrible day' because you are working with children and I think you
144 can't really have that attitude if you work with children anyway, you have got
145 to be, keep them going, no matter how much you are feeling inside, like, you
146 know you could have a bad day or it could just be one of them days you are
147 feeling a bit, but then you come in and make sure that you pick yourself up
148 because, you know, you keep your stresses at home, (=R: Mhmm) and, so yeah, so
149 that's, but that's just the way I am though, I think that's my character so,
150 yeah.

151 Researcher: And what's that like to have that, like you say keep the stresses at
152 home?

153 Bella: Yeah, I mean like, I could have, a bad morning with the children

5/9

trying

impact on family? — 154 to get them ready and all that and I am like "come on you have got to listen to

155 me"; they are my own children so I feel like I can, sort of do that to them, not

about children — 156 do that to them but they have got to know discipline, they have got to know
157 certain things, so, I can talk to them like that, and then we get in the car and

thinking/feeling outside 158 I am like "right, now we could possibly be like five minutes late" so then I am
impact on family? 159 feeling a bit like, oh I just need to get to work now, and then once I get here,

160 I am just like 'oh, I don't know why we had that stress' and then I am like
161 "sorry children, have a nice day' and like, and I'll give them a kiss and then
162 they go off, and they are like 'my mum's crazy' (*laughs*) but I mean like then I

impact on family? 163 pick up from school and they're, nothing, they've forgotten about it, they
164 haven't said anything, 'oh this morning, you was a little" they might say to
165 their dad later in the evening '(*deeper voice*) oh yeah mummy was a little bit

166 angry with us this morning' and he's like 'what do you mean angry?' and I will

167 say 'oh we was running behind so you know, I was just getting a little bit
168 stressed, but, not at them, just (*cough*) at (*cough cough*) the situation, sorry I

169 have just had my lunch (=R: that's alright, take your time) (*drinks water and*

170 *coughs*). I had cous-cous, I could feel it (=R: Oh no) probably a bit dry
171 (*laughs*) (=R: just take your time, have another drink if you like) so yeah, I
impact on family? 172 mean, er, I do, as you can see I just get a little bit emotional thinking about
173 things like that, (=R: Mhmm, yeah) (*drinks more water*) but (*coughs*) sorry, (=R:

174 don't worry, don't worry, I would rather that you got your drink and that took a

175 moment) (*laughs*).

176 Researcher: So, is there anything more that, like I haven't covered or that you

177 would want to say about your experience?

178 Bella: It's probably hard, because if I had worked with different children, and

progress makes me feel g 179 I had, like my last school, I worked with a child, (*pause, swallowed*) and again
"rewarding" 180 he was really, it was so rewarding working with someone that you are just seeing

181 progress, whereas, and you have heard like, oh they have had really bad times,
but it's not that bad 182 oh this is you know possibly, could be, but then that sort of passes as well,

---

...about self

210 course and that, it was like 'this is for me, I am actually' (*sniff*) because I
211 had just started doing the lunch time to see if I actually liked working with
212 children, because I thought 'yeah I love children, but, working with them could

...Career

213 be a different thing' I could be thinking 'oh, what am I doing?' but I done that
214 for like 6 months and I was like 'right, no, I am gonna get on the course and I
215 am gonna do it because it is something that I want to do' and I have loved it
216 since I have done it, so yeah, it is all very positive for me (=R: oh, that's
217 really good to hear) (*Laughs*) (=R: I am glad you enjoyed it).

218 Researcher: And is there anything else that you want to say, anything else that
219 comes to mind?

...about the job /what others

220 Bella: No, I just wouldn't ever listen to anyone trying to tell, like, you know
221 like if I would have took, took up the advice that I was told 'don't ever do one
222 to one, always, if you are going for the TA, just do a TA job in a class because

...about the job /what oth

223 it's really horrible just working with' and I was like 'what do you mean
224 horrible' and they was like 'well it's just like soul destroying you just feel

...seeing progress up close

225 like you are doing nothing' and I was like 'but you are working with a child
226 that is going to, you are going to see changes, you are going to work so closely

...it is "positive"

227 with them that you are going to build such a positive relationship with them,
228 surely that's a good thing?' (*pause, sniff*) but you know everyone is different I

...about self

...about how things hav

229 suppose in what they want out of life and it suits me, it's, yeah, (*heh*) it was
230 obviously meant for me (*laughs*) (=R: good) so yeah

231 Researcher: I suppose that's it, that's all the questions I had, so it's only if
232 there's anything more that comes to mind that you might want to say

...feeling upset / crying

233 Bella: Yeah, erm, (*pause then sniff*) no I mean, you know emotionally I don't

...not wanting a future

..."emotional"

234 think unless as I said that time, it did make me really sad, and you know, I
235 don't know, working with another child that could be possibly, could have
236 different needs that I could be a bit more emotional with, I don't know, but

...positive feelings abou

237 right now, I am not (*sniff*) and I think cos I could see how happy she is that,

...happy

238 that's why, that's what makes me happy you know and if she comes to school every

...Child upset then I am

239 day and she was so sad, then I'd, it would probably have the reverse effect on

...feeling upset / crying

240 me as well, you know I am giving her my upbeat, but if she could just be sad all

...bringing only positivity t

241 the time, I coul-, then it could probably be quite draining for me (*sniff,*

8/9

...enjoy the work

242 *pause,*
mouth sound) but I think cos I don't get that response back I get a lot of

...positive feelings ab

243 positivity back, but that's what's made it so much more enjoyable (*sniff*) so

...feeling good when

244 yeah (*laugh*) (=R: thank you).

...works for me

Appendix R: Coding Systems for Participants

Bella

Code System
- Ending of relationships
  - feelings about ending
  - not wanting a future relationship with another child
  - wanting to stop being a 1:1 after the end
  - what next for the child?
  - what next for me?
- Beliefs
  - about self
  - about children
  - about (other) SEN/D children
  - about the job /what others said about the job
  - about how things happen
- In the relationship
  - sacrifice of self
    - its all on me
    - impact on family?
    - health
    - feeling guilty about things for me
    - doing things that are hard for me, for the child
    - keeping hard feelings in
    - dont want to let her down
  - "positivity"
    - it is "positive"
    - bringing only positivity to relationship
  - length of relationship
  - caring
  - similarities between child and self
  - sympathy
  - being attached
  - she is like my child

Code System
- Feelings
  - loss
    - loss of the relationship
    - personal loss
  - anxiety
  - emotions in response to work
    - positive feelings
      - happy
      - positive feelings about the relationship
      - enjoy the work
      - excitement
    - thinking/feeling outside of work / afterwards
    - it doesn't upset me
    - feeling good when things are not bad
    - makes me feel better
    - "emotional"
    - frustrating when can't help
    - feeling upset / crying
  - "bad days"
    - "bad days" for the child
    - not being able to help on a "bad day"
    - Child upset then I am upset
    - but it's not that bad
      - it doesn't happen a lot
    - getting better
  - Benefits/positives of what I do
    - "rewarding"
    - Career
    - works for me
    - family

- Separation / Together
  - managing separation
  - feeling the need to be with the child
  - wanting to stay with child in future
- Knowing the child
  - "knowing" the child
  - Not knowing
- Progress
  - supporting a child
  - progress makes me feel good
  - seeing progress up close
  - progress because of me
  - future progress

Mina

Code System
- Personal experiences and c
  - family in education rol
  - child with communicati
  - loss of mother
  - sharing emotions with
  - meeting people with e
  - family noticing
  - family members with SE
- Beliefs
  - about self
  - about children
  - about doing "good" w
    - doing something "
    - others seeing "goo
    - making sure child i
  - about contributing to
  - about what others may
  - about parents of indivi
  - about people with SEN
    - view of need / diffe
    - what we need to d
    - what is going to ha
    - what is going to ha
    - thoughts about wo
  - feeling "special"
    - feeling appreciated
    - managing challenges
  - doing something for o
    - for the child
    - for the community
  - feedback on work
    - you're so good wit
    - always happy / nev
    - he is different for me
- Separation / Together
  - want to be with him
  - missing him
  - feeling lost without hi
  - apart during the holid
  - what may be different
  - returning / reuniting
  - appreciating time with

Code System
- Role
  - Responsibility
  - relationship with parent
    - buildiing the relationship
    - feelings of the parent
    - when it is "difficult"
    - "good working relationship"
  - knowing what the role is
    - views on 1:1 roles
    - challenge for 1:1
    - wanting to do more than 1:1 / c
    - what is 1:1
  - more than a Teaching Assistant
  - Teaching Assistant - Teacher differer
  - what you do for the child
  - Expectations of self
  - what makes it easier
- Endings / Beginnings
  - starting work together
  - my new beginning
  - a future ending with the child
  - feelings about ending
- In the relationship
  - anticipating problems
  - independence in the relationship
  - expectations of the relationship
  - what is the relationship?
  - communication in relationship
    - communicating expectations
    - working with a child with comm
  - different stages in relationship

- Feelings
  - emotions in relationship
    - my emotions
    - child's emotions
  - what is going well with the child in the rship
  - length of relationship
  - bond / attachment?
  - parent-child
- Feelings
  - thinking about work outside of work
  - "comfortable"
  - "worry"
  - what makes me feel better
  - don't mind
  - guilty
  - bored
  - when work is challenging
  - isolated
  - good feelings
  - talking about the work to someone
- Benefits/positives of what I do
  - routine/knowing is comfortable
  - Rewarding
- Knowing / understanding the child
  - knowing / understanding
  - Not knowing
- Progress
  - home/school progress
  - when difference is good
  - when work is no longer challenging
  - progress makes me feel good
  - seeing progress

Aya

Jenna

- Code System
  - other relationships
    - relationships with other educators
      - hierarchy and power
        - separation in Teaching Assistant / Teacher
        - decisions without Teaching Assistants
        - teaching assistants
        - teachers
      - emotions in different relationships
      - role and contribution understood by other educators
      - speaking/listening to other TAs experiences
      - positive relationships
        - with teachers generally
        - getting help
        - working together
      - difficult relationships
        - relief when it was over
        - things have changed
        - working in uncertainty
        - hope for better
        - speaking up
        - trying to seek help in the relationship
        - seeking help from others
        - walking away from conflict
        - being shouted at
        - conflict with colleague
    - working with parents
      - managing parents needs
      - emotions in relation to parents
      - feeling part of the family
      - dependence of parents
      - emotions of parents
  - Personal experiences impacting role
    - how this connects with work
    - childhood / experiences of education
      - not being helped
      - being given up on
    - family

- Role
  - defining a changing role
  - feedback to the children
    - reminders / prompts
    - praise
    - a new day
  - perseverence
  - when it is all going off
  - the needs of the children
    - types of needs experienced
      - toileting need
      - emotional needs
      - physical needs
    - others not understanding needs
    - not feeling supported to meet need
    - difference at specialist provision
    - when not able to meet needs
  - the behaviour of the children
    - behaviour when anxious
    - visible behaviour of children
    - quiet behaviour
  - interest in role
- Endings and change
  - Own aspirations and changes
    - future transitions
      - with parents
      - with children
    - where I want to be
  - coping with his absence
    - getting used to change
    - not being missed
    - seeing him since leaving
    - missing him
  - transition of the child to another settin
    - responsibility / letting go / bittersw
    - raising concerns in transition
    - feedback from others
    - miscommunication
    - seeing positives for the child
    - difficult feelings about the transition
    - feeling good about the transition

- boundaries and expectations
  - affection in the relationship
  - emotional responses to boundaries
  - not engaging with certain responses
  - he knows he won't get anywhere
- Feelings
  - exciting
  - relief
  - questioning self / doubt
  - worry
  - wanted to be appreciated / noticed / valued
  - defeat
  - exhausting
  - worthwhile
  - why am i doing this?
  - both/and times noticed in descriptions of feelings
  - defensive / protective
  - worry
    - worry when not in
    - less worry when feeling others will be there
  - proud
  - amazement / wow
  - hard
  - frustration
    - with self
    - with the needs/support for children
    - in relation to experience with a child
    - with others
  - rollercoaster/up and down
  - thinking/feeling outside of work / afterwards
- Progress
  - progress in the relationship
  - small steps of progress
  - not making progress
  - progress/regress
  - worked so hard for progress
  - child belief in progress
    - not my child but...