An Action Research Study of Organisational Change through the Implementation of
Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP)

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Declaration of Original Authorship

I can confirm that this thesis is my own work and the use of material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged

Oliver Ward

Abstract

An action research approach was utilised to explore practitioner change at an organisational level within Alternative Provision (AP). My overarching aim was to ascertain to what degree I, as a senior member of staff working within a Pupil Referral Unit, a form of Alternative Provision, could develop the reflective practice of my colleagues so that they are able to effectively enact principles aligned with Attachment and Trauma-Informed Practice (ATIP). Research relevant to both Alternative Provision and ATIP are currently poorly represented in the research literature, emphasising the value of this research.

The research consisted of two phases, gathering data gained from interviews with colleagues, both individually and as part of a focus group. To support practitioner consideration of their practice, regular supervision sessions and structured reflective models were implemented for all staff. A Model of Reflective Practice was developed, which offered the most important factors that impact reflective practice relevant for the staff working within the organisation. This avenue of investigation was developed further during the second phase, through reframing decision making as agentic choice and a focus on the importance of practitioner values. The Ecological Model of Staff Agency was presented with which to more accurately conceptualise and guide practitioner decision making. This model amended previous iterations through the explicit addition of both the importance of personal factors and the consideration of multiple possible agentic outcomes.

The research showed that the systems implemented across the organisation had some successes in the development of practitioner reflective practice and thus instigating change on an organisational level. However, this impact was noticeably inconsistent, with clear discrepancy across the wider staff team practice. This was hypothesised to be due to the relatively short time frame of the research, as well as the unique challenge that working in AP requires with regard to strongly held beliefs of practitioners and the impact that such a high level of relational support necessitates. The planned next phase of the research will focus efforts on developing individual reflective capacity to ensure greater alignment between espoused values and tangible practice.

Contents

Index of Figures and Tables

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Structure of this Research

This research was designed to ascertain how effectively I, as a member of my Senior Leadership Team, could promote the consistent use of principles of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) in staff practice within Alternative Provision, specifically within the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in which I am still employed.

Due to the fact that my own professional role was integral to the management and monitoring of the introduction in the PRU of ATIP principles, it is important to recognise that I was intrinsically embedded with both the research and the professional aspects of this process. As such, this research differed somewhat in comparison to traditional research observed within the field of Education, utilising an Action Research methodology to provide a framework to underpin this study. Therefore, despite many aspects that align closely with more traditional research designs, there were certain methodological considerations and differences to the status quo.

As Action Research is inherently value-laden, due to its highly contextual relationship with evidence gathering, it was important to be explicit about my own values as a comparison and to guide the overarching analysis of success throughout the research. Action research emphasises personal reflection; as such, the perspective was provided from my own point of view, eschewing more traditional formal 'objective' narrative style and instead developed around a somewhat unorthodox first-person approach, firmly placing myself at the heart of the research.

The other major difference for this research is that instead of following a typical 'all-encompassing' style of research design, this study utilised different cycles of research, each building on the findings from the previous. This means that the research resembled a series of smaller, discrete, research studies, containing their own literature review, results and analyses sections. Action Research is discussed in much more depth in Section 2, but the principle of such a design can be seen in Figure 1 below:
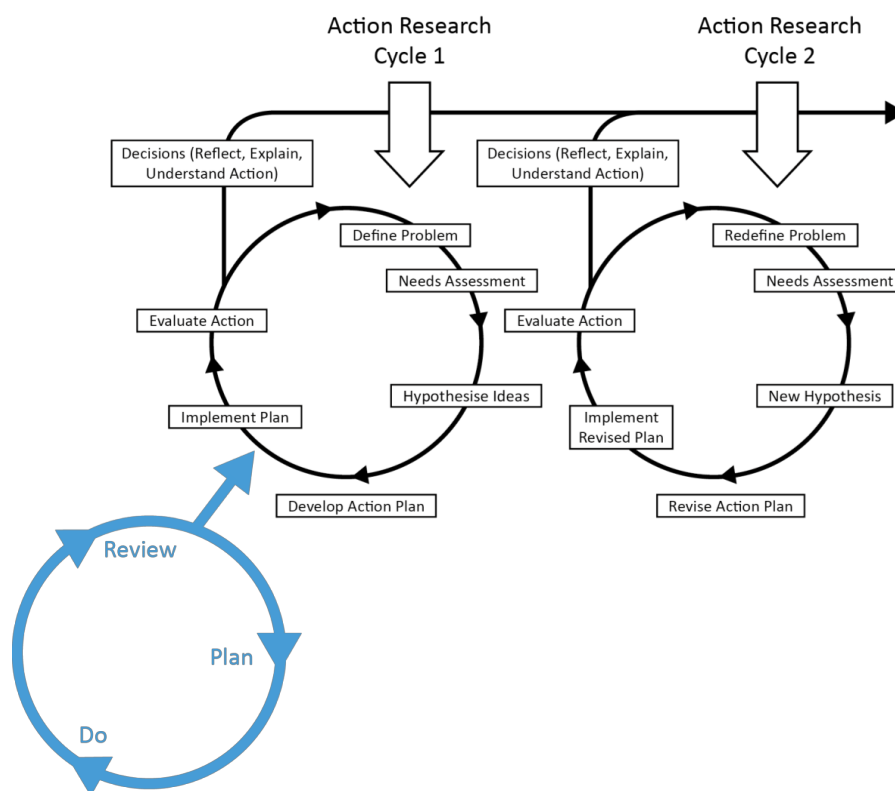
Figure 1: Diagram Showing Proposed Action Research Cycle Process

(Baumfield, Hall & Wall, 2008, p.5)

As Action Research utilises a first-person, insider, narrative it was essential for myself to offer clarity around my own personal worldview; such honesty is a necessary step to increase research validity and reduce any opportunity for hidden bias to negatively impact research findings. Therefore, for the first part of this introduction, it was necessary to provide a summary of my own background, including a focus on my own personal values, beliefs and experiences relating to both relevant wider research literature and professional practice. I then detail the rationale for the study, both in terms of theoretical perspectives and professional context, before offering my overarching Research Question.

1.2 My Journey

After completion of my PGCE in Secondary Mathematics in 2005, I decided to eschew the type of academically prosperous school favoured by the rest of my cohort and sign up to work in a relatively small mixed comprehensive (approximately 700 pupils) that drew its

intake from a 'council estate' consisting predominately of social housing. This area is located on the periphery of a major city of the South Coast, sufficiently isolated to be omitted from significant infrastructure planning and populated by families who have witnessed little in the way of migration, exposed to high levels of intergenerational needs. Not only did the cohort experience high levels of social disadvantage in the community, with rates of Free School Meals (FSM) reaching up to 48%, it was also subject to the deleterious influence of what has been described as 'working-class underachievement' (see Gazeley, 2010, Reay, 2006). The decision regarding my choice of school was a surprise to my peers; however, since embarking on my teacher training, my preference had always erred this direction. My own upbringing was strongly defined and associated with proud notions of working-class values of community, close relationships, and the importance of working hard to provide for your family. I was born in a council estate, into a very large extended family of blue-collar workers and homemakers; my grandmother was the matriarch of the estate and the landlady of the local Public House, my uncles and my Father labourers, electricians, plumbers and mechanics, and I the first of my family to attend University. Despite a move during my childhood to the suburbs and more middle-class surroundings, those values inhabited by my family never left me and shaped my own personal values growing up. I strongly felt the desire to embolden pupils who came from a background similar to mine, in order to open up the possibilities in their lives. I was fortunate enough to have adults who showed the potential of learning as its own reward, rather than something that it is simply done to satisfy others and I wanted to be able to offer such an insight to the pupils at this school that perhaps lacked an otherwise guiding figure. I also felt that at a school in such an area, there is the possibility of making more of an impact in many different domains of their development, not just academic.

I became interested that a prominent attainment gap existed across the social and economic strata, so started studying toward an M.A. in Education. I specifically researched the relationship between disadvantage and educational outcomes, hoping to find underpinning rationale to explain this different and interventions that could be implemented to 'close the gap'. In deliberating a focus, I acknowledged the prevalence of behavioural difficulties exhibited by the pupils at the school, compared to those in my PGCE training placements, which were situated in much more affluent communities, a consideration reinforced by research (see van Oort et al., 2011). Such difficulties, including behaviours such as aggression, refusing to comply and disruption (Hamill & Boyd, 2002), previously described

as 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties' (BESD) have now been designated as 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' (SEMH) needs in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2014).

I thought it useful to choose an overarching measure of a pupil's ability to cope with stressful situations and still thrive, thus not exhibiting such poorly adjusted behaviour: as such, for my MA thesis I decided to study the concept of *resilience*. Whilst a definitive definition is somewhat nebulous (see Tedeschi and Kilmer, 2005), studying resilience provided the impetus for me to appreciate that supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds would be an incredibly complex task that would not be solved by a 'silver bullet', single intervention. It brought to my attention the work of a range of ground-breaking researchers responsible for showing how individual differences play a significant role in developmental outcomes (e.g., Rutter, 2002; Bourdieu, 1977; Masten, 2001). I also adopted a preference for using the Ecological-Systems Model (Brofenbrenner, 1979 – See Figure 2) as a method of understanding of how developmental trajectories are formed: such a framework suggests that human development is a result of a balance of risk vs. protective factors over the life course at different levels, taking into consideration the transactional relationship between genes and environment (see Masten, 2007).
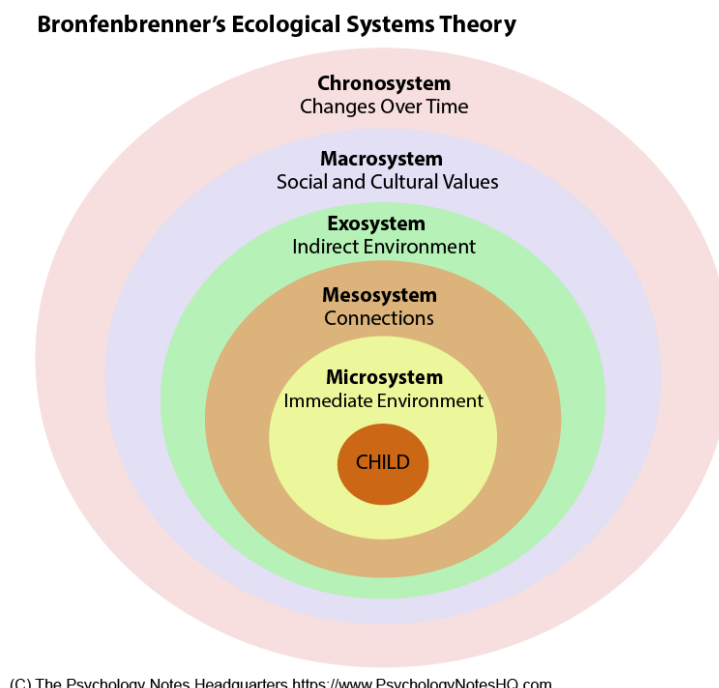
Figure 2: Ecological Systems Model (Brofenbrenner, 1979)

I elected to utilise this model, as although seemingly simple in design, it works effectively to instigate discussion regarding individual cases' development over time and allows the consideration of any potential factors that may impact outcomes. It serves as a person-centred way in which to discuss the reasons that underpin behavioural symptoms while simultaneously looking forward and acting as a preventative tool to stop such symptoms occurring in the future. Various risk and protective factors can be highlighted depending on the case, within a range of domains, from psychological to sociological, completed as part of a systemic process, enabling practitioners from different domains to have input as part of a multi-agency approach. This conceptualisation had a profound effect on my thinking; it strengthened my belief that the key to best support pupils and thus improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is to provide greater clarity regarding the specific factors underpinning the exhibition of poor behavioural adjustment and thus be able to design and offer effective relevant interventions.

To further develop my understanding further, I left my teaching post and enrolled on a full time M.Phil. in Education & Psychology. My studies focussed on the association between neuroscience, child behaviour and wider trends, both in terms of psychological and sociological outcomes. Continuing to develop my understanding pertaining to SEMH, my thesis focussed on examining the cognitive pathways through which stress leads to unproductive behaviours and starting to realise possible interventions that could be utilised in order to best support children and families. I became increasingly aware of the gap between theory and practice, with much of the research literature offering scientific rationale that offered objective narrative, but frustratingly minimal evidence of contextual factors. The lack of awareness or discussion relating to personal characteristics or including the people involved was of particular frustration.

Upon completion of this course, I took a role at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), where I have been employed now for over 6 years. The nature of the centre, providing education for pupils who have exhibited significant disruptive and unproductive behaviours previously, has offered many opportunities to enact best practice based on the huge breadth of research evidence gained during my academic studies. I offer more detail regarding the context of the centre and its importance to this research in the next section.

As a summation, this research was built upon personal beliefs and assumptions that have been developed during my journey to this point:

- That theoretical conceptualisations were important but should not constitute an exhaustive element of research. It was important to me that this research produced tangible improvement in staff practice, with the overall aim of indirectly producing positive outcomes for the pupils.

- That practitioners will bring expertise and lived experience from their individual backgrounds, both personal and professional.

- That although I recognise the efficaciousness of previous research, I believe along with experience, context plays a significant role in determining how practitioners best enact interventions in practice, i.e., staying true to the maxim 'Everything works somewhere; nothing works everywhere' (William, 2018).

- As experts in their context, practitioners should be afforded the appropriate levels of *trust* necessary to make such an informed decision.

- Finally, that practitioners will ultimately always want the best outcomes for the pupils in their care and that practice to the contrary should be assumed not to be a deliberate enactment with the aim to actively 'worsen' the situation.

1.3 Rationale for Study: Gap in the Literature

In choosing to undertake this research, I elected to align it closely with two aspects of professional practice. The first was associated with the paucity of current research literature regarding pupils who are not educated within mainstream schooling; as such, I wished to add to the evidence base in this area, most specifically regarding pupils who have been excluded from mainstream. The second related to the installation and use of trauma-informed practices by the staff team within the centre. When I started this research, such practices were utilised more commonly within mental health services (i.e., CAMHS) and were very rare within the wider education system and not observed at all within the Local Authority. During the time during which my research has taken place, awareness of such practices has become increasingly evident within the wider world of Education in the UK, forming an aspect of some professional teacher training curricula (i.e., University of Reading). Trauma informed considerations have become so well known in some spheres, albeit in a very misunderstood

manner, that they provide an ongoing topic expedient for public discussion; one prominent example is the frequent raising of such practices on social media by Edu-Twitter luminaries such as Tom Bennett, the founder of the ResearchEd organisation and 'Behaviour Tsar' of the current administration. Despite such an increase in publicity, I believe that there still remains a lack of accuracy in what constitutes trauma-informed practice, in tangible terms. I also believe that there is still a schism between the awareness of such practices and how they might be enacted in practice, so it was my aim to develop to the current limited evidence base beyond the more theoretical academic perspective and toward a more functional use for such practices.

Taking both in tandem, it is my understanding that no research currently exists that aims integrate these two foci, providing a clear contribution to knowledge.

1.3.1 Attachment & Trauma Informed Practices (ATIP)

When our Headteacher began at the end of the academic year 2016/17, we were utilising a behaviour management philosophy underpinned by behaviourist principles of rewards and sanctions. At this point, we were still using Fixed Term Exclusions (now called Suspensions) as our main form of consequence; however, despite their increasing frequency, our internal data showed this was not modifying pupil behaviour; it felt that we were 'sticking plasters over wounds', instead of 'healing the infection'. With this in mind, we began to theorise a framework that could provide effective support, one that underpinned every possible facet of our pupil's development to support them to be not only survive adversity but thrive. We understood that the reason the pupils were placed with us was due to the exhibition of poor self-regulation or other deficit or atypical functioning in the emotional or cognitive domains. We initially considered having different staff members become well trained in specialist areas, to support the range of different needs of the pupils, e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). However, rather than implement a series of initiatives that would target need on an individual basis, we recognised the high incidence of co-morbidity between different underlying causes of the impaired functioning, so we wanted an approach that could most efficaciously provide the best outcomes for *all* our pupils.

We decided to introduce a pedagogical approach underpinned by Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP), based on the principles of Trauma Informed Care (TIC), defined as:

> *An organisational change process that is structured around the process that everyone in the agency may have been directly or indirectly exposed to trauma within their lifetime (Wolf et al., 2014, p.111).*

Trauma is the 'inability to respond in a healthy way to acute or chronic stress' (Woolpow et al., 2009, p.2); experiencing stressful situations without being able to utilise effective coping strategies will result in deleterious outcomes, with the pupil exhibiting either internalised or externalised responses to such events (Compas, 2006). This stress response system is triggered whenever the body is subject to a stressful situation, releasing stress hormones (e.g., cortisol), activating the flight / fight / freeze response. Continual activation causes cells to atrophy and impairs the functioning in important parts of the brain, the Pre-Frontal Cortex (PfC) and Hippocampus; this is known as the allostatic load (McEwen, 2005). This was integral to my interest for two reasons: the first was that disadvantage led to build-up of risk factors that were all potential causes of stress to families and children. Secondly, the Hippocampus and PfC are integral to the development of memory and executive functioning (EF) (see Bridgett et al., 2015). EF, described as more strongly associated with school readiness than IQ (Blair & Razza, 2007), has a direct impact on academic learning as well as the behavioural aspect of being a pupil. It is an overarching set of neurological processes that are responsible for working memory, problem solving, cognitive flexibility and self-regulation (Diamond & Lee, 2011). It is recognised within an ATIP system that not all stress will be considered traumatic but that it is the pervasive stress that is high in severity that can be classed as trauma and may include diverse experiences such as poverty, parental separation, bereavement, experiencing bullying and being disabled.

The use of an ATIP approach has been introduced at all levels within the organisation, as recommended by Wiest-Stevenson and Lee (2016), incorporating a commitment to work with families and community partners. While in no way a panacea, ATIP offers a system to make sense of and provide effective support for children and families to develop coping mechanisms in the face of such increasingly pervasive stress. It is a system of care that seeks to offer detailed knowledge of the way in which trauma can influence behaviour, as well as offering practical and efficacious interventions to help promote the best possible outcomes

(Butler et al., 2011; NCTSN, 2013). It facilitates the adult's ability to assess a specific incident, understand the reasons underpinning the behaviour, problem solve with all stakeholders (including pupils and parents), improve their own skills as well as those of and pupils, for mutual development and better outcomes. Key aspects integral to ATIP include, but are not limited to, an understanding of the neuroscience of development and executive functioning, emotion coaching, the importance of language and utilising strengths-based and solution focussed techniques, as well as proactive strategies and de-escalation techniques. The ATIP approach functions as the antithesis of an approach that relies on a system of extrinsic reward and punishment with which to modify behaviour that forms the foundation of many schools' behaviour management processes. The pupil has experienced a lifetime of such systems, which have not functioned effectively in modifying their behaviour, hence their transition to a PRU. The aim is to develop the breadth and quality of the 'tools' in one's 'toolbox', as to provide the appropriate skills to prove as successful as possible in the circumstances. Not only does such a system offer strategies and understanding of the pupil's development and behaviour, but it also promotes the need for staff to recognise their own wellbeing, impacted by Secondary Trauma (Knight, 2018), the stress experienced when working with other exhibiting symptoms of their own trauma.

There has been a great deal of research completed (e.g., Berger & Quiros, 2016; Harris & Fallot, 2001; Goodman et al., 2016) that recognises that to prove effective, ATIP is be developed around five key areas: *trust, safety, empowerment, choice and collaboration*. Through these foci, ATIP aims to improve staff practice in two key competencies. The first is reflective practice, defined as the 'the engagement in purposeful and critical analysis of one's knowledge and experience, with the aim of accessing deeper meaning and understanding' (Calvert et al., 2016, p.2). The second is relational competence, defined as 'to relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and communities' (Rodolfa et al., 2005, p.351), improving interpersonal engagement skills (Fouad et al., 2009). ATIP principles have been shown to improve pupil behaviour and performance, while reducing teacher stress and frequency of exclusions (Oehlberg, 2008).

During the first phase of our ATIP journey, lasting eighteen months between September 2017 and May 2018, we bought in a specialist training provider to offer five ATIP INSET days. We also decided to run mandatory weekly supervision sessions, with each one having an ATIP theme relating to a topic or issue that had arisen over the week and journals with the

explicit remit to promote reflective practice, through an ATIP lens. The impact of that journey has been revelatory: staff wellbeing improved over time, measured on a half termly basis via anonymous self-report questionnaires completed by all staff. Our understanding of why pupils exhibit certain behaviour always improved, rationalising our reactions through our knowledge, and so making our interventions more effective and become less perniciously impacted by secondary trauma. In surveys and during pupil specific briefings, staff recorded that they feel better equipped to problem solve and manage unproductive behaviour and take responsibility for personal wellbeing. Pupil behaviour reduced in severity over time, according to internal documentation, despite an increase on roll, with anecdotal evidence that staff felt more empowered to make mistakes and attempt new strategies without the feeling of pending admonishment. Pupils provided termly feedback regarding the development of positive relationships, particularly regarding the exhibition of empathic listening, patience and support with any personal issues that may arise. The main mechanism through which ATIP principles are developed into organisational culture is via trauma-informed supervision, mandatory to all staff and held on a weekly basis.

However, despite such experiencing such positive outcomes in our PRU, ATIP in Education is still relatively rare; although there are a small number of specialist provision sites (e.g., Mulberry Bush School), most of the work around ATIP principles are spearheaded by Virtual Schools, focussed on specific pupils, rather than whole site practice. Also, much of the relevant research literature originates in North America, with few specific case studies incorporating a British cultural and policy background. The implementation of ATIP within Education has the promise of further consideration, given not only the theoretical evidence associating with literature pertaining to stress and coping, but also the burgeoning personal anecdotal experience. Section Two offers a much more comprehensive consideration of ATIP principles.

1.3.2 Professional Context - Pupil Referral Units

Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to provide education to all pupils and most have opted to utilise PRUs to educate pupils that have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools (see Brown, 2013). They are the most frequent form of Alternative Provision (AP) (McCluskey et al., 2015), designed to offer temporary support for the pupil,

with the aim for them to reintegrate back to another mainstream provision (see Ofsted, 2007). Many of the pupils who attend PRUs have been placed there due to exhibiting significant unproductive behaviours associated with deficits in regulation pertaining to SEMH dysregulation and deficits. Various researchers (i.e., Gilbert, 2008; de Jong and Griffiths, 2006) have described that PRUs are more able to effectively support this cohort, as they are able to provide a more flexible and bespoke learning environment necessary to provide positive outcomes, which can include amongst others an increased sense of agency regarding curriculum content, smaller class sizes and an intensive level of specialist pastoral support not usually found in mainstream schools.

The national data for Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions show both rates rising over time (see DfE, 2022a), indicating an increasing issue regarding the number of pupils that require Alternative Provision. Anecdotally, we have experienced an increase not only in the number of referrals but also the severity of the behaviours exhibited over time. Austerity measures, introduced after the Coalition Government was formed in 2010, led to the most notable decline in educational funding for more than 30 years (Belfield et al., 2017), alongside significant rises in child poverty (JRF, 2017). This in turn was associated with an increase in the prevalence of children requiring recognition from either Children's Services (DfE, 2022b) or mental health professionals (Burt, 2016), themselves negatively impacted due to related funding cuts. Parents were often lacking the support they required to effectively cope with the stressors introduced by such cuts, including poor quality housing (Ackerman et al., 2004) and household chaos (Coley et al., 2015). In this way, poverty has indirectly impacted the child (Goodman et al., 2005), with parents becoming less attuned to their children (Feldman, 2015), correlated to greater use of authoritarian caregiving (Blair et al., 2011 and decreasing their responsiveness and consistency when dealing with behaviour (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Ultimately, it seems that familial hardship and the associated increase in stress is being transferred down to the children, in the form of dysregulation stemming from a lack of emotional and social development.

Our PRU is located on the South Coast and serves a community that varies hugely demographically; the area covers the largest disparity in wealth in the whole county, the largest of which is between just half a mile in distance, with high levels of unemployment, social disadvantage, and criminal activity. As one might expect, the PRU has very high levels of social deprivation, measured through the high proportion of pupils (66%) eligible for Free

School Meals (FSM) and close involvement with both the Police, through the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Childrens' Services, indicative of the high level of need within the area. In our centre, we have two sections, educating just 70 pupils out of a potential total of over 10,000 in the area: one for Emotional and Vulnerable (EV) pupils, who are often school refusers, with a significant degree of anxiety related internalising behaviour. The other section is for the type of externalising behaviour synonymous with PRUs, e.g., poor regulation skills, anger issues, impulsivity, often exhibiting physical and verbal aggression. In my personal experience, staff working at PRUs offer a foundation of holistic care for some of the most vulnerable children and families in their respective local areas, often acting as the bridge between social care and education necessary for pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Despite the important work completed at PRUs to support the most vulnerable pupils in the educational ecosystem, a recent Government investigation (DfE, 2017) highlighted the lack of evidence base associated with AP. PRUs have an essential role to play in supporting some of the most vulnerable pupils in society and as such, require greater focus with regards to developing improved support mechanisms and effective pathways for pupil development. Although it is recognised that this investigation may not be able to offer replicability in other similar provisions, it will provide our staff with the opportunity to improve their practice, while contributing ideas to share with colleagues and consideration of how to further develop a positive narrative around PRUs and the excellent, unheralded work that they complete on a regular basis.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

This research was designed to assess how effectively the principles and processes of Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) could be implemented within the newly administered 'sister' site of my PRU. Ravitch and Riggan (2017) highlight that it is necessary to offer effective rationale why this particular topic matters, while Marshall and Rossman (2016) posit that it is important to clearly offer a 'solid rationale' that must show how I intend to study 'instances of a larger phenomenon' (p.6); both of these will be covered within this section, as part of the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework should be formed of three sources (Crawford, 2020). The first is *experience*, meaning it is relevant to myself, but also others in the field. The topic of this research has a high degree of personal interest, both personally and professionally; it also has the potential to offer significant appeal to others in similar contexts. The second is *literature*, ensuring that there is sufficient and appropriate existing research relevant to the research focus. In this instance, there exists a multitude of such literature from contexts outside of Education which offers scope for this research to offer a unique contribution to knowledge. The third and final source is the *theoretical framework*; the focus of this research was practitioner change and the degree to which actions align with ATIP values and processes. Over the course of the research, the foci changed from reflective practice to staff agency, but throughout there existed a clear utilisation of a theoretical framework – of reflective practice and staff agency - with which to consider findings within the organisation.

1.5 Plan for Research & Research Question

During the Summer Term of 2018, our Local Authority, encouraged by the success we have experienced at the centre over the last two years, including receiving a 'Good' OFSTED inspection grade, asked us to take on the management of a nearby PRU. Despite the relatively short notice, we made plans to export our successes to the new site, which included the sharing and introduction of ATIP principles. My professional role, as a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was to oversee the introduction of ATIP principles at the new site. While we had previous anecdotal evidence of positive association between ATIP and outcomes, this was the ideal opportunity to more formally complete research and as such formed the foundation of my thesis allowed the completion of research of some professional and personal importance.

Therefore, the aim of this research was to most effectively introduce, implement and monitor the introduction of ATIP principles in our new site, promoting staff development and upskilling practice. Due to the nature of PRUs, with frequent changes in cohort throughout the year, it was not deemed appropriate or applicable to identify and analyse the outcomes of specific pupils who may only remain on roll for a short period of time. Instead, it was decided that the focus would be on the staff, theorising that pupils would be the direct beneficiaries of prospective change in practice.

The research focuses on developing change in practice across the new team, aligning them with ATIP principles. Thus, the overarching research question can be summarised as:

'How effectively can I develop the skills and knowledge of the new staff team, so they are effectively utilising ATIP principles?'

The first cycle of research had a focus on assessing and understanding reflective practice of the staff team, as the primary mechanism and theorisation with which to understand change in practitioner actions. Therefore, the research question for Cycle One related specifically to how well I was able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP principles. The findings gained from Cycle One suggested that staff agency was the most suitable theorisation moving forward with which to understand such practitioner change. Therefore, the research question for Cycle Two focussed on how well I was able to promote the sense of staff agency necessary to develop their actions aligned with ATIP principles.

1.6 Organisation of Thesis

As described in Section 1.1, this thesis utilised an Action Research methodology, based around cycles of investigation. The thesis offers a summary of the research literature for both ATIP (Section 2) and Action Research (Section 3), both of which provide the underpinning foundations for the whole thesis and thus sit outside of such cycles.

The first cycle of investigation - Cycle One (Section 4) – details research literature pertaining to reflective practice and supervision as means to support organisational adherence to utilising ATIP principles. Colleagues working at the PRU were interviewed using semi-structured interviews, focusing on their understanding of reflective practice. The data gained during the interviews supported the development of a model of reflective practice, specific to

the context of the PRU. This Ecological Model of Reflective Practice recognised the breadth of factors that influence decision making by colleagues, across a range of domains and at different levels.

The second and final cycle of investigation – Cycle Two (Section 5) – offers a literature review of how the construct of agency can be utilised to interpret decision making, while detailing the specific intervention that was designed to support staff to utilise reflective practice more effectively, through the use of refined reflective prompts. As with the previous cycle, interviews were utilised to obtain data from which the Model of Staff Agency was developed. This model further refined the findings from the previous cycle, offering more explicit recognition of contextual factors and the introduction of a temporal aspect of reflective practice.

The Conclusion (Section 6) then summarises the four main research findings, offering a holistic interpretation of the work completed, personal reflections, an assessment of the relative success of the investigation, as well as describing any weakness in the research design and possibilities for future improvements.

2.0 Literature Review: Trauma Informed Practice

This research describes the development and utilisation of Trauma Informed Practice in the provision in which I am still employed. This section of the report provides a detailed literature review relating to such practice, including the history of such research and the rationale of moving to use such practice, what such development entails, both from an organisational and practitioner perspective, as well as offering an account of any limitations relating to such development.

2.1 Trauma

2.1.1 History of Trauma Research & Definition

Current understanding of trauma originated in the field of Psychotherapy popularised during the late 19th Century, where it was theorised to play a key role in understanding how early experiences manifested as psychological issues (Friedman et al., 2007; Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, 2007; Monson et al., 2007). Despite such prominence during this period, the recognition of the association diminished considerably until the late 1970's, spurred on by efforts to provide support to both veterans returning from the Vietnam War and women and children impacted by sexual abuse and domestic violence (Courtois & Gold, 2009). The United States have been a prominent advocate of trauma-based research since this era; in the 1990's the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) recognised the role of trauma on women's issues (Wilson et al., 2013) and in 2001 established the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) in order to explore how trauma can be alleviated through the use of specific interventions on an organisational and system level (Taylor & Siegfried, 2005).

For the purposes of this research, the definition of trauma provided by SAMHSA will be utilised, offered below.

> '*Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individuals' functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being*' (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 7)

I believe it most appropriately incorporates the manner in which holistic development can be impacted by negative events. It also recognises the importance of how such events are *experienced* and buffered by any protective factors available, associated with the literature on coping described in Section 1.3.1 (see Hamoudi et al., 2015).

The research literature recognises the difference between two types of trauma (NCTSN, 2006). *Acute* trauma is described as an event that is 'short-lived' but significantly impactful, such as a natural disaster, experiencing an act of terrorism or loss of a loved one. Historically, trauma-based diagnoses in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were allocated on the basis of experience of and reaction to such events (Knight, 2018). *Complex* trauma recognises the pervasive and pernicious nature caused by experiencing often multiple risk factors over an extended period (Wolpow et al., 2009) and as such 'trauma' is often utilised in conjunction and interchangeably with the terms 'stress', 'toxic', 'chronic' and 'adverse' (Chafouleas et al 2016, p146). Research such as the Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACES) (Felliti, et al., 1998) and the World Health Organisation Mental Health Surveys (Magruder et al., 2016) have offered valuable insight into the prevalence and causes of complex trauma. Once considered to be rare and even beyond typical development trajectories (APA, 1980), it has been proven that many childhoods have experienced pervasive stress, often in a cumulative manner, co-morbid across different domains (see Berliner & Kolko, 2016; Finkelhor et al., 2009). The ACES study illustrated that approximately 60% of adults had experienced trauma in their childhood (Felliti, et al., 1998); this figure is even higher for certain demographics, with youth from ethnic minorities experiencing higher incidence of trauma (Baglivio et al., 2015; Lawrence & Hesse, 2010) and a close association between traumatic experiences and both youth in detention facilities (see Ford et al., 2012) and youth seeking mental health counselling (Lang et al., 2010). Although it is impossible to produce an exhaustive list of adverse experiences, notable causes of complex trauma include physical, emotional or sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty, familial mental illness, lack of support, discrimination, physical health issues and household dysfunction (Berliner & Kolko, 2016; Cook et al., 2005; Courtois & Gold, 2009; Felitti et al. 1998; Felitti & Anda, 2009; Lieberman & Knorr, 2007; Middlebrooks & Audage, 2007)

Traumatic experiences can have a long lasting and deleterious impact on holistic functioning throughout the life course. Childhood traumatic experiences have been associated with atypical trajectories in the core domains of affective, behavioural and relational development

(Cook et al. 2005; Lieberman et al. 2011). As described in Section 1.3.1, chronic stress can lead to prolonged activation of the stress response system (Alexander, 2019; Craig, 2008; Frydman & Mayor, 2017), which leads to executive dysfunction and impairments in key facets of development such as planning, decision making working memory, self-regulation and impulse control (Cook et al., 2017; Shonkoff et al., 2012; Van Dam et al., 2018). Such impaired development is manifested over time externally, with the child exhibiting disruptive behaviours, aggression, defiance, poor self-esteem, poor emotional literacy and a lack of self-regulation skills (Alexander, 2019; Bellis et al., 2018; Cole et al., 2005; Craig, 2008; Delaney-Black et al., 2002; Ford et al., 2006; Frydman & Mayor, 2017; Perfect et al., 2016; Wolpow et al., 2016). Unfortunately, such behaviours are also closely associated with poor academic performance (Delaney-Black et al., 2002; Grogger, 1997; Hurt et al., 2001), increased risk of suspension and absenteeism (Bellis et al., 2018; Delaney-Black et al., 2002). Longer term impacts can be described in even more unfavourable terms, with traumatic experiences closely associated with a significant risk of substance misuse, unemployment, incarceration, as well as mental and physical illness, such as an increased likelihood as being diagnosed with an eating disorder, personality disorder, psychosis, chronic pain and dissociative disorder (Brown et al., 2005; Courtois & Gold, 2009; Goldberg et al., 2014; Garno et al. , 2005; Magruder et al., 2015; Mulvihill, 2005; Randolph & Reddy, 2006). It is important to note the cumulative burden related to experiencing multiple traumatic experiences. There is a direct association between the number of such stresses experienced and the severity of the negative impact, with the ACES study offering that an individual who experienced six or more adverse events was likely to die 20 years earlier than a peer who had experienced no adverse events (Anda et al., 2010; Felitti et al., 1998).

Despite the prevalence of the population that have experienced such adverse events in their lives, most individuals prove themselves resilient in the face of such stress and exhibit positive outcomes (Bell et al., 2015; Miller-Graff & Howell, 2015). Scaer (2005) showed that 92% of individuals who experienced a major traumatic incident did not go on to develop negative symptoms, while Boyce and Harris (2011) observed that across two studies, 45% and 64% of participants exposed to childhood trauma did not experience negative issues later on in life. The notion of resilience, described by Wolpow and colleagues (2016) as "the ability of an individual or community to withstand and rebound from stress" (p. 14), underpins frameworks described as Trauma Informed Practice, which are designed to

counteract the negative impact of adverse experiences through notions of recovery and healing (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 1994).

2.2 Trauma Informed Practice

2.2.1 Background

As described in the previous section, adverse childhood experiences have been shown to negatively impact physical and mental health outcomes (Anda et al., 2006; Corso et al., 2008; Dube et al., 2002; Dube et al., 2006; Felitti & Anda, 2009; Felitti et al., 1998). Over the past two decades, the research literature has increasingly recognised the importance of effective strategies with which to ameliorate the pervasive cycle of trauma in society (Wolpow et al., 2009). During this time, the scope and complexity of intervention research has increased substantially (see Becker-Blease 2017; Branson et al. 2017; Hanson and Lang 2016; Lowenthal, 2020), most notably in the United States, where the NCTSN has funded significant research into possible avenues of success (Hanson & Lang, 2016). Research has been completed across various social science related fields such as psychology, mental health, public health, criminal justice and social work (Champine et al., 2018; Donisch et al., 2016; Hanson & Lang, 2016) and has also incorporated a focus on high-risk and marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities and youth involved in criminal activities (Beehler et al., 2012; Day et al., 2017; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2017; Santiago et al., 2018).

For this research, I will utilise describe such strategies as Trauma-Informed Practices, as this is the most commonly used term (Conners-Burrow et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2015); however, the literature has also previously utilised both trauma-informed systems (Conradi & Wilson, 2010; Ko et al., 2008) and trauma-informed services (Elliott et al., 2005). Trauma Informed Practice is underpinned by a recognition of the ecological manner in which development is impacted by the interplay between risk and protective factors, with an overarching emphasis on the establishment and growth of resilience. Such practice recognises that many conventional systems available often do not appropriately respond to the needs of families impacted by trauma (Bloom & Farragher, 2010, 2013; Elliot et al., 2005; Harris & Fallot, 2001; Oudshoorn, 2015), instead desiring to enact a proactive, collaborative and evidenced based framework with which to support those who require it the most. As with the

construct of trauma itself, there are a number of differing definitions for such practices. For this research I am using the version offered by SAMHSA (2014), as it most appropriately includes both the individual and organisational aspects necessary to promote positive outcomes for those who have endured traumatic experiences:

> *'A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.' (p. 9)*

The research literature related to this definition is underpinned by four important characteristics. The first is the recognition that exposure to trauma is extensive and the impact of such trauma can be pernicious. The second is a fundamental belief that with the appropriate support, it is possible to ameliorate the negative impact of trauma. The third is that any system of trauma informed practice must be constructed upon a foundation of close, positive relationships in order to enact lasting change. Lastly, the fourth describes that ensuring the safety of all involved is paramount to enable healing and prevent further negative consequences (Bloom 2016; Chafouleas et al. 2016)

2.2.2 Trauma Informed Practice in Schools

As the interest in trauma-informed practices increased, such approaches have been increasingly adopted and installed within many public sectors responsible for the welfare and outcomes of the population; for example, there are a number of examples detailing successful implementation within child mental health services, criminal justice and social care (see Hanson & Lang, 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). One key public service domain that has proven relatively slow in incorporating trauma informed ideas has been education, specifically within schools. This observation is, at least superficially, surprising as there is extensive literature describing how schools are perhaps the optimum point of delivery with which to offer support to those most at risk of the negative impact of traumatic and stressful experiences. This is due to the long-term presence school staff have in the lives of their

pupils; most notably at a Primary level, staff spend many hours with children developing close relationships with the pupil and their families and thus recognise trends in behaviour and welfare (see Cohen & Mannarino, 2011; Gelkopf & Berger, 2009; Openshaw, 2011). SAMHSA (2014) describe that the predictability and consistent structure offered by school aligns closely with notions of safety and positive relationships, while others (e.g. Alisic, 2012; Wadsworth et al., 2008) explicitly highlight that school is the place to most appropriately offer interventions to address the social, behavioural and academic dysfunction caused by the experience of traumatic events. Various authors have described several benefits gained from utilising trauma-informed practices with a school, including improved academic achievement, teacher wellbeing and feelings of safety, as well as a reduction in student behavioural issues, staff stress and related absence (e.g. Alisic, 2012; Alisic et al., 2012; Mendelson et al., 2015; Oehlberg, 2008).

2.3 A Blueprint for Trauma-Informed Practice in Education

As the focus on trauma-informed practice with education is relatively modern, the research literature currently is somewhat narrow in its findings; although this does mean that for the purposes of this literature review, I was able to read through a significant proportion of the studies, it does of course provide a limited conclusion as to best practice. At the time of writing, three detailed meta-analyses have been completed, providing a detailed summation of the research literature relating to trauma-informed practice within education (see Avery et al., 2020; Stratford et al., 2020; Zakszeski, 2017). This section details the findings offered by these analyses, with the aim of providing a blueprint of sorts with which to develop and implement any such practice in a new setting.

2.3.1 Utilising a Multitiered Model of TIP

Historically, trauma-informed approaches have primarily focussed on the assessment and provision of appropriate intervention for individuals recovering from traumatic experiences (Brewin, 2005; Choi & Graham-Bemann, 2018; Eklund et at., 2018). As such approaches have been refined, the emphasis has moved from a focus on only supporting those that have been overtly impacted by more serious adverse experiences (in line with notions of *acute* trauma), to considering the merit of implementing a universal framework, designed to

support all pupils (Jacobson, 2021). It has been theorised that although individual interventions are a necessary part of any trauma-informed framework (see Matlin et al., 2019), they are not sufficient for achieving the best possible outcomes (SAMHSA, 2014), as it is often difficult to sustain impetus (Cole et al., 2013; Domitrovich et al., 2010; Flay et al., 2005) and have been shown to lack necessary 'buy-in' across the educational ecosystem (Cole et al., 2013; Evans et al., 2014).

As described in Section 2.1.1, adverse experiences have been found to be widespread in their incidence and impact and so the optimal model for intervention should be based on diverse, whole-system approach (Bloom, 2016; Magruder et al., 2016; SAMHSA, 2014; Tebes et al., 2019). The research literature overwhelmingly recommends the use of a multitiered trauma-informed model, split into three tiers of foci (see Chafouleas et al., 2015; Lane et al., 2007; Sugai & Homer, 2006) most frequently visually conceptualised as a triangle, akin to the version offered below:
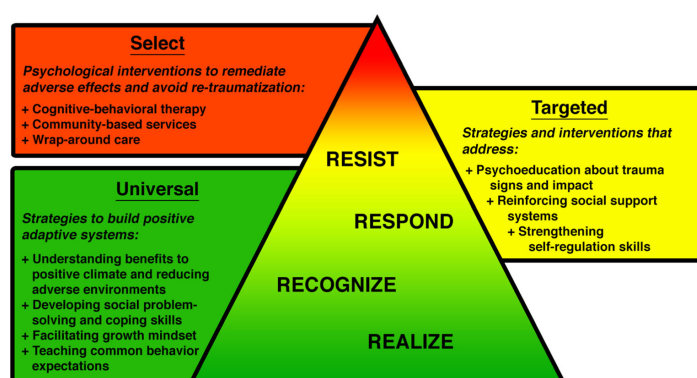
Figure 3 - Model of Multitiered Support (Chafouleas et al., 2016)

Tier 1 is the universal strand of the model, designed to facilitate trauma-informed measures across the entire school for the benefit of all individuals within the ecosystem, including pupils, families and staff. At this level, practices are designed and implemented to promote feelings of safety within school, support socio-emotional learning as a core part of the curriculum and upskill all staff to recognise, understand and most effectively support pupils exhibiting symptoms of trauma. Tier 2, the 'targeted' section of the model, involves utilising trauma-informed screening and assessment criteria with which to accurately identify pupils who are exhibiting ramifications of adverse experiences, developing appropriate interventions to help support them. At this stage, interventions would include the facilitation

of small group work relating to strengthening self-regulatory skills, developing self-esteem and offering explicit opportunities to complete work relating to psychoeducation. This is particularly important, as it provides pupils with an understanding of their behaviour, increasing the agency they possess for future decision making. Tier 3, the 'select' section of the model, describes the facilitation of support and interventions for those individuals who are exhibiting the most dysfunctional outcomes across domains. Due to the high level of need exhibited by such pupils, the necessary level of response is often outside of the skillset of typical school staff; it is essential at this level that there is a focus on collaboration, with partner agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (i.e., CAMHS) and Social Care, as well as with the family and wider community (Chafouleas et al., 2015). This multitiered model offers a useful and effective theorisation of how trauma-informed practice should be conceptualised, but does not provide a guide to implementation, the focus of the next section.

2.3.2 Implementing Trauma Informed Practice in Schools

Recognising the importance of utilising a multitiered model, the research literature then offers a description of 'best practice' for implementing trauma-informed practice within schools. In their extensive meta-analysis, Avery and colleagues (2021) developed inclusion criteria developed from key elements of trauma-informed practice offered by both SAMSHA (2014) and the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI; Cole et al., 2013). They based their work on three main facets, with which I will offer as the main areas of implementation guidance: staff professional development, organisational change and practice change.

2.3.2.1 Professional Development

There has been a multitude of research completed describing the issues faced by school staff when attempting to remain effective in supporting pupils exhibiting behaviour associated with trauma. In the classroom, it has been shown that school staff lack knowledge in understanding why such behaviours occur, misinterpreting these instances as deliberate and wilful, closely associated with punitive responses from staff, which further exacerbates the behaviours (Alisic, 2012; Mckee & Dillenburger, 2009; Oehlberg, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012). From a wider perspective, it has been proven that a lack of understanding from

ancillary staff such as psychologists has caused improper diagnosis and classification of such behaviours, leading to both immediate and longer-term issues (see Metlzler et al., 2017). It has also been acknowledged that school staff are not equipped with the skills to ensure that their competence is appropriately sufficient to effectively support such behaviours, with the research describing limited training opportunities both pre and during service (Alisic et al., 2012; Brunzell et al., 2018; Sitler, 2009).

Many authors have recommended the development and implementation of professional development curricula in order bridge the gap between theoretical understanding of trauma related behaviours and current practice. The literature recommends that staff development should be for the benefit of *all* staff, not just classroom teachers, as schools should be theorised as a shared ecosystem where all adults share responsibility for the outcomes of the pupils in their care (Dingwall & Sebba, 2018). This aligns closely with the Universal Tier of trauma-informed support, with all adults responsible for adhering to agreed theorisations and understanding of behaviour and learning.

The first focus of any professional development curricula should be to foster and strengthen staff recognition and understanding of trauma, improving knowledge regarding how trauma impacts neurobiology and how this internal development is manifested externally in the form of behavioural, social and emotional dysfunction. There is no consensus regarding what such professional development curricula should incorporate, but may include work on the stress response system and recognising when pupils 'flip their lids', the importance of non-verbal communication, window of tolerance, risk and resilience, the vagus nerve and related limbic systems (see Alexander, 2019; Baweja et al., 2016; Dorado et al., 2016; Oehlberg, 2008; Perry & Hambrick, 2008; Perry & Winfrey, 2021; Treisman, 2018). The second strand should focus on providing staff with the appropriate skills and strategies to proactively prevent and de-escalate such problematic behaviours (Lang et al., 2015; Perry et al., 2016), including how to effectively utilise Emotion Coaching techniques (see Rose et al., 2019). Professional development also includes training and upskilling staff to complete trauma assessment and even higher complexity interventions when appropriate, such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). It is also important to provide development opportunities for staff to consider how the ramifications of dealing with adverse experiences is having an impact on their personal wellbeing, something that I will describe in greater detail in Section 2.3.2.2.

It is important that professional development is considered part of an ongoing, persistent endeavour. Various authors (e.g., Ashby et al., 2019; Baker et al., 2018) describe the fallacy of utilising time limited training opportunities, highlighting that interventions which finish after just a few sessions often result in a muted influence on outcomes. Instead, it is recommended that any professional development is most effectively supported using ongoing coaching and specific work is completed to integrate any theory into practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hambrick et al., 2018). It is also necessary to recognise that professional development by itself is not sufficient to foster the level of positive outcomes necessary to best support pupils most impacted by adverse experiences (see Dorado et al., 2015; Metz et al., 2015). Maintaining the desire to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils requires a more holistic organisational and culture change.

2.3.2.2 Organisational Change

As described by Dr. Sandra Bloom, attempting to operationalise trauma-informed practices without first recognising the importance of facilitating appropriate culture change in any organisation is akin to 'throwing seeds on dry ground' (in Menschner & Maul, 2016, p.3). It has long been recognised that trauma-informed approaches are most effective when they are 'woven into the fabric of the school' (Cole et al., 2005). In order for this to happen, there is a clear emphasis on leadership to make decisions that introduce policies that foster key trauma-informed tenets, such as the promotion of ongoing professional development, feelings of safety, empowerment and the encouragement of positive relationships across all stakeholders (Ashcraft & Anthony 2008; Azeem *et al*. 2011; Cherry & Foustis, 2022; Elliott *et al*. 2005; Gatz *et al*. 2007). For the purposes of this research, the guiding principles of trauma-informed practice offered by SAMHSA (2014) will be used to offer a reflective prompt with which to consider and compare the possible impact of any proposed organisational change; these can be seen below:

Trauma-informed key principle/ value	Description of principle/value
Safety	Working to ensure physical and emotional safety; the physical setting is safe, and the interpersonal exchanges promote safety
Trustworthiness and transparency	Maximize trustworthiness through transparency and consistency
Collaboration and mutuality	Leveling of the power hierarchy; shared decision making
Empowerment	Strengths are recognized and validated; prioritizing skill building
Voice and choice	Maximizing survivor choice and control. Recognizing the need for unique/ individual approach
Peer support and mutual self-help	Organizational level of support, building trust, promoting safety and empowerment
Resilience and strengths-based	Belief in the ability of individuals and communities to heal; promote recovery from trauma
Inclusiveness and shared purpose	Everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach; not all are trauma therapists but all can help create therapeutic spaces
Cultural, historical, and gender issues	Moving past cultural stereotypes and biases; gender-responsive services; acknowledges and addresses historical trauma
Change process	Intentional, evolving responsiveness to new knowledge and needs

Figure 4 - Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice (SAMHSA, 2014)

Implementation of trauma-informed practices have been shown to be to be closely associated with sustainable changes to culture and systems within organisations, developed as a result of collaborative decision making and a related focus on the development of agency, to ensure that have staff 'buy-in' when considering changes, to ensure that there is a consensus and to facilitate feelings of mutuality and shared ownership (Hummer et al., 2010; Lang et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2017). This collaborative aspect of trauma-informed practice includes the importance of involving pupils, families and also community stakeholders, to maximise benefits of any practices (see Bunting et al., 2019; Cole et al., 2013; SAMSHA, 2014).

A significant aspect of implementing trauma-informed change within an organisation involves ensuring a focus on supporting staff with self-care and wellbeing. As briefly introduced in Section 2.3.2.1, the association between trauma and more challenging pupil behaviours is well documented. There is an increase likelihood of burnout and staff stress as a result of trying to cope with managing and supporting the most vulnerable pupils to achieve positive outcomes. This is a significant cause of high rates of attrition currently being experienced within the education sector, especially compared to other similar professions (see Aloe et al., 2014; Greenberg et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). This impact is described in the literature as Vicarious Trauma or Secondary Traumatic Stress and is a direct response

from the adults processing the trauma experienced by the pupils (Borntrager et al., 2012). Not only can it ultimately lead to increased rates of staff absence (Leutner et al., 2017), it is also associated with impaired judgement, self-regulation, critical thinking amongst professionals as well as increased feelings of helplessness and isolation from colleagues (Quinn et al., 2018; Tullberg et al., 2012), impacting the ability of staff to most effectively support pupils, which has a pernicious impact on progress. Historically, schools have tended to not prioritise the wellbeing of staff (see Richards et al., 2016) but there is an increasing recognition of the importance of organisations needing to implement policies and practices that promote staff wellbeing (Borntrager et al., 2012; Carigni et al., 2015). Professional development is one method of supporting staff to more effectively recognise and understand the impact of trauma, relating to both in themselves as well as the pupils. The other method is through the implementation of supervision sessions, recommended to offer a safe space to discuss with colleagues' possible issues and provide a forum within which to problem solve (Horsmann, 2000).

It is important to recognise that aligning trauma-informed ideals into cultural norms does not necessarily involve reinventing current best practice relating to school organisational change, but using the key tenets as a guide, there will be clear differences, most noticeable on a practical, day-to-day level. The next section offers a detailed guide as to what such trauma-informed practice *looks* like.

2.3.2.3 Changes in Practice: What Does Trauma-Informed Look Like

It is difficult to offer an exhaustive or rigid description of what trauma-informed practice will look like; it is a flexible, responsive system based upon the key tenets and guidelines described previously but is able to remain contextual in practice. A significant difference noticeable in a trauma-informed school is the move away from a punitive based system of consequences toward a relational approach, developed upon a foundation of unconditional positive regard and close, productive relationships between all stakeholders (Corcoran, 2006; Parker et al., 2019; Wolpow et al., 2009). Staff within a trauma-informed organisation are skilled at recognising how trauma may be manifested and responding effectively to unproductive behaviours. They are able to maintain equanimity and de-escalate a heightened pupil who has been exhibiting aggression or impulsive behaviours, avoiding becoming drawn

into a power struggle with pupils (Alexander, 2019; Crosby, 2015; Jacobson, 2021; Knight, 2007; Morgan et al., 2015). Staff utilise emotion coaching techniques to support pupils to improve their emotional literacy (Rose et al., 2019) focus their attention on the development of positive attachments with the pupils, modelling healthy relationships and incorporating strengths-based approaches to foster independence and improve self-esteem (Cole et al., 2013; Ford & Courtois, 2013; Brunzell et al, 2016).

From an organisational perspective, perhaps the most important component of trauma-informed practice is the establishment of predictable school structures, offering consistent routines and expectations (Alexander, 2019; Cole et al., 2005; Craig, 2008; Crosby, 2015; Jensen, 2000; Nealy-Oparah & Scruggs-Hussein, 2018; Walkley & Cox, 2013; Wolpow et al., 2016). While the literature recognises the importance of incorporating an element of flexibility relating to individual differences, this predictability is a key tenet in the enactment of safety for both pupils and staff.

Leadership ensures that appropriate curriculum opportunities are made available to support the socio-emotional learning of pupils (Atallah et al., 2019; CASEL, 2014; Herrenkohl, 2019). As with staff professional development curricula, there is little consensus regarding what is the most effective list of strategies, but includes work on psychoeducation that includes work on recognising feelings, thoughts and emotions, understanding what Siegel (2012) describes as 'flipping your lid' and improving self-awareness of prospective dysregulation, self-regulation techniques such as square breathing and reflective, reframing strategies (see Alexander, 2019; Craig, 2008; Wolpow, 2016).

Trauma-informed practice envisages a change in culture pertaining to dealing with unproductive behaviour, moving from punitive consequences such as suspensions or permanent exclusions to a restorative framework underpinned by a shared language and increased levels and complexity of communication (Alexander, 2019; Berardi & Morton, 2017; Rose et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019;).

Schools act to foster positive relationships between other stakeholders, recognising the importance of positive relationships between peers, ensuring that any conflict is effectively dealt with and arranging opportunities for supervised activities to foster social competence (Craig, 2008; Crosby, 2015). Although seemingly obvious, high expectations are a key tenet

of trauma-informed practice; while it may prove tempting to consider exceptions for pupil on the basis of their experiences (see Wolpow et al., 2016), the literature is clear in reinforcing the need to maintain such high expectations and thus avoid being at the mercy of a detrimental Golem effect. As highlighted previously, wherever possible leadership ensure that agency is shared across stakeholders; pupils and families impacted by trauma often feel powerless to modify their circumstances (see Bloom, 2007; Craig, 2008). A punitive and inflexible environment will have the impact of exacerbating such a feeling, so the aim of trauma-informed practices is to ensure that voices from across the spectrum of stakeholders are considered, increasing feelings of belonging and sustainability (Crosby, 2015; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014; Wolpow et al., 2016). As highlighted in Section 2.3.2.2 trauma-informed schools also prioritise professional self-care, offering regular supervision sessions in an attempt to ameliorate secondary trauma and support staff wellbeing.

As offered so far, the research literature points toward a blueprint for a seemingly utopian school environment and organisational climate that most effectively meets the needs of all pupils. Of course, the disconnect between theoretical assumptions and tangible practice can be dramatic, with various barriers to the implementation of trauma-informed approaches. The next section describes why, despite the apparent depth of theoretical framework available, schools have not yet taken up such approaches compared to similar professions.

2.4 Barriers to Trauma-Informed Practice Implementation

Perhaps the most significant barriers with regards to the successful implementation of trauma-informed practices are directly associated with prevailing philosophies relating to policy and leadership capability.

Implementing trauma-informed practices can prove a long and complex task, one that requires ongoing dedication, time and effort from leadership to ensure the best possible chance for success (Cherry & Foustis, 2022). As highlighted previously in this section, ensuring all stakeholders have suitable agency in the decision-making process and offering appropriate staff development opportunities is paramount, as is ensuring all aspects of school governance is viewed from a trauma-informed lens. Without ensuring that these foci are maintained long term, it has been shown that staff feel 'disempowered' (Damian et al., 2019), resisting the opportunity to refine their own practices (Blitz et al., 2016). It is also vital that

appropriate expertise is sought when instigating trauma-informed practices, as various authors have found that inappropriate, confusing or poor-quality frameworks can significantly hinder the likelihood of successful implementation (see Berger & Quiros, 2014; Birnbaum, 2019). Unfortunately, a strong, well organised leadership can still be stymied by issues with accessing appropriate resources for their plans.

In England, under the stewardship of the Conservative Party, the Department for Education and national inspectorate OFSTED have for over a decade advocated for the use of punitive behaviour systems, associated with increased rates of both Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions (see DFE, 2022a). Despite policies related to punitive discipline, sometimes described as 'Zero-Tolerance', being shown to be ineffective at satisfactorily addressing unproductive behaviour (see Skiba et al., 2014), there seems to be an emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their actions rather than necessarily supporting them in the development of regulatory skills with which to cope with a similar situation in the future. Opting to utilise such a deficit model of behaviour is a philosophical choice, the ramifications of which result the pupils who most need support often the ones that are increasingly left behind.

This is unfortunately closely associated with a significant decrease in funding available to schools, who have experienced a marked reduction in per pupil funding during the past 30 years (see Bellfield et al., 2017). This is closely associated with scarcity of resources, time constraints and the issue of competing demands with the school system (Damian et al., 2018; Dueweke et al., 2019; Fraser et al., 2015; Jankowski et al., 2018). Offering appropriate and effective support to pupils exhibiting unproductive behaviours is a costly endeavour, one that requires significant resources to be allocated over a long period of time. Schools remain under pressure to demonstrate academic benchmarks and progress (i.e., KS2 SATs and GCSE exams) and resources are often assigned accordingly. The decreasing level of funding has an inevitable detrimental impact on pupils who are the most challenging and require relatively more resources (see Day et al., 2015; Perry & Daniels, 2016). Ancillary professions have also endured reduction to funding, meaning that schools are now increasingly seeing the longer-term impacts of poverty and a lack of holistic services that would have previously provided support in the local community (see Goodman et al, 2005; JRF, 2017).

Ultimately, when a system is stressed and stretched, the practices that are the most intensive are often the first to be curtailed. It has been shown that trauma-informed practices can take a long time to effectively embed (Quadara & Hunter, 2016), so it may prove difficult to observe the associated longer-term benefits of the new systems. Until such a point where it is clear they have proven successful, or when the school has the appropriate skillset, leadership may feel no recourse but to opt for a more punitive consequence (Hemphill et al., 2017).

It is also important at this juncture to reference current issues in the field of trauma-informed practice research. It is universally agreed that any implementation must be evidence based (see Day et al., 2015); however, as has been touched upon during this literature review, despite various authors offering consideration for best practice, there is little consensus regarding definition or operationalisation (Hanson & Lang, 2016; Maynard et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2015). Authors have also highlighted the methodological concerns inherent in a lot of current trauma-informed research. These include the lack of robust longitudinal experimental design, insufficient incorporation of perspective from all stakeholders rather than just staff, questions over reliability and validity of success criteria and the need to utilise a mixed- methods multi-factorial analysis that can is able to account for the complex ecosystem of influencing factors (Champine et al., 2019; Dixon et al., 2014; Hanson & Lang, 2016; Maynard et al., 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015; Zakszeski, 2017). It is widely accepted that implementing trauma-informed systems is a positive step; however, such implementation has outpaced the associated research necessary to evaluate and guide such practice (see Berliner & Kolko, 2016; Thomas et al., 2019). While it is not expected that organisations simply wait for research to 'equal' practice, it is important that they remain reflective and able to monitor changes, adjusting decision making accordingly (Stratford et al., 2020).

2.5 Trauma-Informed Practice in the Context of this Research

2.5.1 Pupil Referral Units

As highlighted in the Introduction, both our sites within our organisation are PRUs and as such we are responsible for providing education to pupils that have been excluded or are at the risk of exclusion from mainstream schooling. These pupils are at risk due to the exhibition of significant atypical behaviours that mean that mainstream school are not able to

effectively meet their needs, whether due to internalising symptoms (withdrawal, anxiety or school refusal) or externalising symptoms (impulsivity, anger, poor self-regulation). From personal experience, it is clear that colleagues working in PRUs recognise the fallacy of treating their provision as '*mini-mainstreams*'. They recognise all the issues highlighted in the previous section (i.e., rise in punitive systems, decrease in funding) and understand that iterations of support available for the pupil in the past were not successful, hence their referral to the PRU. Therefore, they have developed frameworks that take into consideration the 'whole' pupil, explicitly supporting pupils to develop their own regulatory skills, offering a cessation of punitive punishment and admonishment that the pupil has most likely experienced throughout their schooling. These frameworks are underpinned by close relationships between staff and pupils; although many colleagues in different organisations may not explicitly share such terminology, they adhere to the principles of practice described in the trauma-informed literature as detailed in this section.

In essence, pupils are referred due the fact they are exhibiting atypical socio-emotional related behaviours; for them to access the curriculum and engage with academic rigour associated with the best possible life outcomes, they need to first be supported to successfully modify the very behaviours that were stopping them from engaging previously. In order to achieve this at our organisation, we developed and installed our own bespoke version of Trauma-Informed Practice, detailed in the next section.

2.5.2 Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) in this Research

As described during the introduction, in our organisation we decided to describe our refined approach as Attachment and Trauma-Informed Practice (ATIP). During the first phase of our ATIP journey, lasting eighteen months between September 2017 and May 2018, we bought in a specialist training provider for five ATIP INSET days as bespoke staff development. We utilised the recommended best practice described previously in this section, including providing staff with the necessary knowledge of neurobiology related to stress and how adverse experiences are manifested as unproductive behaviours. We also developed staff ability to enact practical, proactive techniques with which to support such behaviours most effectively, including emotion coaching, the importance of maintaining equanimity, reflecting on non-verbal communication and skills to develop positive relationships with all

stakeholders. From an organisational perspective, the behaviour policy was rewritten using a trauma-informed lens, with an explicit aim of reducing the frequency of suspensions. Due to the high incidence of historical adversity and unproductive behaviours, all pupils were assumed to be at least at the Secondary Tier of need and thus all offered regular Psychoeducation sessions which had three main foci; developing a sense of their own emotional awareness, including the way in which emotions were associated with thoughts and bodily sensations, supporting pupils to expand their sense of self and improving the social skills of the pupils. Observations, a standard tool of Quality Assurance within Education, were increased in scope, now emphasising the importance of relationship and behaviour management in line with trauma-informed recommendations. Professional development opportunities were built into the weekly calendar, to ensure that the focus on the importance of trauma-informed practices did not diminish over time. These briefings included highlighting different pupils and reframing behaviours to understand what is driving the situation, rather than assessing at a superficial level, focusing on the maxim 'all behaviour is communication'. In an effort to support staff regarding self-care and wellbeing, we decided to run mandatory weekly supervision sessions, with each one having an ATIP theme relating to a topic or issue that had arisen over the week and providing journals with the explicit remit to promote reflective practice, through an ATIP lens.

The impact of our trauma-informed journey was revelatory: staff wellbeing improved over time, measured on a half termly basis via anonymous self-report questionnaires completed by all staff. Our understanding of why pupils exhibit certain behaviour always improved, rationalising our reactions through our knowledge, and so making our interventions more effective and become less perniciously impacted by secondary trauma. In surveys and during pupil specific briefings, staff recorded that they feel better equipped to problem solve and manage unproductive behaviour and take responsibility for personal wellbeing. Pupil behaviour reduced in severity over time, according to internal documentation, despite an increase on roll, with anecdotal evidence that staff felt more empowered to make mistakes and attempt new strategies without the feeling of pending admonishment. Pupils provided termly feedback regarding the development of positive relationships, particularly regarding the exhibition of empathic listening, patience and support with any personal issues that may arise.

3.0 Methodology: Action Research

This research required careful consideration of my role as both a researcher, seeking an accurate summation of the research process as possible, and as a professional, desiring the best for the project, in its tangible form. I recognised that I am intrinsically associated with both, unable to be truly 'objective' in any traditional sense. Thus, instead of adopting such traditional formation of the research process, I embraced my 'closeness' to both roles, opted for transparency and made clear how my own values and possible biases may impact proceedings. As such, I utilised Action Research as a methodology, one that not only offers the opportunity to recognise any impact of such biases, but also most appropriately permitted ongoing cycles of assessment and change that, in my opinion, most suitably aligned with the proposed introduction the ATIP framework at the new site.

This section will describe the dominant approach to theory generation, offering a critique, before providing detailed analysis of Action Research as a methodology, incorporating concise descriptions, epistemological underpinnings, practical considerations, and personal thoughts regarding my research project. It illustrates how traditional research is underpinned by positivist epistemological frameworks have increasingly been identified as limited in their ability to accurately describe how knowledge is constructed in relation to the social sciences, in this case within the Education system.

3.1 Prevailing Understanding of Research: Knowledge

> '*Research always has to do with knowledge. If a study is not about knowledge, it cannot stand as research*' (McNiff, 2016, p.11)

All knowledge is intrinsically associated with and derived from what is termed a *paradigm*, a collection of values that influences the way we think about the world in which we inhabit and thus any research that is completed (see Kuhn, 1996). Values play such an integral role in this research, so it is important at this juncture to offer a clear description. According to Sagiv and Colleagues (2017), values are understood to be:

> '*(the) inner realities of an individual that are reflected through habits, behaviours, beliefs, expectations and relationships. Values lay the foundation for an individual's*

pattern of thinking and way of acting. They play a vital role in how one makes decisions, choices and builds perceptions and attitudes…… they often guide decision making in all aspects of life such as career, religion, social circles and self-identity' (P.3)

For many years, the dominant focus of scientific inquiry has been underpinned by an empirical paradigm, in which cause, and effect are tested for and assessed; a methodological understanding was utilised, designed for work on natural sciences. Key contributors to the knowledge we take for granted in modern society have used this paradigm in their work, such as Isaac Newtown and his work on gravity and Rene Descartes' investigations into the dualistic self. Such an approach is positivist; values and understanding of phenomena are assumed to remain constant between researchers, and replicability and objectivity are seen as important credentials for a successful investigation. This approach has many benefits and can work well within the physical scientific community but fails to acknowledge the subtleties of social contexts; as highlighted by Davies (1992), if people are seen as 'pieces of machinery' the analogy fails quickly, as people don't behave as expected.

Isiah Berlin (2006) stated that traditional research process as being underpinned by 'tripartite' assumptions (In McNiff & Whitehead, 2009, p.316). He described that within such traditional practices, it is assumed there is always a conclusive answer to every question posed, that this answer can always be discovered with enough effort and that this conclusion will be universally agreed upon. This is clearly not true in a social setting; leaving aside more extreme examples such as issues between socio-political or religious factions, the values and experiences that are integral in the construction of a person's habitus (see Bordieu, 1990) mean that every individual will experience a situation differently and thus offer alternative concluding thoughts. Carr and Kemmis (1986) described that even self-proclaimed positivist research was value laden, meaning that the effect of the individual researcher cannot be simply dismissed under the guise of a form of epistemological cognitive dissonance.

Noffke and Somekh (2009) describe a 'spectator theory of knowledge', highlighting that such a perspective is increasingly redundant when considering the complexity of modern research. Polyani (1958) goes a step further, describing that knowledge cannot be separated from the 'knower'. The two are inseparable, with the person's values, history and experiences affecting how they comprehend the situation; as such, the knower utilises their 'personal (or

tacit) knowledge' to process new information. Everyone has a 'reservoir' of inherent knowledge (McNiff, 2016) developed through an ongoing process of experiences, interpretation, reframing, constructing, and sharing narratives (Conelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this way, knowledge is continually refined (Pushor & Clandinin, 2009), hopefully resulting in the development of what Aristotle called *Praxis*, described as ethically informed practices which promote the 'good life' (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Integral to achieving such a laudable aim is another Aristotlean concept, that of *Phronesis*, described as 'practical wisdom' derived from 'situational understanding' (Elliot, 2009, p.29) and as such, demands a move away from traditional methodologies toward those that do not acknowledge the merits of tacit knowledge. In aspiring to achieve Phronesis, more universally recognised 'rules of thumb' (Nussbaum, 1990), or 'action hypotheses' (Elliot, 2009) are utilised in tandem with details specific to the individual context in order produce decisions that indicate wisdom across different domains (see Dunne, 2005).

A further important point relating to traditional dominant research regards the discrepancy between what has been described as 'pure' and 'applied' research (Noffke & Somekh, 2009). Traditionally, knowledge has been guided by the academy, mostly in the guise of what Elliot (1991) describes as 'Education Research', producing generalisable truths to be utilised in different contexts, much like the Psychometric Tests that are administered to diagnose children exhibiting symptoms of ADHD. However, while using this approach does offer greater opportunity to complete more efficient research (can be completed more quickly, much easier to generalise findings), such dominant logic fails to incorporate contextual factors that exist on an interpersonal level resulting in a 'meagre harvest' (Shumsky, 1958). There has been an ever-growing shift in the manner in which pure research is seen as an integral part of 'scientific robustness' (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). However, methodologies that inform 'Educational Research' (Elliot, 1991), i.e., those that incorporate personal knowledge (see Polyani 1958), while acknowledged to be useful for improving practice and problem solving, are not accepted to add to knowledge in the same way or seen as legitimate (McNiff, 2013). The seemingly easy separation of 'pure' and 'applied', while on paper an easy task, in reality becomes almost impossibly challenging when concerning human interaction and social systems. It is important to note that, unlike traditional understanding of knowledge, Phronesis cannot simply be learned in an academic setting then applied into one's practice; it is acquired through the process of initiation whereby practitioners experience specific social contexts, building their own tacit knowledge (Carr & Kemmis,

2009). In this way, the boundaries between what is deemed theory and practice dissipate, with practice becoming a type of 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989).

It has been described that ideology pertaining to educational policy has been increasingly determined by a market driven neo-liberal agenda of preparing pupils for work (see Harvey, 2005); Little's Human Capital Theory (2003) ascribes investment in pupils in association with economic productivity, rather than any non-economic benefits, such as wellbeing or happiness (Robeyns, 2006). It has been theorised (e.g., Bourdieu, 1986) that the education system serves to reproduce the social systems of the previous generation, perpetuating the status quo. Thus, equipping practitioners with the aspiration of striving for this morally committed, contextualised practical wisdom (i.e., phronesis), is an integral part of ensuring that education can serve a more 'transformative function' (Carr & Kemmis, 2009). Elliot (2009) states the importance of such an epistemological basis for educational practitioners, describing that by utilising notions of phronesis, teachers can exhibit agency and promote Praxis. By exhibiting contextual awareness and actively seeking to reframe teachers can make a significant difference to the outcomes of their students, permitting a measure of agency and promoting an increasing sense of practitioner professional development (see Cochran-Smith & Lyle, 2009). Ultimately, such an approach places trust in the practitioner as the 'expert', who is recognised as best placed to recognise learning needs and tailoring evidenced based practice in order to support their pupil's development, avoiding passive transference of content, with little consideration for contextual influences, an issue described by Freire (1978) as a 'narration sickness'. In this way, such reflective practice allows practitioners to develop their emancipatory interests (Hambermas, 1987), moving from the status quo and realising a new trajectory and creating evidenced informed practice, as elucidated in Figure 5 below:
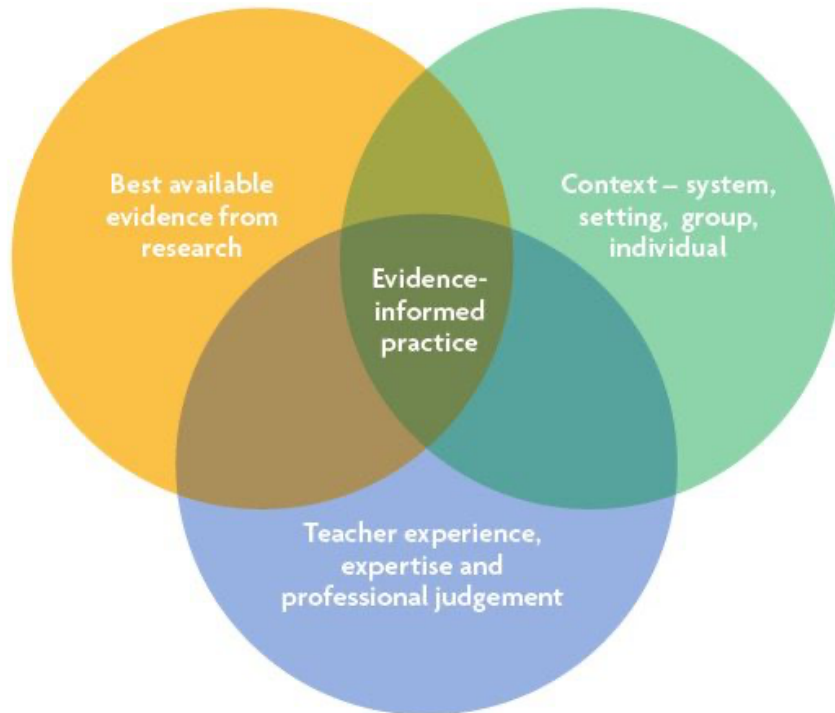
Figure 5: Evidence Informed Practice

(Scutt, 2022)

The next section will describe Action Research, the methodology chosen for this research project, that will offer the ability to utilise tacit knowledge in Education in order to develop practice based on praxis, while still remaining, in terms of research, as valid and robust as more traditional methods.

3.2 Action Research

3.2.1 History

Action Research was developed by practitioners who desired transformation in terms of social justice and equity. Kurt Lewin, described as the father of Action Research (see Kemmis et al., 2014), worked alongside members of deprived communities, helping support their improvement by getting locals to take part in planning useful developments. The model he developed – the 'Lewinian Spiral' consisting of *planning, acting, observing* and *reflecting* - is still often cited in modern Action Research (see McNiff, 2013). Within education, Lawrence Stenhouse recognised the importance of acknowledging teachers as the most effective judges of their personal practices, so highlighted the need for ongoing Action Research as a basis for personal development (McNiff, 2013). John Elliott, described by

Kemmis (1993) as key in the genesis of modern Action Research, highlighted the importance of Aristotle's phronesis within education (see Elliott, 1993). As described previously, research should not be passively applied without careful consideration of contextual cues and context.

Despite the prevalence of methodologies that produce dominant knowledge, as described in the previous section, there has been significant growth of the use of Action Research across the world in the last 20 years (Noffke & Somekh, 2009). The principles of Action Research are still very similar to the work completed by Lewin, described previously; it incorporates research and action into a non-linear set of cycles, involving collaborative partnerships with the aim of some form of social transformation, all located within a detailed understanding of broader political and cultural contexts (Somekh, 1996). The methodology has achieved increasing respect through the publication of various journals (i.e., Journal of Action Research) and academic literature (Reason & Bradbury, 2001), with Action Research gaining greater acceptance at University, Government and Policy level (McNiff, 2013).

3.2.2 An Overview: 'Action'

Action Research has been described as both 'intrinsically engaged' (Zeni, 2009) and a 'passionate enquiry' (Dadds, 1995): it draws on many different skills and practices, including reflective practice (Schon, 1983), critical thinking (Brookfield, 2013) and innovative thinking (Hart, 1996) amongst others, ultimately utilised to evaluate and improve the practice of the researcher (McNiff, 2016).

Action Research is a methodology of change (McNiff, 2013); McNiff and Whitehead (2009) posit that this change is derived from what Karl Popper (1963) describes as the association between enquiry and the 'ongoing process of generative transformational self-realisation' (p.314). Action Research utilises the principle of *plurality* (Arendt, 1978), which describes that it is through our actions with others that we construct meaning, rather than our words or thoughts. Researchers position themselves as insiders (Zeni, 2009), at the 'heart' of the research, operating in a given setting and observing the resultant effects of the action; as such. It also has a strong association with Jurgen Habermas' concept of the '*lifeworld*' in which he proposed 'communicative action' as the ultimate goal with which to help people understand each other's cultural and social perceptions of the world (1979). With such a basis

underpinning the approach, knowledge is understood to be inherently relational in nature (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

The intent of any Action Research is to improve a particular situation through the construction of new knowledge and practices (McNiff, 2016). Within education, it is understood that any study, irrespective of methodological considerations, will be underpinned by particular 'political purposes and goals' (Carr & Kemmis, 2009).

While Carr and Kemmis (2009) note that all Action Research is inherently personal, it also has political and professional dimensions (Noffke, 2009). These can include the exploration of the connections between practitioner beliefs and practices (personal), reframing the nature of teaching as a form of research in itself (professional) and giving a voice and raising outcomes of excluded pupils (political) (Noffke, 2009). Irrespective of the specific domain, Action Research is ultimately about praxis; it requires practitioners to be committed in the pursuit of morally 'informed, purposeful action' that produces new knowledge (McNiff, 2016). Action Research is most often utilised in a small scale (Noffke, 2009) and as such, practitioners are able to ascertain the needs of their chosen community with increased sophistication and develop shared practices that offer solutions that offer desired social transformation.

3.2.3 Embracing the Personal: Reflexivity and the 'I'

As Action Research is so closely tied to notions of practitioner self-development and the removal of the researcher / practitioner dichotomy, it often utilises a unique positionality within social science research: despite potential reluctance of placing oneself 'in the frame', due to the 'cultural phobia of privileging the I' (Dadds, 2009, p.287), it is standard practice for research to be considered from, and reports to be completed in, the first-person perspective (Somekh, 2006). Although other positions of view can be used in Action Research reporting (see Reason & Bradbury, 2008), McNiff (2016) suggests that this emphasis on using 'I' shows the practitioner as able and willing to keep developing their own practice), while it also explicitly offering the opportunity to show how they engaged with reflection.

As described in Section 3.2.2, researchers who adopt an Action Research approach do not desire to maintain any pretence of objectivity; however, their subjective values and potential biases, and potential effects on research findings, must be acknowledged. When using the 'I' perspective, it becomes absolutely imperative that practitioners are self-aware (Dadds, 2009). This is achieved by the development of reflexive practice, in which the practitioner does not remove presuppositions regarding value, but instead makes them explicit (Roth & Breuer, 2003), usually by including their motivations and experience regarding the topic of study within the research (Finlay & Gough, 2003). The researcher shows how their own values and practices are continuously reflected upon, ensuring recognition of the manner in which personal assumptions and biases can influence practice (see McNiff, 2016) in a process known as *deconstruction* (Derrida, 1997). It is important to acknowledge that electing to underpin research with an 'I' perspective does not necessarily just consider the practitioner; instead, it is about the relationship between the different selves that constitute the researcher (see McNiff, 2016). It is through this dialogue that assumptions are shared then challenged, thought process investigated (Bohm et al., 2004) and practices transformed (Kemmis et al., 2014). Deconstruction involves the process of decentering, whereby the 'I' is not deemed in the centre; through this principle, the idea of relational construction of knowledge is promoted, giving credence to notions of equality among all involved (McNiff, 2016). Winter (1989) suggests that reflexivity is both critical, seeking to improve practitioner self-awareness and also dialectical, evolving awareness of how thinking is impacted by influences originating from a wider scope, whether social, economic or cultural. This differs significantly to the assumed (consciously or otherwise) norms and values used in traditional, positivist research, where the ramifications of potential personal influence on research findings is rarely discussed.

3.2.4 Assessing Quality in Action Research

> *'Change is us' – Jean McNiff (2013, p.55)*

As opposed to the more prescribed steps offered by alternative methodologies, there is no unique epistemological position or method associated with Action Research (Griffiths, 2009); it is considered a set of commitments, rather than an exhaustive register of techniques (Harding, 1987). McNiff (2013) believes Action Research to be considered as a form of 'practical philosophy' (p.19), stating that it is important for relevant models to be only ever

considered as 'guidelines', for fear that they are imposed, leading to negative consequences. Instead, the criterion of success relates to the degree with which the researcher has transformed their personal practice. In Action Research, as described previously, boundaries between theory and practice become aligned, instead offering a 'personal theory of practice' (McNiff, 2016, p.245). This is developed through reciprocity between colleagues, both directly and indirectly, described as 'ecologies of practice' (Kemmis, 2009) in which practitioners develop their practice, their comprehension of their own practices and how the situation affects their practice (McNiff, 2013). McNiff (2013) notes four levels of judging 'good' practice in Action Research: the *technical* level involves identifying specific criteria against which to judge quality, while the *practical* level describes understanding what quality actually means with regard to the work taken place. The *theoretical* level requires how the work is judged and what it may mean for others, and finally the *ethical* level returns to notions of the 'good life' and how much the research reflects this.

Kemmis and colleagues (2014) suggest that successful Action Research results in the researcher refining their practice, using personal aims and objectives to guide them. As such, there should be no explicit outcomes, rather than holistic professional development (McNiff, 2013). This specifically relates to exploring one's own practices (Whitehead, 1989), rather than the practices of other participants, as the researcher cannot ultimately be responsible for their learning (McNiff, 2016). McNiff (2016) also highlights the importance that for an Action Research approach, it is acknowledged that the conclusion might not be 'perfect' and that the improvement doesn't necessarily equate to fixing something that is broken. A significant difference between Action Research and more traditional methodologies is that practitioners are seen to produce practical knowledge that is deemed to be as equally valid as that generated by the academy, as recommended by Gibbons and colleagues (1999). One of its most fundamental tenets is the manner in which the typically discrete roles of practitioner and theorist blend and swap throughout the process (see Kemmis et al., 2014).

Another important aspect of adhering to quality criteria within Action Research is the aim of achieving validity and legitimacy. McNiff (2016) states that the establishment of validity is the first step in the achievement of legitimacy and that it is responsibility of the practitioner to provide accurate and detailed evidence to show this has been successfully proven. Validity relates to establishing the veracity of claims to knowledge made by practitioners; legitimacy is achieved through acceptance within the wider social field. Traditional forms of research

have very clearly defined methods through which both can be established, through the use of propositional logic (Popper, 1972); however, due to the subjectivity inherent in Action Research, this is not possible. However, as McNiff (2013) describes, any new claim to knowledge still has to bear witness to external scrutiny and as Action Research is based within the world of practice, such scrutiny has to take place and witnessed accordingly. Thus, the process of validation takes place at different levels. It is sought at a personal level, through the maintenance of reflexive practices and by ensuring methodological rigour (McNiff, 2013). It is also required at the social level, where Action Research often utilises the work of Jurgen Habermas; his principle of *social validation* (Habermas, 1976) requires that any claim to knowledge be comprehensible, using language that is clear, truthful, and authentic, showing the practitioner to having lived through their values and appropriate, exhibiting that the practitioner has integrated wider context of influence into the claim. His theory of *communicative action* (Habermas, 1987) describes that for shared practice to be developed, three key facets must be achieved: intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus. These are to be achieved in dialogue within a 'communicative space' where:

> *'People can share views, be respected even though they may take different views or have different perspectives on things and take seriously the commitment to finding lines of consensus about what should be done to address questions of V&L that might arise' (Kemmis et al., 2014, p.35)*

McNiff (2013) notes that while Habermas desired inter-subjective agreement, he recognised that it was unlikely to be achieved due to its nature as an idealised concept. In essence, as Action Research is fundamentally about collaboration, validity and thus legitimacy must stem from a group working together with the practitioner to negotiate and transform how such values are enacted in tangible terms to become norms (McNiff, 2016). This can be completed using critical friends and validation groups, who offer the opportunity to assess shared understanding of practitioner practices (see Kemmis et al., 2014)

3.2.7 Criticisms of Action Research

Despite the many positive aspects of Action Research, it is inevitable that there would be some drawbacks. The emphasis on the individual practitioner as the sole arbiter of 'good' is potentially problematic; it assumed that they have the requisite skills with which to plan,

collect and analyse their data, while ensuring validity and legitimacy are maintained. Without appropriate explicit teaching, it is highly unlikely that the practitioner possesses such skills.

Another issue pertains to the scale of the scope that Action Research can influence; it is acknowledged to be 'inherently local' (Noffke, 2009), which depending on the topic under investigation, may or may not be appropriate for different contexts. This ultimately means that any benefit or knowledge gained through Action Research may prove increasingly stubborn to share and thus less likely be used on a wider scale, especially considering the preference for quantitative approaches in large scale research projects, with methods that can be easily replicable and utilised within a meta-analyses. Within Education, these may be produced by the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) or from Government endorsed Educational Research Conferences (most notably ResearchED).

The final significant issue concerns the fundamental purpose at the heart of Action Research, whether personal, professional or political. While Carr and Kemmis (2009) acknowledge that all Action Research is personal to some extent, there seems to be a lack of ownership in researchers regarding what they believe the core focus to be; to provide practitioners the opportunity to develop practice based upon an enriched sense of holistic identity (McNiff, 2013). They describe that much Action Research chooses to attempt to omit political stance but argue that the methodology is inherently political; such an omission is not an acceptable action, as these values influence everything about the research that it is completed. They also argue that Action Research has become a tool that is utilised significantly in individual projects and technical change, rather than their envisaged aspiration of it as a critical approach in which they seek a much larger scale, able to bring about transformation on a societal level (Carr & Kemmis, 2009).

3.3 My Action Research

3.3.1 Why Action Research?

Action Research was chosen as the most appropriate methodology to utilise during this research for multiple reasons. In the introduction, I detailed my personal experiences and views relating to pupils and schooling, indicating a commitment to social justice for all

pupils, with an emphasis on pupils from working class backgrounds or affected by poverty and other associated risk factors. I have experienced first-hand the transformative power of education and its ability to open doors that were previously hidden, and I have been seeking this revelation for others throughout my career; concurrently, I understand the limitations of the rhetoric regarding social mobility and appreciate the positive aspects of traditional working-class communities, with their emphasis on hard work, family, and warmth. In my experience, I have learned that change is most effectively introduced collaboratively, utilising research evidence to inform practice and build staff capacity. I am currently the organisational fulcrum that offers guidance in terms of incorporating evidence into their own practice, but my aim is that over time, this power will be devolved as staff become more confident in their own ability and knowledge. I also believe that it is within team, in unison, that the best practice can be developed; I have developed this previously through the use of forums, specific to different topics such as building relationships and positive language. In such forums, staff are provided with the opportunity to discuss and feedback their ideas, as equals, to contribute to whole school best practice and policy; in this way, although I could be considered as the 'centre' in terms of an organisational role, bringing ideas from research to share, I am just part of the 'constellation' (McNiff, 2013). I have developed ideas regarding what I consider best practice which I shall bring to the group, in many different domains, but consider myself an equal and as such, am willing to change my own practice to best fit the consensus, so that a consistent approach is adopted; I firmly believe it is this consistency that will produce the best outcomes for pupils. In this way, it is most similar to personal experience of enacting organisational change and introducing new systems and processes, linking the theoretical and more tangible aspects of productive development.

Although seemingly trite, I firmly believe that no chain is stronger than its weakest link; in a PRU, where unproductive behaviours are common and staff can experience high levels of stress, no one staff member is above the others, on an operational level. I acknowledge that every organisation utilises a hierarchical leadership of some form, with different roles that incorporate different skills and responsibilities, such as my own membership of our Senior Leadership Team (SLT). However, this research is specifically about understanding behaviour and building relationships using an ATIP lens which must be the focus for all staff, as all staff are responsible equally; on a day-to-day basis, when there is an incident or regarding supporting pupils most effectively, hierarchy is often at least temporarily frozen. Such a collaborative stance is in line with ATIP principles, that suggest that to develop

positive relationships. Despite this fact, it is impossible to ignore the possible impact of power dynamics on the situation. Being a member of SLT does, in practice, cause ramifications in terms of the way in which staff respond and share, whether due to a lack of trust, adhering to hierarchical norms or not wanting to be seen as overly negative in their opinion and feedback. This issue was most likely increased significantly due to the context of taking on responsibility of the new site. I believed that through close collaboration and the development of trust and reciprocal relationship between myself and the new staff, these issues could be largely overcome. It is important to recognise that it is likely that they were not entirely negated; however, the Action Research methodology provided the necessary language and practice to bring these issues 'out into the open', allowing appropriate ongoing consideration and reflection to best evaluate and refine the research.

The purpose of this research was not to provide a generalisable set of discrete findings, akin to the prevailing epistemology. Staff and pupil outcomes are the result of context specific relational processes and interaction between all stakeholders, incorporating a wide breadth of contextual biases and assumptions. Although findings may serve others as guidance regarding the implementation of ATIP, 'blind' replication without consideration of such context cannot be an appropriate way forward. Instead, the purpose was to provide guidance and support with which to best support staff to refine their practice for the benefit of the pupils at our centre, i.e., what works in *our* centre, with *our* staff and pupils. As such, utilising Action Research afforded all involved to develop their expertise, in the form of praxis.

One of my aims was to 'upskill' the staff at the new site, ensuring they can most effectively meet the needs of pupils exhibiting a significant amount of unproductive behaviour; something that they have struggled with in the past, as highlighted by previous inspection reports. As this was a new site, my experience or engagement with the staff and pupils was very limited and as such, despite my firm personal belief in the effectiveness of instituting an ATIP approach, there existed subtle differences in the backgrounds of the staff and pupils that will alter how the approach should be implemented. It was hoped that involving the staff in manner described above would also hopefully improve their sense of empowerment; it had been quite a stressful period during the transition from previous leadership to now, so every opportunity for the staff at the new site to be included in planning was taken to facilitate building trust in the new 'regime' as soon as possible. As such, I utilised a first person,

insider, perspective throughout the report, permitting description of reflexive practice (see Reason & Bradbury, 2008). The notion of empowerment is most appropriately aligned with the purpose of Action Research as a framework of change (McNiff, 2013) with which to emancipate practitioners from traditional sense of knowledge and practice, aligning with my own personal strongly felt belief in the importance of social justice. I am an advocate of the principle that those people who have experienced a situation are the experts in their field, which again aligns closely with Action Research. While it had been documented that the staff at the new site historically found it working with pupils challenging, failing to provide them with 'good' outcomes, they are still the keepers of knowledge when it comes to the school. This 'expertise' is not in terms of traditional type, but of the experiential, *praxis*, form: it recognises that there are no other people in the world that know as much about the school, the pupils, or the overall 'lifeworld'. Considering all these factors, I firmly believe that Action Research was the most effective methodology to employ to not only understand the situation but then also develop and enact productive change, for the purpose of improving the outcomes of the pupils.

It is recognised that every person will hold different values (see McNiff, 2013); no one person can ever lay claim to the same experiences, and thus values, as another. This ontological difference is at the crux of Action Research, as with any form of self-study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004). Without a clear, honest and reflexive discussion as to my personal values and ongoing exhibition of how my practice aligns with the values that I espouse, this research could not be treated as valid. Being explicit about my own values is essential, as notions of 'good' need to be explicitly linked to them throughout the research (McNiff, 2013). From a personal perspective, I felt strongly drawn to this element of Action Research. I believe that current teacher training and professional development does not offer appropriate or sufficient opportunities for practitioners to consider holistic professional development, providing little space to reflect on their role away from policy stipulations and seemingly ever-increasing protocols. My aspiration was that not only would the research serve to increase my own personal reflective capabilities, but also permit the opportunity to develop these across the wider staff team as part of the research and installation of the ATIP implementation. I hoped that this would have a positive impact on staff behaviour and thus staff outcomes.

Another key reason for using Action Research was its cyclical framework. Although, as stated previously, it should not be treated as a regimented approach (see McNiff, 2016; Kemmis et al., 2014), there are certain steps that are usually described and actioned as part of the process, one of the key tenets being its cyclical nature. Such an approach permitted the study of one key facet of implementing ATIP principles, assessing its efficaciousness, then altering the focus, embarking on an ever more accurate path toward positive organisational change.

The final reason that Action Research was chosen for this project was the close way in which the language and theoretical underpinning of AR aligned closely with ATIP principles. Section Two of this report has emphasised the importance of personal reflexivity, taking into account and being mindful of the influence of values and experience in aspiring to ensure that Action Research can be considered 'successful'. The successful implementation of ATIP principles are also underpinned by these same guiding factors, as to develop Phronesis; in this context it is the practical wisdom to reflect and amend behaviours and actions in line with ATIP.

In summary, after extensively reading literature pertaining to Action Research, I still found it difficult to imagine any other methodology or approach, where the researcher is so intrinsically 'in-situ' and closely involved in the context. Without the openness, reflexivity and continual refinement that form its foundation, I don't believe that the findings can be treated as credible and representative of any wider group. As Action Research eschews the prevailing positivistic epistemological foundations, claims to knowledge must be constructed upon firm foundations. I aimed to follow the guidance offered by Habermas (1976), described in detail previously. On an individual level, it was my aim to maintain reflexive personal practices and ensure methodological rigour, following the process described above. On a social level, I shall follow the rules of Habermas' social validation theory, ensuring that my work is comprehensible, truthful, authentic and appropriate. I incorporated an idea of a communicative space through the use of the focus group, whereby the vision champion becomes the messenger for their groups own shared values and language. I recognised the importance of 'critical friends' available on a regular basis to provide an ongoing assessment as to the effectiveness of my own development and how the plan is improving staff practice. I was also able to add the introduction of the ATIP approach plan to our fortnightly Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting as an agenda item, offering another way in which the

validation and legitimacy can be evaluated. At this juncture, the consideration of Ethical probity was one that was placed foremost in my mind; I felt that I had taken all the relevant steps with which to offer recognition and countenance such issues. My conclusion was that it was one to be closely monitored throughout, hoping the development of positive relationships over the course of research would lead to beneficial offerings from those involved.

3.3.2 Ethics

It is acknowledged that Action Research poses a different challenge than traditional methodologies, in terms of maintaining ethical processes, due to the insider arrangements and more intimate knowledge (see Zeni, 2009). However, it is recognised that despite the possibility of any research being influenced due to power dynamics the desire to maintain ethically responsible standards should not be compromised.

This research was carried out in accordance with ethical standards as produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the University of Reading Ethical Committee. Since this research is part of a key professional responsibility, I followed advice provided by Bell (2014) and already received full permission to complete the investigation. It was imperative that I offered all participants informed consent, described as the foundation of proper ethical practice (Cohen et al., 2011), which requires all involved to be provided with information pertaining to the aims and procedures of the research, while also explaining any risks. All participants were required to sign a consent form that describes such information, an ethical statement (McNiff, 2016), along with the fact that they are able to withdraw from participation at any time, described as a central tenet of research (Young & Barrett, 2001).

The consent form also described the process regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Although Zeni (2009) argues that anonymity is sometimes almost impossible, this research adhered to guidance that suggests that data is anonymised using aliases if necessary (see Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992) as well as following data protection guidelines (see Holmes, 2004). Kemmis and Colleagues (2014) offer some further useful information to be provided in the consent, regarding the type of recording that will be made (audio), who will permitted to see the records (myself only), how the records will be stored (in locked filing cabinet or in password protected folder on a hard drive) and finally the distribution of the records (will only be personal, so no further distribution).

Once the project has been completed fully, each of the members of staff, in accordance with the suggestion by Bell (2014), will be provided with a copy of the final report, which will hopefully provide them with a valuable opportunity to see their own development. I hope that through being clear about my aims for the site, I can continue to bring the staff on board with the plan. I believe that the more opportunities colleagues have to be involved in supervision, the more opportunities they will have their voice heard and the more included they will feel; it is through this process that the caring and thus ethical consideration, will prove evident.

3.3.3 Quality in this Action Research Project

As highlighted in Section 3.2.4, different researchers recommend different criteria with which to judge 'good' practice in Action Research. I will utilise these theoretical criteria to produce a tangible outline with which to describe and assess 'good' practice in this specific research.

McNiff (2013) recommends the use of four levels with which to judge 'good' practice in Action Research, which I shall aim to adhere to: technical, practical, theoretical and ethical.

- The *technical* level involves identifying specific criteria against which to judge quality. This was considered relating to the extent to which practitioners are able to judge if they have successfully modified their practice in line with ATIP principles.
- The *practical* level describes understanding what quality actually means with regard to the work taken place. In this research, this relates to the development of a useful framework with which to support staff to reflect on their practice and so be able to consider how aligned to ATIP principles it is
- The *theoretical* level requires how the work is judged and what it may mean for others. For this research, my intention was to offer an ongoing narrative of social validation and alternate perspectives with which to verify my thoughts and reflections, as well as ensure that at all points, the research has a tangible use, that it is rooted in practice.
- The *ethical* level returns to notions of the 'good life' and how much the research reflects this. Due to the fundamental tenets of ATIP being significantly aligned with equity and the support of vulnerable pupils, I was confident that my research would meet the criteria for this level of good practice.

Kemmis and colleagues (2014) suggest that successful Action Research should result in refining my practice as a researcher, using personal aims and objectives as a guide, to focus on holistic professional development (McNiff, 2013). In this way, I was aiming to be able to able to offer evidence and reflections on my own personal growth as a researcher in relation to supporting colleagues to recognise the benefit of ATIP principles, something I passionately believe in.

The last aspect of aiming for quality Action Research relates to the aspiration of achieving validity and thus legitimacy (McNiff, 2016). In order to achieve validity, it is my intention to offer accurate and detailed evidence that has been appropriately scrutinised. I planned to enact this scrutiny at a personal level through the use of reflexive practices, journal taking and a clearly defined set of methodological rules and processes (see McNiff, 2013). I also enacted scrutiny at a social level (see Habermas, 1987), ensuring that my language remained truthful, comprehensible and authentic to my values. It was my aspiration throughout that I encouraged a dialogue with my colleagues, within which I fostered a space within which collaborative action would blossom. Both aspects were taken into consideration through the use of critical friends to assess my own reflections on the evidence gathered, and well as on my perception of the findings, as well via the ongoing focus planned focus group discussion opportunities, who will hopefully act as a validation group (see Kemmis et al., 2014).

4.0 Cycle One

4.1 Introduction

This research was focussed on supporting staff to change their practice, with the aim of bringing them closer to ATIP principles and this most effectively support pupils.

In this section I will cover the focus for this cycle of research, which was to study the impact of practitioner reflective practice in decision making, developed and refined through the use of weekly supervision sessions. I offer an extensive literature review that covers both Reflective Practice and Supervision, describing why I chose to focus on these two aspects and how consideration of reflective practice facilitated the implementation of regular supervision sessions for staff. I provide details of the method, incorporating issues that were apparent with data collection, as well as details on how the data was analysed. The results are then presented and discussed, followed by the presentation of a new Model of Reflective Practice, relevant to the current context. Finally, an analysis of this first phase is provided with a look ahead to Cycle Two of the research.

4.1.1 Focus for Cycle One - Reflective Practice

An initial focus on reflective practice felt like the most appropriate starting point for three reasons. The first rationale related to the idea that change in practice is directly associated with reflective capabilities. The overarching aim of the research was to support staff in the new site to refine their own practice, aligning it with ATIP principles. However, without staff reflecting on their current practice, such refinement is not likely to take place; unless there is a proactive desire, as well as the skills available for this reflection to occur, then no changes will be observed. The first aim, therefore, was to equip all staff with the appropriate language and resources with which to foster and develop reflective practice.

The second focus related to a desire to ascertain the reasons underpinning practitioner reflective practice, i.e., what enabled staff to reflect more effectively and thus prove more adept at refining their practice. This would then provide the opportunity for the next cycle of research to focus in more depth, once such key aspects of reflective practice had been

identified. With this in mind, the second aim was to develop a framework of reflective practice, specific to this specific context.

Lastly, there are significant similarities between reflective practice literature and that described with Action Research, most notably regarding notions of experiential recognition of expertise and the confluence of theory and practice, recalling the conceptualisation of praxis. I hoped that this focus would enable practitioners to develop not only their personal understanding of theoretical aspects of reflective practice – what they *think* - but also for them use this knowledge to refine and improve what they *do*. As such, it was predicted that aligning so closely with Action Research methodology enabled staff to comprehend and provide critical feedback, an essential aspect of providing validity.

4.1.3 Research Question

The focus for Cycle One related specifically to developing an understanding of how practitioners here in the centre enact reflective practice, in order to enact changes in their actions so that they are aligned with ATIP principles of relational practice, via the mechanism of supervision. The success criteria required the development of a reflective framework, with which to most effectively understanding such processes. As such, the research question for this first cycle was:

> **'How successfully was I able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP and align their actions to these principles?'**

4.1.4 Cycle One Plan

In Cycle One, the **aim** was to establish an understanding of how practitioners working in the centre reflect on their own professional practice. Once the literature review was completed, the plan was to develop a site-specific Model of Reflective Practice, providing specific areas that might require most support or are deemed effective targets for wider professional development and training. The plan was that these areas would provide the foci for Cycle Two.

For Cycle One, the introduction of weekly supervision sessions were utilised as the **intervention**, with which to provide practitioners with a greater opportunity to develop their own reflective practice and expand personal awareness of how they enact practice. The **data** for Cycle One was collected and triangulated from three sources: participants engaging in semi-structured interviews, supervisor focus groups and my own personal journals.

For the intervention at this stage to have achieved their objective, the **success criteria** were an increase in practitioner consideration, discussion and evidence of enactment of reflective practice.

This plan can be seen in Figure 6 below:

Overall Research Question:

'How effectively can I develop the skills and knowledge of the new staff team, so they are effectively utilising ATIP principles?'

Cycle One

Research Question: How successfully was I able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP and align their actions to these principles?

Literature Review: Reflective Practice & Supervision

Intervention: Implementation of Weekly Staff Supervision

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interview: 10 participants

Focus Group: 6 participants

Personal Journal

Data collection and implementation was significantly disrupted due to COVID

Figure 6: Plan for Cycle One

4.2 Literature Review

The literature review for this section encompasses two foci; reflective practice as well as the role that supervision plays in the facilitation and development of such practice.

4.2.1 Reflective Practice

4.2.1.1 An Introduction

Reflective practice is both a method *and* a skill (Helyer, 2015), the evolution of which has for many years has been recognised as important for teaching staff (see Day, 1993; Liu, 2015). It has been identified as one of the most important methods through which staff build upon existing professional learning (Korthagen, 2001), which in turn develops self-efficacy (Larivee, 2000), promotes the use of personal strategies to maintain self-care (Young, 1989) and avoids 'staleness' in their practice (Brookfield, 2017). Ultimately, reflective practice will avoid the fallacy of heedless replication of the status quo (see Thompson and Thompson, 2008), discard notions of 'chance' and advance a sense of agency (Brookfield, 2017), leading to improved benefits both to the practitioner and those that they support (Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Definitions and descriptions of reflective practice have incorporated many foci, including mindfulness (Frank, 2004), deliberate thought (Loughran, 1996), experience (Hebert, 2015), agency (Bolton & Delderfield, 2018), temporal considerations (Senediak, 2014) and notions of iterative processes (Nguyen et al., 2014), amongst many others. As this research is studying the potential for reflective practice to promote change, in terms of staff practice, the definition from Black and Plowright (2010) was felt most appropriate:

> *'Reflection is the process of engaging with learning and/or professional practice that provides an opportunity to critically analyse and evaluate that learning or practice. The purpose is to develop professional knowledge, understanding and practice that incorporates a deeper form of learning which is transformational in nature and is empowering, enlightening and ultimately emancipatory' (p246)*

The description discusses the need to utilise critical reflection, the emphasis on 'transformational' and 'empowering' learning and practice, which align well with the goals

of the research. This section describes in more detail how reflection has been theorised previously, followed by the reflective model that will be utilised in this research.

4.2.1.2 Theories of Reflective Practice

4.2.1.2.1 A Technical Rationality

Within the literature, it is recognised that the first author who offered a theory of reflective practice was John Dewey (see Fook & Gardner, 2007; Johns, 2009). Dewey considered reflection to be different to habituated thought (Liu, 2015) and a specific cognitive act that required recurrent consideration (see Dewey, 1933). Reflection, according to Dewey, was specifically predicated around the need to make sense of an event that was outside of typical circumstances (Finlay, 2008).

Stephen Brookfield argues that theorising of reflection in this way negates the manner in which intentionality is removed from that of practice, implying that it is very difficult to deliberate on an action when in the moment (Brookfield, 2017). However, Dewey's model favours such deliberate action, privileging academic theory as the primary means to make meaning of experience. This objective approach, underpinned by what Schon (1983) describes as 'the positivistic epistemology of practice' (p.31) is promoted as valid within educational research (Fook & Askeland, 2007). The framework, described as rationalist-technicist (e.g. Hebert, 2015), is appropriate for explaining how practice should be *in theory,* but often lacks the contextual subtlety to accurately describe practice in the real world (Driscoll & Teh, 2000) as well as relegating the role of the practitioner to that of a technician, designed to simply consider practice in theoretical terms (see Rolfe et al., 2001).

4.2.1.2.2 Moving Toward Experiential-Intuitive

Donald Schon offered the next significant model with which to understand reflective practice, removing the distinction between theory and practice. Schon's framework (1983) further develops Deweyan notions of technical-rationality, recognising the validity of practitioners utilising constructivist knowledge (Brechin and Sidell, 2000), effectively working to reconstruct an epistemology of practice, emphasising the importance of practice in relation to theory (Munby & Russell, 1989).

He offered a clever narrative account to explain his theory, highlighting the way in which our actions and intentions are often misaligned (Osterman and Kottamp, 1993). He describes day-to-day professional practice, or *theories-in-use*, as the swampy lowlands and 'quagmire of uncertainty' in which practitioners develop *tacit* knowledge over time, through trial and error (Bolton & Delderfield, 2018) and it is this tacit knowledge that underpins the framework. Schon (1983) describes that action does not have to be derived from a distinct cognitive conceptualisation, with practitioners often lacking the time to rationalise an issue, faced with 'situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict' (p.51). Instead, with increasing experience, practitioners are less likely to strictly follow discrete rules (Finlay, 2008) and exhibit context appropriate expertise with which they are able to problem solve any issues that present themselves. This is very similar to the 'practical wisdom' or *Phronesis*, offered by Aristotle (Section 2.1).

He then offered a contrasting element, *espoused theory (*Argyris & Schon, 1992), which are the values and practice that we say we are utilising, described as high above the confusing terrain below. It is the 'inevitable' gap (Senge, 2006) between these two theories of action that underpins reflective practice, with practitioners urged to consider their practice to ensure that it matches the values they claim to espouse (see Cunliffe, 2014)

Schon also attempted to operationalise this reflective practice, distinguishing between reflecting after the event and utilising reflection during the moment as a method with which to promote professional learning. *Reflection-on-action,* described by Munby and Russell (1992) as 'the systematic and deliberate thinking over one's actions' (p.3) is considered the 'dominant' mechanism through which teacher professional development is supported (Leijen et al, 2019). It is through such focused consideration that *Reflection-in-action*, a meta-cognitive process (Flores & Day, 2006) can be exercised most effectively, resulting in 'informed practice' (Argyris & Schon, 1992) and what Schon (1983) described as 'professional artistry' (p.22). Kolb (1984) designed a useful framework (See Figure 7 below) which operates in tandem with Schon's work, offering an experimental model, firmly situated in practice, described as 'active experimentation' (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2017).
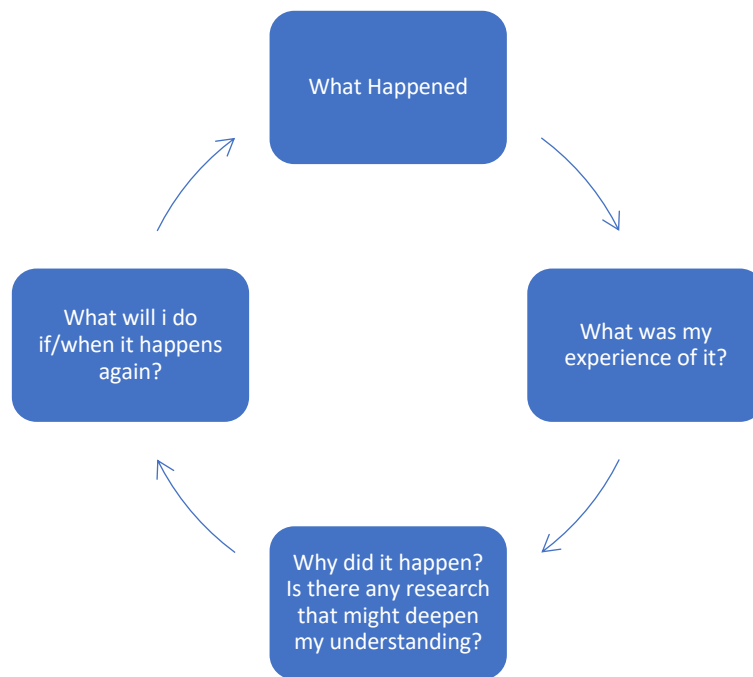
Figure 7: Model of Reflection

(Kolb, 1984)

Although Schon's understanding of reflective practice has been subjected to criticism regarding a lack of precision in definition and questions over temporal accuracy (Eraut, 2004), it is still commonly utilised. In particular, the notion of tacit knowledge, underpinned by a notion of 'mental maps' (Argyris & Schon, 1992) has proven key. The authors acknowledge that many practitioners are not aware of their thought processes in this domain, yet they drive our theories-in-use. Morrison (2005) suggests that change in practice will only take place when we are aware of the discrepancy these and our espoused theories; which is why introducing critical reflection is the necessary next step.

4.2.1.2.3 Critical Reflection

'In many ways, we are our assumptions' (Brookfield, 2017, p.5)

Critical reflection is not a one-off event, but an ongoing commitment to ensuring that practice remains informed (Brookfield, 2017), leading to a greater sense of professional agency (Fook, 2004; Schon, 1995), improved self-discovery (Maich et al, 2000; Tsang, 2003) and the ability to more effectively take into account multiple perspectives (Griffin, 2003), amongst many others, all associated with improved professional effectiveness and thus greater

outcomes for pupils. It stems from the recognition that while our tacit knowledge and experience are important for practice, it must be acknowledged that they inherently contain a high capacity for 'distortion' (Larivee, 2000).

It acknowledges that all individuals have specific 'dispositions', a term used by Pierre Bourdieu to describe our unconscious ways of being (Grenfell and James, 1998). Carroll (2014) acknowledges the important role of parents in forming our views of the world, with further *assumptions* developed over the life course as a direct consequence of our experiences. It is these assumptions that play such a significant part of the choices we make, which directly impact practitioner effectiveness. It is through the lens of critical theory (Fook and Askeland, 2007) that practitioners examine the role of values and assumptions in the choices that they make, ensuring they reflect on their 'taken-for-granteds' that are manifested in practice (Reynolds, 1999). It can be utilised as a bridge between professional and personal self-understanding, as described by Larrivee (2000):

> *Unless teachers develop the practice of critical reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations. Approaching teaching as a reflective practitioner involves fusing personal beliefs and values into a professional identity (p.293)*

Critical reflection is particularly relevant for this research as it actively 'encourages participants to see new possibilities for change' (Fook and Gardner, 2007, p.132), with an aim to develop new theories-in-use (Fook, 2002). It is also describes that practitioner practices must be assessed with regard to ideologies such as the power horizon (Smail, 2001), hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) and other emancipatory and democratic pursuits (Reynolds, 1998), which is again relevant, due to the high proportion of socially excluded and disadvantaged pupils that are on roll at the centre.

Fook and Gardner (2007) describe the need to focus on 'unsettling' assumptions, thus extending the work completed by Schon through the addition of a new category: 'reflection-about-action' (Zeichner, 1993). Thus, critical reflection recognises the need to proactively avoid the fallacy of overlooking everyday occurrences (Brockbank and McGill, 2012) and challenge our practice; Brookfield (2017) describes this process vividly, stating the need to drop a 'bomb of dissonance (to) shatter our habitual rationale' (p. 40). Finlay and Gough (2003) also describe the importance of *reflexivity*, as at one end of a continuum ranging from

reflection ('thinking about something after the event'), through critical reflection and ending with reflexive practice, involving 'a more immediate and dynamic process which involves continuing self-awareness' (p. ix).

4.2.1.3 Reflective Models

Due to the complexities involved, reflective practice should not be considered binary in nature and thus approached as a spectrum rather than a binary conceptualisation (see Husu et al., 2008). Larivee (2008) studied a number of reflective models (i.e. Day, 1993; Farrell, 2004; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Van Manen, 1977) and found a distinct categorisation into four levels. From this review, she derived a model that will be utilised for this research. It is important to note that not all levels of reflection will necessarily be applicable for a specific incident or experience, with some experiences able to be considered at a 'basic' level of reflection. This model was chosen due to the fact that it functions as a 'meta-analyses of sorts, taking into account a plethora of other models. Although it is recognised that practice in the real world cannot be split down into easy discrete groups, the descriptors below offer practitioners clear and actionable statements of intent with which to compare their own practice. The model also offers includes an associated assessment tool, describing many different statements that provide a useful basis for discussion at each of the levels, all which are to be incorporated into staff training, detailed in the Section 3.3.

Level 1: Pre-reflection

Although not included in the majority of the existing models, it is important to offer baseline measure, which can be used to assess professional growth. This level essentially implies that the practitioner is *not* reflective; instead, they are reactive, not utilising evidence accrued through experience or research and without any measure of deliberate thought, failing to adapt their practice to the context.

Level 2: Surface Reflection

The first level is closely aligned to technical reflection (see Schon, 1983; van Manen, 1977) with practitioners able to consider 'what works' in order to access clearly defined objectives. This is similar to what Arygris and Schoon (1974) describes as single loop learning.

Level 3: Pedagogical Reflection

At this level, the practitioner takes into account both tacit knowledge and research to inform practice, with a view to ever close the gap between their espoused theory and theories-in-use, and improving their practice, thus starting to take into account underlying assumptions and considering alternative practices related to the needs of pupils involved.

Level 4: Critical Reflection

As described previously, critical reflection involves a practitioner utilising a critical lens to regularly, consciously and reflexively, consider the impact their 'taken for granteds' have on their actions, with a view to take into account ethics and social justice (Dinkelman, 2000) and ultimately promoting a 'better society' (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Although reflexivity is not mentioned specifically, for the purposes of the model, it will be described as the ultimate goal.

4.2.1.4 Promoting Reflective Practice:

Although the capacity for reflective practice is sometimes described as an attribute (Loughran, 2006), many researchers now believe that it can, and indeed should, be developed as a skill (Moon, 1999; Braun, 2004; Paterson, 1995). Despite acknowledgement that there is no one prescriptive method (Larrivee, 2000), there are several conditions that offer optimum development, including explicit and direct instruction (Russell, 2005), support from a mentor (Falendar & Shafranske, 2004) and a supportive culture (Boud & Walker, 1998). All of these are underpinned by a 'learning-by-doing' approach (Johns, 2009; Scaife, 2010), which facilitates the practitioner being afforded the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. This can be achieved through the use of video-based procedures (Allas et al., 2017; Husu et al., 2008), the implementation of individual action research projects (Finlay, 2008), through the use of journals and reflective writing (Stevens & Cooper, 2009), via the use structured worksheets and prompts (e.g. Rolfe et al., 2001; Driscoll, 2000) and also through supervision, which offers the opportunity to engage in reflective dialogue, more detail of which will be provided further into the report.

All the methods described above aim to 'problematise' the assumptions that provide the foundations for professional practice (Molla & Nolan, 2020). If we consider reflection as a continuum, as described in the previous section, then practitioners require skills to be able

reflect at all levels. This involves the presentation of critical incidents (Fook and Gardner, 2007) to be analysed by colleagues, with particular focus paid to the language used alongside the uncovering of possible assumptions. Another important method through which reflective practice can be developed is by implementing and utilising practitioner supervision.

4.2.1.5 Reflective Practice in the Context of this Research

This research focuses on supporting staff to reflect on their practice against ATIP principles as outlined in Section Two. Figure 8 offers a diagrammatic representation of these principles, to indicate for clarity which principles staff are utilising as a baseline when engaging in such reflective practice:

Figure 8 - Conceptualisation of ATIP

4.2.2 Literature Review - Supervision

4.2.2.1 Background to Supervision

Smyth (1991) observes that the word supervision originates in Latin, defined as 'a process of perusing or scanning a text for errors or deviations from the original text' (p.30). This

etymological fact emphasises that supervision relates to the focussed effort of engaging with reflective practice to ensure accuracy, something that holds true in its more modern iteration. The research literature across professional fields such as nursing, counselling, psychology and social work describe the common use of 'Clinical' supervision as far back as the 1920's and beyond (see Burns, 1958). Early models of such supervision utilised psychodynamic theory and person-centred understanding of development to maximise effectiveness of personal practice (Daniels and Uhlemann, 2004). Since the 1980's, progress has been made in the development and refinement of what has been described as *competency-based* models of supervision. This type of approach, now commonly utilised across these professions (see Anema & McCoy, 2010) requires the identification of agreed knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that form core competencies required for the practitioner to prove effective in completing any specific role (see Falendar & Shafranske, 2007; Plionis, 2007; Sutherland et al., 2013).

In practice, clinical supervision, noted as the primary method through which competencies are developed (Falendar & Safranske, 2007; Holloway, 1992), involves an intervention, in which a more experienced colleague offers professional guidance to a junior, acting to monitor, evaluate and enhance the quality of their services (see Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). These include developing attributes and abilities that are specific to a role, such as clinical skills (Rubin et al., 2007) as well as key foundational competencies such as professionalism, recognition of the influence of diversity and intersectionality, interpersonal skills and ethical considerations (Falendar & Shafranske, 2004).

Use of supervision within the main professional fields described above 'exploded' around the turn of the 21st Century (Bernard, 2006). However, it is only very recently that the relevance and use of supervision within the Education system has started to find its place in the prevailing discourse (see Sturt & Rowe, 2018), with very few educational staff having access to such a process (Lawrence, 2020) and very limited research completed to this point (i.e. Willis & Baines, 2018). Various authors have described the current issues negatively impacting those working within Education, from increasing numbers of staff leaving the profession (Des Clayes, 2017) associated with increasing numbers of staff reporting that they lack the opportunity to reflect and improve their practice (Lynch et al., 2016). There have been many studies completed highlighting the positive impact associated with Supervision on a significant number of outcomes in other domains, including the promotion of skill

acquisition, job satisfaction, improved wellbeing, increasing worker empowerment, development of positive working relationships, professional efficacy and greater adherence to high quality practices (see Watkins, 2011; Reid & Sloan, 2019; Mor Barak et al., 2009; Harvey & Pearrow, 2010). Taking these positive outcomes into consideration, as well as the Education specific issues, various authors have predicted supervision as a key possible method in which staff working in education can 'positively change' their practice (Alila et al., 2016; Fook and Gardner, 2007).

4.2.2.2 Definition and Functions of Supervision

Carroll (2014) describes that 'supervision means different things, to different people, at different times in their professional journeys' (p.13); as such, a general definition of supervision is difficult to ascertain. However, Harris and Brockbank (2011) state that certain descriptors frequently present themselves in the literature - 'support, a series of tasks, a developmental process, training, a consultative process, a reflective process, an interpersonal interaction' (p153). For the purpose of this research, supervision was considered the foundation of all professional development and potential change, described as the 'crucible' for acquiring skills (Hoge et al., 2014), with the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017) offering the most relevant definition:

> *'having a space where it is possible to open up thinking to the mind of another with a view to extending knowledge about the self' (p. 12)*

As highlighted by the variation in definition, supervision can serve a range of purposes and functions. One of the most frequently cited descriptions in the literature is that of Inskipp and Proctor (1995), which is utilised in this research; they suggest that supervision has three functions, normative, restorative and educative, that interact in a dynamic manner to promote professional development and wellbeing.

The *normative* function refers to accountability, with an aim to promote a high standard of ethical care and ultimately enhancing performance. Carroll (2014) describes supervision as 'the forum in which…. we learn how to translate the professional codes, frameworks and ethical theories into ethical action – it is a forum for applied ethics' (p89)'. Such ethical

considerations include ensuring that practitioners take responsibility for their own choices, monitor personal competence and that relevant guidelines and informed consent are adhered to (Mitchell 2009; Borders, 2014; Falendar & Shafranske, 2014; Thomas, 2010; Hoge et al., 2014). Underpinned by a competency-based approach, supervision functions as a 'respectful interruption' (Zachary, 2000) of work, offering the opportunity to compare conceptions of what 'effective' looks like, with practice compared to theoretical and idealised values (Goodyear, 2014; Novins et al., 2013).

The *restorative* function refers to developing resilience and wellbeing, both through self-care and fostering supportive relationships. This is of particular importance, as there has been a much-discussed increase in work-related stress for staff in schools (see Sturt & Rowe, 2018) especially for those who have roles with significant pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities (Asthana & Boycott-Owens, 2018). Bingham (2013) suggested that the promotion of staff wellbeing will be associated with both lower staff turnover and increased retention, which is important, considering it has been shown that around 10% teachers leave the profession each year (Des Clayes, 2017). One of the crucial ways in which supervision offers understanding relates to *projective identification*. Described by Shohet (1999) as the ability to 'induce feelings in others that are in ourselves' (p.427), this unproductive behaviour can cause adults to begin to feel unable to emotionally contain their frustrations (Day 2011) and thus end up reflecting similar behaviour back at the pupils and to fellow staff members, thuis increasing the probability that they are negatively impacted by secondary trauma (Kavanagh et al., 2003). Morrison (2005) describes an oft noted 'myth' that supervision is solely designed to target emotional support; while this is not true, as can be observed throughout this section, the author makes it clear that practitioners require holistic support in order to prove most effective in their roles.

Lastly, the *educative* function refers to the ongoing professional development needs, utilising reflective practice to help guide this process. Supervision has the ability to offer practitioner agency within a supportive culture that actively encourages learning (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). In practice, this means that practitioners are encouraged to identify on areas of strength, as well those for further development in their professional practice, drawing on the skills and experience of peers in similar manner to typical Clinical Supervison competency models (see Alila et al., 2016; Carroll, 2010; Reid & Sloan, 2019).

Supervision also has a key 'meta' role to play in the development of reflective practice across all the three strands. It provides the opportunity to engage in reflection-on-action and thus promote the development of meta-cognitive processes (Calvert et al., 2016) in the form of improved reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983), improving practitioner personal problem-solving capacity (Morrison, 2005). A key aspect of reflective practice within supervision is that it provides the opportunity to engage in dialogue. Originating from the Greek *dialogos,* translated as 'the flow of meaning', it is a process where meaning is co-constructed and where practitioners learn to reflect on their practice (Carrol, 2014). Dialogue is key to maximising the effectiveness of reflective practice to promote professional learning, as self-reflection and introspection will largely fail to uncover the unconscious habitual processes and assumptions that underpin our actions (Carroll, 2014; Day, 1993). Supervision then, offers the 'quintessential reflective dialogue' (Brockbank & McGill, 2012, P.251) within which practitioners can discuss, monitor and evaluate organisational norms, ethical practice, discuss feelings and aspects of wellbeing, as well as continue to take agentic action toward improving professional development.

4.2.2.3 Trauma-Informed Supervision

Various authors have highlighted the relative dearth of attention paid to supervision in the research literature relating to trauma-informed practice (Kerns et al., 2016; Kramer et al., 2013; Collins-Camargo & Antle, 2018). However, it has been increasingly recognised that trauma-informed supervision plays a key role in effective implementation of such practice within organisations, irrespective of domain (Knight, 2018; Berger & Quiros, 2016; Joubert et al., 2013), associated with better outcomes for practitioners across various fields of practice (Pack, 2009; Joubert et al., 2013; Hansel et al., 2011). As this research explicitly addresses the development and installation of trauma-informed practices, supervision in this context is inherently trauma-informed. This section describes how it draws upon more widely used supervision practice, as well as offering any differences in approach.

In a similar manner to typical clinical supervision, trauma-informed supervision it is underpinned by the three main functions of educative, restorative and normative, as described in the previous section. It may include, but not be limited to, the explicit transference of practical knowledge, assessing practitioner resilience to any trauma content in their role relative to previous experiences, supporting them with aspects of wellbeing and self-care, as

well as guidance pertaining to the administrative function of implementing and quality assuring practice relative to organisational policy (Berger & Quiros, 2014).

Trauma-informed supervision is underpinned by key tenets of trauma-informed practice, offering a 'lens' through which practitioners engage in a reflective manner to adhere to such tenets in their own practice (Berger & Quiros, 2014). These tenets, described in full in Section 2.3.2.2 are simplified in the research literature relating to supervision to include the original five; safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment (Berger & Quiros, 2014). These are developed in the same as typical clinical supervision in the first instance by fostering a close supervisory relationship and strong working alliance (see Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Falendar & Shafranske, 2014; Pearce et al., 2013), in order to increase the number of 'authentic' disclosures and maximise the potential for transformative learning (O'Rourke, 2011). Bordin (1983) identified the three core aspects necessary to ensure effective supervision as ensuring agreement on goals, consensus on tasks required to reach these goals and a close relational bond between both parties. In this way, the aim is to develop a space that is non-judgemental, with clear boundaries and expectations for all parties (Berger & Quiros, 2016; Bride & Jones, 2006), to foster an environment where both the practitioner and supervisor feel that they are vulnerable and able take risks to maximise learning (Shohet, 2008). This environment has been described as a 'sharevision' (Fontes, 1995), in which power dynamics are considered on a regular basis with the aim of developing a more egalitarian and honest relationship (Peled-Avram, 2017; Miehls, 2010).

Such a close relationship is particularly paramount when working in a trauma-informed manner as a significant difference relates to the scope of the reflective practice and dialogue taking place within trauma-informed supervision, with a more explicit focus on incorporating the influence of factors that may influence practice from across all domains. One important facet is recognising the impact of sociopolitical influences on both the supervisor and the supervisee; these include, but are not limited by, the impact on lived experience as a result of race, class, gender, discrimination, power dynamics and any inter-subjectivity that may exist between such factors. It also includes explicit consideration of possible biases and reflection regarding how values, experiences and assumptions may influence thinking (Berger et al., 2017; Etherington, 2009; Varghese et al., 2018; Quiros & Berger, 2015). As this type of supervision requires practitioners to carefully consider such personal characteristics and attributes, it is essential that adequate training is provided for all involved to minimise the

possibility of practitioners experiencing harm. Authors have noted a lack of understanding among many supervisors relating to the impact of trauma and trauma-informed care more generally, as well as a wider lack of preparation offered for any supervisory role (see Berger & Quiros, 2014; Courtois & Gold, 2009; Gray et al., 2001; Mehr et al., 2015).

It is important to note that the purpose of trauma-informed supervision is not to offer therapy, possessing a risk of traumatisation if there is too much focus on historic disclosures of practitioners (Walker, 2004). Instead, it is to support practitioners to examine their actions and reactions, as to enhance and promote their work with clients; one such way is through recognising the impact of parallel processes within the supervisory dynamic. This is a key principle of psychodynamic theory that posits practitioners re-enact a problematic dynamic from their professional practice in their supervisory relationship; such transference can be a useful learning opportunity regarding the behaviour exhibited, with practitioners observing how the supervisor reacted, as well as permitting the supervisor the opportunity to reflect on the development of such behaviour (see Schamess, 2012; Goren, 2013; Miehls, 2010). Another way includes supporting them to understand how their own experiences with trauma may be impacting their current practice, described as *countertransference* (Knight, 2018; Berger & Quiros, 2014).

4.2.2.4 Potential Issues in Supervision

The research literature pertaining to supervision, while offering a multitude of positive outcomes and benefits, also describes a need for caution and a careful approach as supervision has the potential to produce undesirable outcomes (Knight et al., 2010) such as uncertainty, stress and even proving harmful for the participants. Such harm does not necessarily have to be intentional but is the result of inadequate supervisory practice that results in psychological harm to those involved (Ellis, 2010).

Such harm could be the result of infantilisation caused by forced imposition and a perception from participants that it is a form of management surveillance or an additional tool for performance management (see Fook & Gardener, 2007; Reid & Sloan, 2010; Ellis, 2010; Knight, 2018). It could also be due to lack of training or guidance for all involved, whether

supervisor or supervisee (Williamson & Harvey, 2001; Carrol, 2014; Davys & Beddoe, 2009). This includes issues specifically relating to the ability of practitioners to foster effective supervisory working alliances (Hoge et al., 2014; Bordin, 1994; Falendar & Shafranske, 2004). A lack of guidance would lead to parallel processes within the dynamic not being monitored (see Page & Wosket, 2014) and ethical appropriateness not adhered to. Without the skill and willingness to attend to the relationship in this way, it is likely that feelings of trust and safety would be significantly diminished (see Cliffe et al., 2014; Neilsen Gatti et al., 2011).

A lack of resources will also decrease the likelihood of success when introducing supervision. For example, attempting to install trauma-informed supervision is likely to fail when the organisation itself does not adhere to such principles across other domains (Bassuk et al., 2017; Wolf et al., 2014). Leadership is responsible for providing clarity across the organisation regarding the vision and purpose for supervision; without such. Without the appropriate support and resources allocated at the highest level, along with necessary opportunity for appropriate professional development, success of supervision is significantly diminished (Knight, 2018).

In summary, despite the significant number of benefits to installing supervisory processes, there are a number of important facets that need to be considered in order to offer the best chance of success. The next section details how supervision was developed in the context of this research in order to most effectively mitigate the risks detailed above.

4.2.2.6 Supervision in the Context of this Research

The aim of this research was to develop a trauma-informed model of supervision with which to most effectively support staff to reflect on their practice and the principles of ATIP, as detailed previously. This section details how this was achieved.

4.2.2.6.1 Models of Supervision

It was acknowledged that they are many different possible supervision models from which to choose (Bernard & Goodyear, 2005). After careful consideration, the Cyclical Model was chosen (Page and Wosket, 2015. - See Figure 9); it is 'holographic', meaning that it has the

flexibility to represent an entire supervision session, or be repeated many times for different topics. Its cyclical nature is also closely associated to the cycle of reflection, as described by Kolb and allows for the presentation and discussion of critical incidents that promote all reflective practice at all levels.
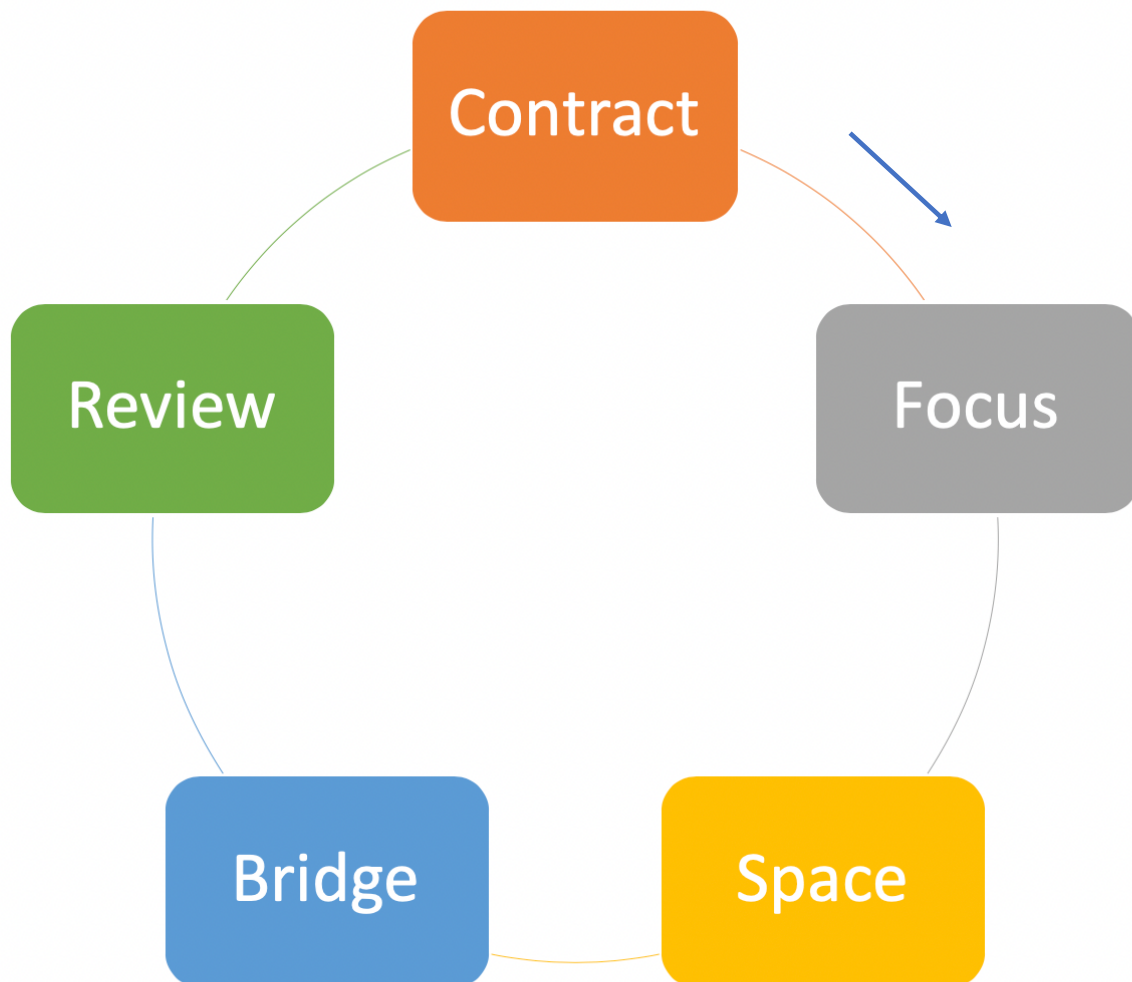
Figure 9: Cyclical Model of Supervision

(Page & Wosket, 2015)

The *contract* step involves a check-in and reestablishment of ground rules and expectations, which are fundamental in promoting trust within the group. The *focus* step requires the group to communicate and agree on a topic they all feel would be most beneficial to discuss. The *space* step is the opportunity for the group to acknowledge, empathise, discuss and challenge assumptions in a positive and constructive manner. The *bridge* step moves the discussion forward and offers the opportunity to start collaborative problem solving. The final, *review*, step involves a discussion on how the group itself, offering every supervisee the opportunity

to offer their thoughts on the process of supervision itself, rather than the content. The model offers a very effective way to move through the process of reflective supervision, while also monitoring and seeking to improve the process, which many models lack.

4.2.2.6.2 Type of Supervision

Group supervision was chosen as the preferred style of supervision, one that has a strong evidence base in mental health professions (see Kaduvettoor et al., 2009). It was deemed to the most effective at offering the opportunity to develop staff reflective dialogue (Brockbank and McGill, 2012), reducing feelings of potential isolation and increased recognition of shared commonalities in needs and aims (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Shulman, 2011), promoting stronger relationships outside of the group and related improvement in wellbeing (Sellers et al., 2016; Willis & Baines, 2018) and opportunities to consider from the perspective of others' (De Stefano et al., 2007). It also permits and encourages participants to draw upon a much wider range of experiences than they would have been able to on their own and from the perspective of different roles and communication styles (Linton & Hedstrom, 2006; Lansen & Haans, 2004). From a practical perspective, it also offered an economical method with which to support the highest number of staff possible; we did not have the resources to offer individual supervision for staff, something that has been discussed as an increasing phenomenon in practice (see Fleming et al., 2010; Haans & Balke, 2017).

Participative group supervision (Proctor, 2000) was selected as the most appropriate type of group model, in which the 'supervisor is responsible for supervising and managing the group and also for inducing and facilitating supervisees as co-supervisors' (p. 38). This model was chosen because it placed the onus on collaborative problem solving on the group as a whole and the importance of co-created learning and communication, rather than solutions being the sole responsibility of one person (see Jackson, 2008). This mutual aid style (Knight, 2017) recognises staff as experts in their own practice underpinned through positive relationship and high levels of trust, fostering the working alliance within the group (Reid & Soan, 2019). This style was deemed to work the most effectively in the research setting, as our staff did not possess the quality of experience necessary to offer the kind of 'authoritative' type of group supervision that is often utilised, where the supervisor is the 'expert' (see Proctor, 2008).

4.2.2.6.3 Role of The Supervisor

Despite the use of participative supervision, a member of the staff team, designated in the organisation as '*vision champions*', was chosen as a supervisor to guide the group. They adhered to advice regarding use of supervision contracts (see Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Willis & Baines, 2018), supporting staff to develop and agree expectations regarding the purpose of their sessions and confirm bespoke ground rules to add to the two universal rules, that supervision does not serve as performance management (i.e., 'snoopavision') and needs to remain confidential. The communication of clear, collaborative expectations and goals, as (see Bordin, 1983; Hawkins & Shohet, 2000), is expected to further develop the working alliance as well as represent a safe space within which practitioners feel confident enough to bring issues and voice concerns for others to offer support (Cunliffe et al., 2014). It was made clear to participants at the start of the process that these expectations and goals could be amended over time, as the group dynamic and priorities change (see Jackson 2008; Proctor, 2008).

Supervisors are responsible for tending to the important task of managing group dynamics (Collins-Camargo & Garstka, 2014), acting as containment for emotions (Bion, 1961) and identifying and effectively dealing with unconscious mechanisms (Brockbank and McGill, 2012). They ultimately support the climate within which reflective practice can be enacted and ensure that the agreed expectations and ground rules are adhered to, while remaining open and willing to use the experience as a learning opportunity for themselves, offering their own experiences and disclosures as part of the collective learning journey (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Reid & Sloan, 2019; Haans, 2008; Berger et al., 2016). Efforts were made to develop the supervisory relationship with the group, as this is such an important aspect of the supervisory dynamic and indicator of positive outcomes (see Ellis, 2010; Lambley & Tish, 2013). Using Page & Woskets' Cyclical Model (2017), the review stage allowed weekly feedback, which not only permitted the ongoing refining of supervision, but also developed an increase trust in the process from all participants through frequent, relevant feedback. One of the key supervisory roles within this style of supervision was to ensure that all participants are afforded sufficient time, as practically as possible, to present their need for discussion. While it is acknowledged that a flaw in the group model is that time for each participant can be limited (see Haans & Balke, 2017), the supervisor must ensure that the time management

within the session is carefully monitored and that group dynamics such as unproductive interactions are dealt with promptly and effectively (see Fleming et al., 2010; Borders et al., 2010).

Various authors have noted that a primary role of the supervisor is to ask effective, open questions that support the supervisee or group to realise their own answers (see Reid & Sloan, 2019; Carroll, 2014). The supervisor utilised Socratic type questioning in order to probe and uncover thought processes that may be otherwise hidden. There are six facets to using this method, which are prompts to clarify the situation, (e.g., 'Are you saying _____?'), probing assumptions (e.g., 'What exceptions might there be to this?'), identifying evidence (e.g., 'How do you know this to be true?'), exploring alternative perspectives (e.g., 'How might ____ explain this?'), considering possible consequences (e.g., 'What would happen if ____ didn't occur?') and a level of meta questions (e.g., 'What is the point of the question?') (see Orchowski et al., 2010).

The research literature describes many examples of unsatisfactory skills exhibited by supervisors in effective facilitation and management of group dynamics, due to inadequate training opportunities (see Knight, 2017; Simon & Kilbane, 2014). In this research, the supervisory team started with a limited range of experiences or skills specific to supervisory skills and duties. To support them, a three session CPD programme was developed; this covered all the theory described within this section. It was offered before the supervision sessions began and offered the opportunity to talk through any possible issues or ask any relevant questions.

4.2.2.6.4 Practical Considerations

Weekly ATIP supervision sessions were introduced, thirty minutes in length. Sessions were built into the weekly staff CPD schedule, protected from other possible commitments as per the recommendation from Bond and Holland (1998). Six supervision groups were organised, each led by a supervisor. Due to the nature of the roles and the extra workload that will be taken on, these roles remained voluntary. Although this could have resulted in dissonance in terms of the data gathered proving biased, due to the fact the vision champion would desire the data to be as positive as possible, the reflexive approach utilised within Action Research means that such a view can be embraced.

Each group had a maximum of six members, which permitted a balance between diversity and 'intimacy' (see Proctor, 2008; Jacobs et al., 2002). The groups were pre-selected, with a view to offer much greater agency with regards to group membership once staff had become accustomed to the process, something that proven successful at our original site. Although other authors (i.e., Willis & Baines, 2018) chose to make their sessions voluntary, citing their desire to include only people that wanted to participate, our sessions were mandatory for all staff to ensure an organisation wide engagement, irrespective of hierarchy.

In summary, it was hoped that supervision could help prove efficacious in the development of reflective practice and thus a transformational change in professional practice through an evidenced based focus on a relational approach, fostering high levels of communication, trust, and support within the groups, each facilitated by a willing and supported supervisor. This positive culture is essential, as uncovering assumptions has been acknowledged to not always be a process that invokes enjoyment, due to the discomforting process that can take place (Fook and Gardner, 2007), so staff will only commit if they feel safe and have mutual respect (see Lizzio et al., 2005). As described by Hawkins and Shohet (2012), the purpose of supervision is to benefit the 'client', which in this case is the pupils; the aim is that improvement in staff practice will cascade down and thus improve pupil outcomes.

4.3 Plan of Intervention Implementation

In order to support staff with developing and utilising reflective practice as a means to change their own outcomes, specific processes and systems were introduced. Professional development opportunities (CPD) were planned, and supervision started from the first week back after the Summer break.

4.3.1 Reflective Practice CPD

On the very first day back in the academic year 2020-21, an INSET CPD day was held for staff, explaining the focus of the year to be around developing staff reflective practice. The session lasted 90 minutes and consisted of two parts. The first part was a brief introduction to reflective practice theory, including the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984) and a description of Schon's work (1983). This detailed the difference between reflection-in-action

and reflection-on-action, as to develop greater recognition of the association between our espoused theories and theories-in-use, i.e., the difference between what we *think* we are doing and what we are *actually* doing. The second part of the session went through the Larivee (2008) model, offering the descriptors for each stage of reflection. As a task, the staff were provided with descriptors for the four stages of reflection and worked in small groups to sort out the wider list checklist of items into the four categories. The session was summarised by highlighting that the process of reflective practice has the potential to prove uncomfortable. Emphasis was placed on the notion that pre-existing assumptions may well require reviewing, which can be disconcerting, but that with appropriate supportive culture, such growth and reflection can take place successfully.

The feedback from the INSET described that the model was successful in introducing the concept of *critical reflection* and being mindful of our personal assumptions, especially when explained in conjunction with the triple-loop learning model (See Figure 10), based on the organisation learning theory developed by Chris Argyris (1977). The model is very similar to the reflective continuum offered by Larrivee (2008); however, I found that this diagrammatic approach was accepted much more favourably by the staff than the continuum, with the third 'loop' highlighting similarities between critical reflection and transformational learning, as suggested by Mezirow (1990) and a key part of this research.
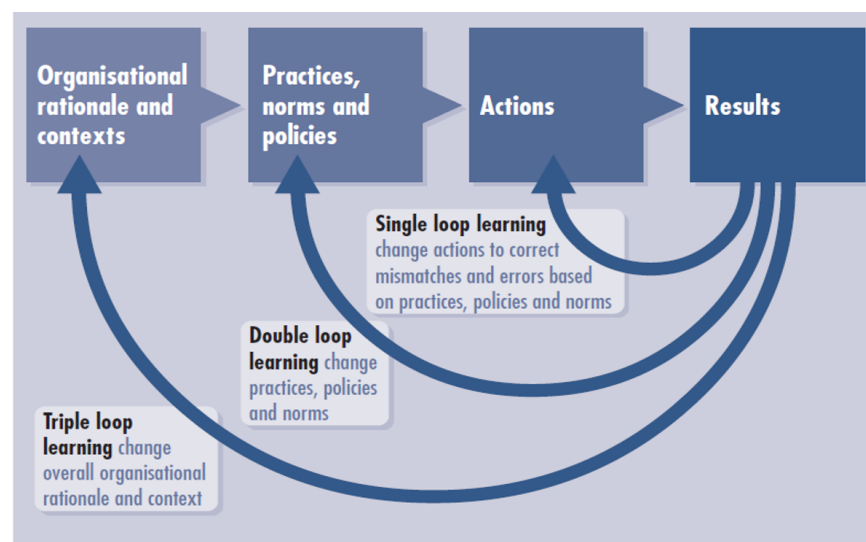
Figure 10: Triple Loop Learning Model

(Aston, 2020 derived from Argyris, 1977)

4.4 Data Collection

> *'The acid test of how effective supervision is simple: What are you (the supervisee) doing differently now that you were not doing before supervision?' (Carroll, 2010, p. 1)*

This section details the data collection for the first cycle, focused on generating evidence that shows changes in practice associated with development of reflective practice; as such, the data collected served to validate or contradict such a hypothesis. In order to gather data effectively, I introduced 'systematic monitoring' (McNiff, 2013), which allowed the identification of new insights into practice. It is recommended that three sources of data are used, to allow *triangulation* (McNiff, 2013) so data can be corroborated; in this research I used data from vision champion focus groups, personal journals and individual interviews with staff. The data was gathered on a regular basis, as to show the progress of the situation over time; the journals are daily, the focus groups weekly and the interviews will take place once per half term. It is important that for all data, the date is clearly provided and that any disconfirming evidence is incorporated into any further analysis and not simply discarded. Precise details of the data collection can be seen in Table 11 below (please see Appendix 8.5 for excerpts and examples from each evidence source):

Data Source	Number of Participants	Data Collection Narrative
Interviews	10	Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour each Interviews took place over period of a half-term (7 weeks) Each interview was recorded and transcribed Participants were classified from A to J
Focus Group	5 (5 in the group)	Focus group sessions lasted between 10 and 25 minutes Sessions took place over period of a half term (7 weeks) – 7 sessions in total Sessions took place on a weekly basis after supervision sessions Focus group consisted of 5 supervisors/vision champions Sessions were recorded and transcribed Participants were classified from 1 to 5
Personal Journal	n/a	Personal journal completed by myself during period of half term (7 weeks) Journal was split into four sections: 'what I did', 'why I did it', 'what I learned from it' and 'the significance of my learning'
Staff Supervision Survey	33	Staff survey was sent out to all staff at the end of the half term period Survey sent via electronic link

Figure 11 - Table of Data Collection Sources & Process

For Cycle One, the aim was to ascertain initial baseline data that showed participant understanding of reflective practice and how effectively it was promoted through supervision; once such data had been analysed, the aim was to introduce interventions for Cycle Two. The process can be seen in detail in Figure 12 below; full timeline of the research can be found in the Appendices (8.1: Appendix One).
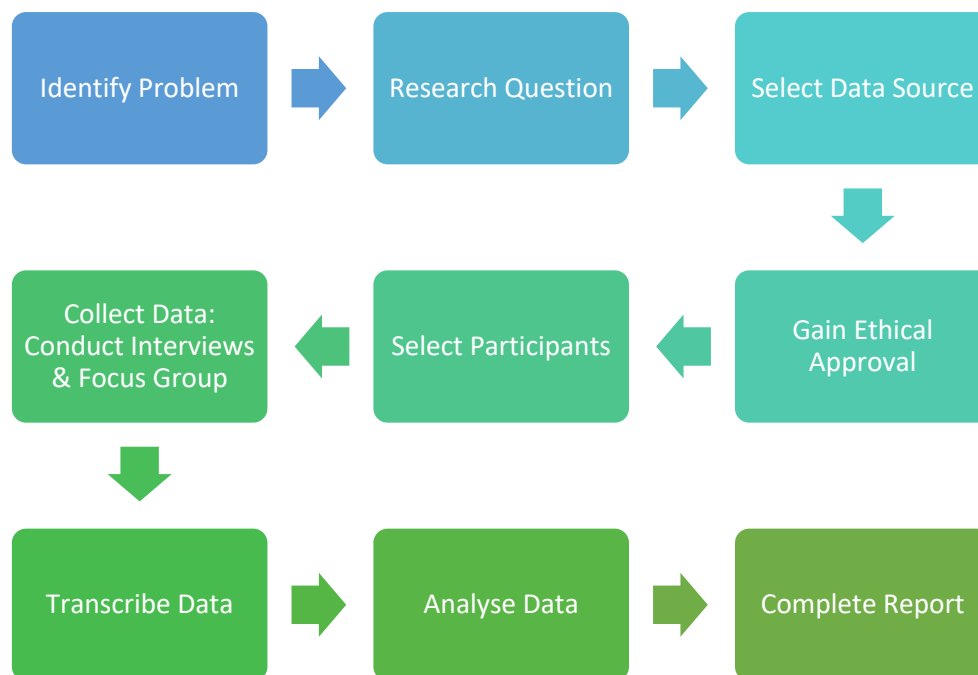
Figure 12: Cycle One Implementation Process

4.4.1 Sample

I asked all thirty-two members of staff if they would be interested in helping support this research, emphasising the opportunity they would possess in shaping future development relevant to Reflective Practice in the centre. The intention was that, if I received a lot of interest, then I would have proceeded to use purposive sampling techniques (see Bryman, 2012) in order to bring together data from the widest demographic possible. Ten staff members were willing to be participants through the possible cycles of research for the individual interviews; they ranged from members of the Support Team, through SLT and the Head (See 8.3: Appendix Three). This scope and variation in roles and responsibility was incredibly fortuitous, as it will hopefully allow the data to illuminate commonalities and differences with regard to reflective practice at the various levels of organisational hierarchy,

enabling a much broader understanding of the construct. It is important to recognise that, as a self-selecting sample, the participants are likely to already possess strong positive beliefs about supervision, reflective practice and ATIP related change. While a sample with a much wider base (potentially using statistical methodology, or purposive, targeted at those staff who I personally believe to be not utilising reflective practice) would potentially offer greater validity with regard to a consensus across the whole staff team, I was confidence that the diversity of the sample and the nature of the research will hopefully mean that a wider range of opinion and thoughts can still be ascertained. Once the sample was selected, I followed all ethical procedures, as described previously in Section 2.2.8 (Full relevant documentation can be found in 8.2: Appendix Two) and prepared the interviews.

4.4.2 Sources of Data

4.4.2.1 Interviews

The aim of this Cycle was to produce a baseline measure of staff opinion; this is necessary to evaluate any future changes in learning, as recommended by Bubb and Earley (2009). This was completed during interviews with the ten participants described above and consisted of two parts; the first was via a small number of semi-structured interview questions, during which Bryman (2012) recommends to naturally encourage participants to discuss elements of their practice they felt were critical in nature, maximising agency. McNiff (2016) remarks that probing questions are useful for providing 'richer' data, and that being empathetic, asking the participant to confirm what they have just said and providing time for the interviewee to response (i.e., embrace silence) are all useful techniques. Socratic and open questioning will be utilised (see Brockbank and McGill, 2012), employing active listening to place emphasis on empathy and the use of re-statement as skills with which to uncover the 'deep' structure of an issue or experience, while recognising the importance of non-verbal communication (Egan, 1990). It is important, particularly with regard to the theme of the research, that I utilised a reflexive approach during all interviews, as recommended by Alvesson (2003), in order as accurately as possible to take into consideration different perspectives. The basic questions designed for this initial stage of the research were:

1) What do you understand yourself by reflective practice?

2) Would you say that you are a particularly reflective person?

3) How do you know when you have been reflective? Outcomes / success criteria

4) What hinders your ability to be reflective?

5) What promotes your ability to be reflective?

6) How important do you think reflective practice is to your work?

7) How, if at all, has the organisational focus on ATIP changed your reflective practice?

As previously described, in association with her model of reflection, Larrivee (2008) has provided detailed descriptors and a self-report assessment tool, incorporating indicators of accessing specific levels of reflection. For the second part of the interview, the aim was to ask the participants to consider their self-reporting, then interview them about their choices; all staff members will have been provided with relevant CPD at the start of the year, so will be familiar with the model. The interviews served as an overarching 'meta' opportunity for participants discuss their experience of reflective practice, with the items in the assessment forming a gauge of 'success' with which to guide further evaluation.

4.4.2.2 Focus Group

After each supervision session, the vision champions attended a supervision session of their own, led by me. There were five vision champions in total, responsible for facilitating the supervision sessions. These sessions provided another source of external data, designed around a focus group model, whereby it not only serves to offer support to staff in their supervisory roles but offers the opportunity for the views of all staff to be accounted for, via their supervisor and supervision sessions. Focus groups have been shown to promote multiple perspectives (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), ensuring that the views of the staff 'on the ground' are captured (Cohen et al., 2011) which is significant element of Action Research. It also has tangible advantages, such as offering greater cost and time efficiency (Robson, 2002), which is important as sessions can only last 30 minutes. As the focus group was 6 people, it adheres to guidance offered by Fowler (2009) and also the need to reconcile between the potential negative effect on group dynamics of only having a few people, but conversely the

'unwieldy' nature of having too many people in the group (Cohen et al., 2011). As the topic of the focus group will always be the effectiveness of introducing the ATIP approach, a 'funnel' approach was considered (Morgan, 1996), in which I aim to interact as little as possible in the preliminary stages of any discussion, increasing my input over time as to ascertain specific answers or information regarding the success of the ATIP approach at that time.

4.4.2.3 Personal Journal

The third source of data came from my personal thesis journal, where I record all my thoughts, opinions, observations and analyses regarding the of establishing the ATIP approach at the new site. The literature regarding the most prudent way to complete a journal offers many different options; I utilised the approach offered by McNiff (2016) whereby each page is split into four sections, consisting of 'what I did', 'why I did it', 'what I learned from it' and 'the significance of my learning'. I felt that such a layout offered the most effective, yet straightforward way in which I could complete a quality reflective assessment on the day without taking too much time out of my already very busy schedule.

4.4.2.4 Staff Survey

Further data, although much smaller in scope and depth than the others, was attained via termly staff surveys. As part of ongoing Quality Assurance and School Improvement protocols, we ask all staff to complete termly surveys regarding the previous term and the role of Supervision and Reflective practice are two of the key indicators collated, although the questions can be amended to suit any new foci. The data is anonymised to encourage honesty, so although individual changes cannot be tracked, centre-wide opinion and feedback is collated.

4.4.3 Recording Data Protocol

The data derived from the interviews and supervision sessions will be recorded through an electronic recording device, following the guidance of Flick (2009) that suggests that useful information such as intonation and non-verbal behaviours are noted. This data will then be transcribed personally, as to 'familiarise' myself with the data (Reissman, 1993). Although

this may take longer, it means that I will be fully immersed in the data in preparation for the coding process. It is acknowledged that the transcript is not an objective record (Qu & Dumay, 2011), which makes it is essential that I considered my own reflexivity during the transcription process, as not to unfairly weight the narrative with my own assumptions. I used transcription coding techniques (see McLellan et al., 2003) and a *naturalised* style (see Bazeley, 2013), both of which detail a way to express non-verbal communication, which is integral to the uncovering of assumptions, as detailed previously.

4.5 Data Analysis: Generating *Evidence*

Throughout the analysis process, following the key tenets of Action Research, it was key that data shows that all involved collaborated and contributed to the process (McNiff, 2016). As such, I tried to ensure that I was clear when evaluating my practice, what 'good' actually means to others; this is such a fundamental facet of the research that it must be probed at interview.

I recognised the importance of offering explanations as to how I have developed my theories of practice, by recognising my assumptions and justifying my actions; in this way the generation of evidence becomes a process rather than a one-off action (McNiff, 2016). A significant part of this related to completion of my personal journal and the inclusion of self-reflective writing; McNiff (2016) states that it is important to look beyond simply describing events or facts, but to offer detail on why my thinking has changed, as part of an ongoing narrative. In short, I must ensure that I am able to 'make the implicit, explicit'.

When all the data had been transcribed, Reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to process and analysis the data. TA offers the opportunity for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6), in a manner similar to grounded theory (see Charmaz, 2006). Although I recognise the limitations of TA, particularly regarding inconsistency and interpretivism (see Holloway & Todres, 2003), I specifically opted to utilise this method as it offers the highest degree of flexibility (see Braun & Clarke, 2016) and the ability to incorporate a critical realist orientation, in a similar vein to the Action Research epistemology described earlier in this research (Section 3.0). This assumes that reality is mediated by socio-cultural contexts, expressed through the language that participants use as mechanism to express meaning, with realities produced within a wider

environmental, cultural social environment (see Terry et al., 2017). This stance aligns well with my focus and belief on the value of the Ecological Systems model of human development, as described in the Introduction; as such it will involve patterns being identified at the semantic, or explicit, level (see Boyatzis, 1998).

The aim was for this cycle of research is inductive in nature (Bryman, 2012), but it is important to recognise that patterns do not *emerge* from the data, as often conceptualised. Instead, rather than meaning being implicitly inherent in the data, any patterns I observe will be influenced by my own personal epistemic framework, hence the need to maintain reflexivity (see Clarke & Braun, 2013). This critical perspective, taken into consideration with the significant quantity of literature I have already read for my professional role, means that in practice, the research may prove more deductive in nature, or at least a combination of the two stances.

I utilised the guidance offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) and supported via the use of data analysis software NVivo 12. First, I became familiar with the data from all sources; following recommendation by King (2004), such themes were not developed until all data had been read and coding scrutinized on at least two occasions, to ensure accuracy in the analysis. Secondly, the aim of TA was to group sections of transcribed text or written notes that have similar meaning; these are called 'codes' and the aim was to capture the full 'richness' of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Then for the third step, codes were then organised into similar groups, called 'themes', described by Boyatzis (1998) as 'a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum aspects of the phenomenon' (p.161). Fourth, I utilised an iterative process, in that I continually revisited the data until such a point where all the codes have been most suitably placed, described by Tobin & Begley (2004) as the principle of 'goodness'. It is important that if a code substantially overlaps with another, the two can merge, with the aim to reduce the number of codes available (see King, 2004). Once this was completed, the themes were named and presented, the fifth step. Bryman (2012) offers the guidance that all the data must be included into the analysis, or else suffer from 'anecdotalism', in which the researcher 'cherry picks' what they want to include in order to (deliberately or otherwise) influence the outcome of the analysis. The sixth and last step was writing up the report. I ensured that all data was shared in line with ethical considerations, most notably maintaining anonymity. I also utilised a reflexive, critical, stance in my personal journal writing, as recommended in the literature

(see Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999). As well as offering a method with which to develop my thoughts, perspectives and practices, it also proved an essential part of the audit trail.

As described in the Action Research Methodology section (Section 2.0), in order to prove valid, such research requires intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus. Although it is recognised that such a relativist method cannot be approached in the same way as when utilising positivist strategy, this research still requires certain procedures to be enacted, in order to achieve these criteria and ensure *trustworthiness* in the data (see Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The first is *credibility*, described as the 'fit' between participants views and my representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004); for this I shared with each of the participants their transcripts and data chosen to represent them in the final analysis. The second is *transferability*; as this is an example of Action Research, with embedded values and influences, this is not of significant concern, as long as the other procedures are followed. The third is *dependability*, for which I have provided a clear and easy to follow narrative of my analysis. Fourth is *confirmability*, described as the need to show an 'audit trail' for how any conclusions have been reached, ensuring that reflexivity is maintained throughout, as to offer my 'internal and external dialogue' (Tobin & Begley, 2004) and completed when the other three procedures have been met. An associated necessary desired remit is that of *validation,* where critical friends and other perspectives are afforded the opportunity to uncover any assumptions, an imperative aspect of reflexive practice and critical analysis (see Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is suggested that the reflexive aspect of the research is embraced rather than dismissed, with no need for additional coding and a focus on inter-rater reliability; such an approach acknowledges that this will serve to only highlight differences in the 'reality' that is perceived in the data by individuals (see Braun & Clarke, 2019).

It was my intention that the supervisory group play a key role in all aspects of the analysis, sharing the data, analysis and having a participatory ownership of the subsequent development of themes. Unfortunately, due to the amendments that were enacted as a result of COVID-19, these meetings were not able to take place in a satisfactory format, so this aspect could not be utilised as desired. Instead, I asked two colleagues, who have agreed to assist with this process, in order to improve their data analysis skills. These colleagues, who are not participants, acted as 'critical friends' and reviewed the data at regular intervals in an

attempt to assess how well the data fits the theme developing what Hosmer (2008) describes as a similar in consideration to positivistic notions of validity. I uploaded all the data onto NVIVO and we discussed during various session how the data should be coded, details of which can be located in Section 3.6.2.

4.6 Results

4.6.1 The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

Unfortunately, this research commenced during perhaps one of the most significant periods of recent global history, one that has impacted health, economic and social outcomes across demographics and most relevant for this research, led to a number of restrictions and education closures. COVID 19 had huge ramifications on everyone, both directly and indirectly, including plans for research implementation. Details of the research timeline can be found in the Appendices (Section 8.1: Appendix One).

Due to concerns regarding physical distancing during the second half of the Autumn Term 2019-20, weekly supervision sessions had to be modified. Staff moved to utilise a virtual format, which was not well received due to a lack of ability to construct meaningful dialogue; frustrations stemming from talking over other members of the group, due to an inability to recognise the non-verbal and verbal cues necessary for communication impeded relational growth and reflection. For the last five weeks of term, the decision was made to utilise the largest space in the centre, which would host each group over consecutive days. It was felt that the groups could be appropriately distanced yet still function as previously; however, it resulted in all CPD sessions for the remainder of the term being cancelled, including those that would have offered the opportunity to study the Reflective Model in greater detail, most pertinently in a tangible, real-life manner. Research has highlighted that any new concept introduced via Professional Development is highly dependent on its duration (see Banilower et al., 2007; Gerard et al., 2011), and thus offering staff the opportunity to become more adept and willing to use it, so this cancellation was a setback.

Associated with this was the frustrating realisation that the reflective checklist was found to not be fit for purpose. Impromptu feedback of staff, collected anonymously using Google Forms, was not part of the original research plan but was completed in the late Autumn Term.

Somewhat counter-intuitively, it seemed that the use of the reflective continuum hampered efforts to reflect on events, causing colleagues to focus energy on locating events within the continuum rather than considering the unique aspects of the situation. The data indicated that the complex language used ('pedagogical' was highlighted as a word of particular concern, with non-teachers in particular not easily able to relate) and the long number of items on the checklist meant that staff found it confusing and were not able to use it to effectively gauge their level of reflection. My aim was to maintain high expectations of all staff with this exercise, as I believe it is the responsibility of all staff to be as reflective as possible and therefore should all be provided the same tools with which to support this. I had simplified some of the language to what I considered a more widely understood level, which I had assumed would be sufficiently comprehensible. However, I lacked the foresight to recognise the issues involved when people are provided such a huge amount of new information. Along with the lack of further opportunity to revisit the checklist (as explained previously), I made the decision to omit the checklist from the research; I wanted it to be accessible for all, so we have a holistic, staff-wide, frame of reference. With this in mind, when it came to the interviews, I made the decision to utilise the continuum and model as a reference for discussion, rather than any specific checklist item.

Associated with the pandemic was the likelihood of increased staff stress. These external pressures related to the increase in the rate of absence, whether due to personal illness or being required to self-isolate. They also were influenced by changes in experiences at work, such as becoming accustomed to wearing COVID related protective equipment or monitoring physical distancing, as well as having to cover for colleagues that are absent. As with all stress, this would be strongly associated with impaired physical and mental health, which is predicted to have a huge detrimental impact on the ability to reflect and associated metacognitive abilities (Spada et al., 2008). It may have also had an impact on the length and level of involvement of the participants during the interviews; some of the sessions were very brief and on occasion, I had to rephrase and approach a topic from a slightly different perspective to gain the relevant information. This may have been due to tiredness but may have also been attributable to the limitations in the participants own knowledge and awareness of reflective language and of their own thinking; twice, even when prompted, the interviewee could not offer a description beyond a superficial explanation of cognitive or emotional processes. Although we can never know for sure the direct impact of such

differences, it is highly likely that such a rare and significant process will have caused the data to deviate from its theoretical 'other self'.

A final issue related to COVID physical distancing was the need to move to a virtual method of discussion, which had some significant implications for the planned data collection. The individual interviews were able to proceed mostly as normal, simply transferring across to Google Meet. Recording and transcription, as detailed previously, remained the same; fortunately, our staff team have become quite adept at utilising such a method to communicate one-to-one.

Data collection from the supervisor focus group was problematic. COVID was responsible for an element of this; I am based at our 'main' site and was not permitted to travel to the other centre, meaning that I had to stay away for the second part of the term, consequently all the communication and meetings had to be completed virtually, with all its accompanying pitfalls and problems. On several occasions, the IT failed to host the group, during one instance the groups overran, missing the meeting and then we moved to a situation whereby the groups were taking place on different days, making it impossible to hold such a reflective group. Consequently, I only managed to achieve a small amount of data from this source; although disappointing, it has been somewhat unavoidable and will allow development of a modified way of collecting data from supervisors, if necessary, in the next cycle.

4.6.2 Data Analysis: Iterative Process & Narrative

This section details the analysis and coding completed for all available data collected during the research for Cycle One. This included transcripts and narratives from:

- Individual interviews
- Vision Champion Focus Group discussions
- Whole staff survey
- Personal journal entries

The analysis took some time, as to ensure that the codes were most accurately allocated; this is not unusual in qualitative analysis due to the iterative approach necessary to most

effectively organise the data, with King (2004) acknowledging the difficulty in knowing when to stop the coding process. As the texts were coded, I became more confident not only in the process, but also in familiarising myself further with the data. I did have to make a conscious effort not to become too quick to simply allocate to an existing code but take each individual case by its own merits.

With regard to ensuring validity of the analysis, I followed the procedure described in the Method. I utilised the support from two critical friends, which provided guidance and suggestions regarding the development of the themes. The two critical friends in this instance were two colleagues that had exhibited and interest in the research topic and were knowledgeable about research more generally; importantly they were not otherwise directly involved in the research in any other capacity. This process involved completing the initial coding phase across all the sources of data myself, then arranging a discussion to go through and share thinking regarding each subsequent phase of the coding analysis. After each discussion, I would go away and complete further independent analysis, before my most recent proposed coding was again presented to them. This iterative process would happen until it was felt that the coding analysis most appropriately 'fit' the data. Most of the themes I had developed over time were deemed appropriate, although there was some discussion around whether 'Recognition of Positive and Negative Reflection' should be in the central theme of 'Reflective Practice' or remain within the 'Desire to Change'. However, as I have already discussed, staff had been subjected to the impact of numerous COVID related stresses and time constraints which, along with their inexperience in such practice, have possibly had unappreciated level of negative impact on the ability of those staff members to offer the most effective analysis possible. Also, as the supervisory focus group interviews were not as successful as hoped, this omitted a significant possible avenue of analysis. This unforeseen development was of course disappointing. Although it didn't seem significant at the time, with hindsight, I can offer that it did have a negative impact on my own reflection on the progress of the research.

Despite these potential issues, I was confident that this narrative, alongside the critical discussion of the data, could act as the mechanism through which I could offer an effective audit trail to prove trustworthiness of the analysis.

By completing an iterative process, I assigned many different codes during the different phases of analysis; this section of the report describes the steps that I took and the relevant decision that I made with regards to coding and grouping these codes into themes. As I described previously (Section 3.5), it is very difficult to be truly inductive; developing staff reflective practice is one of my key professional responsibilities and so is very difficult within a critical position, to be truly inductive in any formulation or analysis. Exemplar coding can be found in Appendix 8.5: Examples of Evidence & Coding Analysis.

Phase One involved going through the interviews and assigning a code to that specific data; this resulted in a lot of codes, many of which used very similar language. Thus, once all the data had been coded in this way, I looked to combine and rename any of the codes that could easily be grouped. For example, there were many around having a supportive team, ('being available', 'open door') that I amalgamated. The list of codes for each phase are displayed in Tables below each section.

Phase One: List of Initial Codes		
Supportive Colleagues	Want to Change	Good Reflection
Confidence	Self-Critical	Bad Reflection
Time	Teamwork	Saying vs Doing
Who 'I' Am	What Reflection 'is'	Perspective
What I Can Do	Way Centre is Run	Impact of Emotions
Allowed to Get on with Job	Feedback	Making Mistakes
Gut Feeling	Don't Like the Feeling	School vs Personal

Figure 13 - Cycle One: Phase One Coding Analysis

When considering the Phase Two of the analysis, it was my aim to assign data to more appropriate sub-themes and also improve the accuracy and succinctness of the language in the descriptors (i.e. *don't like the feeling* became *discomfort*). I considered that it was necessary to split *time* into two separate sub-themes; both the length of time it took to reflect and also taking the time to reflect. At this phase, I removed *school vs. personal*, as I thought that the simple dichotomy between the two was far too wide ranging for one code, instead deeming it necessary to include at a much wider level. It was for this reason that I removed *making mistakes*, as I felt that there needed to be recognition of the difference between the personal and the organisational aspects that impacted the practitioner's feelings regarding

feeling confident about making mistakes and trying to develop their skills; instead, I opted to introduce feedback as a more appropriate code. It was at this point that I started to consider reflective practice at the two levels of individual and organisational. Therefore, the predominant theorisation at this phase, and one that still can be identified in the final model was in the use of three themes, the first of which relates to an *Understanding of Reflection*. The data showed that in order to explain reflection, one needs to have a conceptualisation of what reflection actually looks like in practice before it can be enacted, hence the importance of a separate theme. The other two themes were *internal* (individual) and *external* (organisational) factors. The decision to split the themes into such external / internal factors is one that is recognised within the literature, with various authors suggesting that reflective practice is oriented from both perspectives (see Liston & Zeichner, 1990; Korthagen, 2001). A split focus in this manner aligns neatly with the ATIP research literature. External factors, ultimately designed and fostered by leadership teams, have been well documented to offer the necessary gravitas and support necessary for reflective, relational practice to occur (see for example Bloom, 2007, Craig, 2008). Offering the opportunity to focus on Internal factors as an explicit sub-group allows the development of understanding on how practitioners may develop equanimity and de-escalation techniques, key aspects of relational and ATIP practice (see Crosby, 2015; Jacobson, 2021).

Phase Two		
Understanding of Reflection	Internal	External
Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling	Desire to Change	Allowed to get on with the Job
Saying vs Doing	Self-Critical	Supportive Colleagues
Time Needed to Reflect	Who 'I' Am	Teamwork
Good Reflection	Time Taken to Reflect	Leadership
Bad Reflection	Discomfort	Feedback
Aim of Reflection	Confidence	
	What I Can Do	
	Perspective	
	Impact of Emotions	
	Values	
	Knowledge	
	Feedback	

Figure 14 - Cycle One: Phase Two Coding Analysis

For Phase Three, many of the changes involved changing the language of the codes to most appropriately describe the data. The external theme was now titled *Structural/Cultural* factors and related to passive influencing factors, and the internal theme was renamed as *Ability to*

Change, associated with proactive, individual decision making. I modified this theme by introducing the concept of identity (rather than the somewhat primitive '*Who I Am*'). I rejected the notion of a simplistic *good / bad* split in terms of reflection, due to possible issues arising from lack of consensus and practical validity of such terms. Instead, I described the concept as a pro-active reframing of a situation that can be both positive and negative, based upon a much more individual understanding of what the individual may have experienced and their personal worldview and perception, thus moving it to the *internal* domain. I also improved the quality of the language in the Understanding of Reflection theme, amending 'Saying vs Doing' to now 'Recognise Thoughts vs Actions', utilising a more sophisticated vocabulary moving forward.

At this juncture, I revisited previous iterations of coding and split the various different factors that had been offered to describe *leadership*, including them as separate codes (*Collaboration*, *Communication* and *Culture*), as I felt that it would provide a much more robust lens with which to consider how external factors influencing reflective practice.

Phase Three		
Understanding of Reflection	Ability to Change (Internal / Active)	Structural / Cultural Factors (External / Passive)
Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling	Self-Critical Personality	Trust & Agency
Recognise Thoughts Vs Actions	Identity	Supportive Colleagues
Time Needed to Reflect	Time Taken Out to Reflect	Teamwork
Aim of Reflection	Discomfort	Collaboration
	Confidence	Communication
	What I Can Do	Culture
	Understanding Others' Perspective	
	Impact of Emotions	
	Values	
	Knowledge	
	Seeking Feedback	
	Reframing Situation (Positive AND Negative)	

Figure 15 - Cycle One: Phase Three Coding Analysis

The major change for Phase Four was the introduction of a goal oriented fourth theme, originally presiding in the *Understanding of Reflection* theme. It was clear from the data that having a frame of reference was integral to any reflective practice, so it felt appropriate to make this element a theme. The previously described *desire for change* was now implicitly

part of this theme; it was felt that if there was discrepancy between the values of the individual and those of the organisation, it would be at this junction that change, or lack thereof, would be apparent, therefore these codes were moved across into this theme.

Phase Four			
Understanding of Reflection	Desired Impact of Action (Frame of Reference)	Ability to Change (Internal)	Structural / Cultural Factors (External)
Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling	Values & Identity	Self-Critical Personality	Trust & Agency
Recognise Thoughts Vs Actions	Knowledge & Experience	Time Taken Out to Reflect	Supportive Colleagues
Time Needed to Reflect		Discomfort	Teamwork
		Confidence	Collaboration
		Understanding Others' Perspective	Communication
		Seeking Feedback	Culture
		Impact of Emotions	
		Reframing Situation (Positive AND Negative)	

Figure 16 - Cycle One: Phase Four Coding Analysis

Phase Five was the final iteration of the analysis process, the results of which can be seen in Figure 17. At this point, I realised that it was essential to include something that had been only implicit to this point, explicitly introducing *Change in Practice (If Necessary)* as a discrete code. I also made the decision to recognise the separate influence of both professional and personal experiences on reflective practice. Although there might be a significant interrelationship between the two domains, this may not always be the case, hence deliberately splitting them into two sub-themes. I also at this point improved the accuracy of the *Emotions* code, again amending the brief, rudimentary code to explicitly include ramifications of mental and health and wellbeing on the ability to engage in reflective practice, from a personal as well as a professional perspective. For the External Theme, I I again amended the previous language used for coding, incorporating from the data the more accurate notion of *Culture of Productive Mistake Making*, rather than just the vague *Culture*. I also made the decision to add two sub-themes here, bringing together the previously simplified codes under the new label *Leadership & Systems*, with the previously used *Teamwork* jettisoned as it was too similar to the existing codes which possessed much greater validity. I considered splitting the *Ability to Change* theme into two sub-themes, *Feeling*

Stressed and *Confidence*. Both highlight the importance of emotional wellbeing and resilience on one's ability to maintain effective reflective practice. However, it was felt that adding another layer at this point would be superfluous and would prevent the necessary clear and obvious demarcation between the code grouping. This final iteration was felt to be most closely associated with an envisaged ecological understanding of the phenomena, with the factors influencing each other to enact reflective practice.

Phase Five			
Understanding of Reflection	Desired Impact of Action (Frame of Reference)	Ability to Change (Internal)	Structural / Cultural Factors (External)
Change in Practice (If Necessary)	Personal Values & Identity	Reframing Experiences	Supportive Team
Moving from Thoughts vs Actions	Professional Experiences	Taking Time to Reflect	Leadership & Systems
Time Taken to Reflect	Knowledge & Skills	Emotion & Wellbeing: Professional vs Personal	Culture of Productive Mistake Making
Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling		Seeking Feedback	Trust & Agency
Temporal Aspect		Alternative Perspectives	Collaboration & Communication
		Confidence	
		Overcoming Feelings of Discomfort	
		Self-Critical Nature	

Figure 17 - Cycle One: Phase Five Coding Analysis

From this final phase of coding, I developed a Model of Reflective Practice (Figure 19), which shows how the different themes inhabit an ecological model with which to describe reflection, starting at discovering what the participants understood by reflective practice, then working 'backwards' to find the factors that influence this phenomenon.

The overall refinement and iterative process over the analysis can be observed in Figure 18 below. Diagrammatic representation of proportional weightings for the final coding analysis from NVIVO can be found in Appendix 8.5.5: Cycle One Coding Weighting.

Initial Codes	Focussed Coding	Final Coding
Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling	Understanding of Reflection	Understanding of Reflection
Saying vs Doing		
Time Needed to Reflect		
Good Reflection		
Bad Reflection		
Aim of Reflection		
Time Taken to Reflect		
Desire to Change	Internal	Desired Impact of Action
Self-Critical		
Who 'I' Am		
Values		
Knowledge		Ability to Change (Internal)
Confidence		
What I Can Do		
Perspective		
Impact of Emotions		
Discomfort		
Feedback		
Allowed to get on with the Job	External	Structural / Cultural Factors (External)
Supportive Colleagues		
Teamwork		
Leadership		
Feedback		

Figure 18 - Table Showing Iterative Coding Process

Structural / Cultural Factors (External)

- Supportive Team
- Leadership & Systems
  - Culture of Productive Mistake Making
  - Dveloping Trust & Agency
  - Ensuring Collaboration & Communication

Ability for Change (Internal)

- Reframing: Importance of Positve (as well as Negative) Reflections
- Taking Time to Reflect
- Emotion & Wellbeing
  - Professional vs. Personal

- Seeking Feedback from Others
- Seeing from Other Perspectives
- Overcoming Feelings of Discomfort
- Self Critical Nature

Desired Impact of Action (Frame of Reference)

- Personal Values & Identity
- Professional Experiences
  - Knowledge & Skills

Reflection

- Change in Practice (If Necessary)
- Moving From Thoughts vs Actions
- Time Taken to Reflect
- Unconscious 'Gut' Feeling
- Temporal Aspect

Figure 19: Model of Reflective Practice

4.7 Discussion

This section offers a model of reflective practice, based upon the data collected from the participants and relevant to the context of our workplace; it also provides analysis and insight into each of the separate sections of the model, relating it to both research literature and my own experience and views.

4.7.1 Ecological Model

The aim of this research was twofold: to develop and understand staff reflective practice with regards to the implementation of ATIP principles. I utilised recommendations from Miles and Huberman (1994) regarding the benefits of formulating a display, within which to provide organise concepts and provide clarity of the analysis process. Thus, utilising my knowledge and preference of the Ecological Systems Model of human development (Brofenbrenner, 1977), I organised my analysis of the data and designed an Ecological Model of Reflective Practice (See Figure 20). This new perspective of reflective practice overcomes difficulties associated with categorising factors in a binary manner, incorporating bi-directional influence of all the factors, reciprocally influencing across concentric spheres.

Reflection

Desired Impact of
Action (Frame of
Reference)

Ability for Change
(Active/Indiviudal)

Wider Factors
(Cultural/Passive)
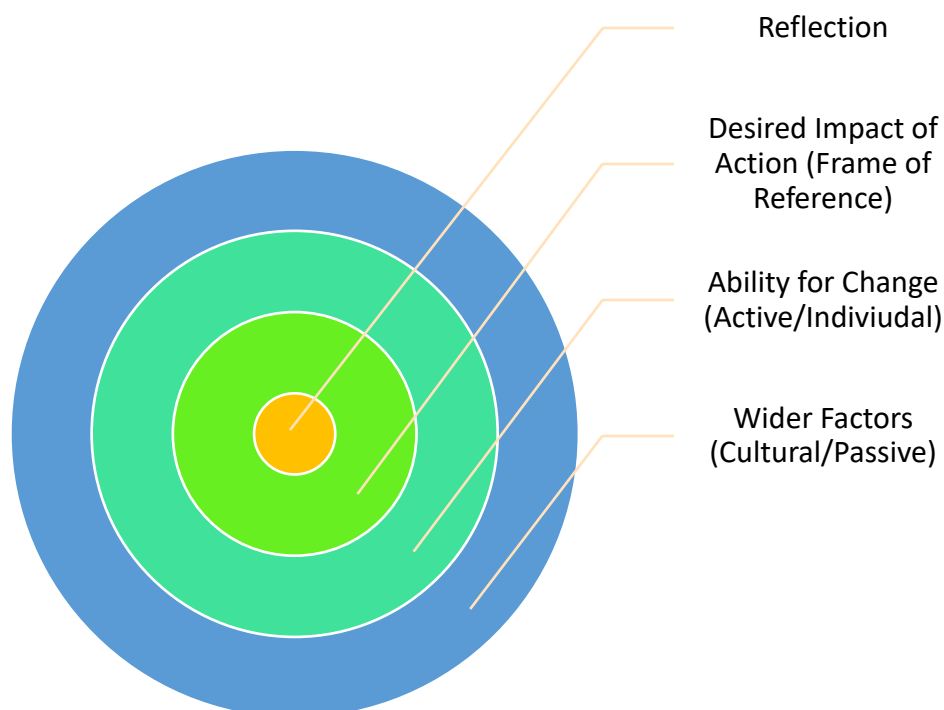
Figure 20: Ecological Model of Reflective Practice

4.7.2 Theme 1 Discussion: Reflection

> *(RP is) 'fundamental. So, it has to be, because otherwise you constantly continue to make the same mistake, you don't learn and actually, then what do the young people get out of it. And that's ultimately what this is about young people' (Participant J)*

The importance of reflection as *better* has been discussed frequently in the relevant literature (see Chitpin, 2011; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Lempert-Shepell, 1995). Participants were quick to extoll the benefits of utilising reflective practice as a means to support pupils to get the best outcomes possible, recognising this as a '*fundamental' (Participant J)* requirement of their role. In this way, the desire for continual improvement acts as driver of social equity, associated with a strong desire to want the best for pupils who have already experienced vulnerability in their learning historically. In the context of this research, reflective practice is the mechanism through which staff develop their ability to utilise ATIP related skills and processes.

Participants acknowledged that reflective practice did not have to result in any tangible change or action, but the data did indicate a clear delineation between 'thinking' and 'reflection', with reflection inherently associated with a solution focussed perspective. Instead, the data showed that as long as the situation is evaluated and considered to have been the most effective possible, then reflection has taken place:

> *'I was just about to say sometimes when I'm reflecting, and I'm reflecting because I think I was wrong, or I've made a mistake. And actually, occasionally I might talk myself into the, into realising Actually, no, I affirmed what I, what I first did, and it was the right course of action. It's just made other people feel unconfident, or, you know what, I don't know, whatever happened today' (Participant B)*

The important thing is ensuring that a *proactive* thought process has occurred; various authors have described reflection as being at a higher cognitive level than merely thinking, emphasising 'active' involvement (e.g. Dewey, 1933; Zimmerman, 2000; Mezirow, 1991; Goulet et al., 2016). Loughran (1996) elaborated further, by describing reflection as 'deliberate and purposeful' (p. 14), while Shavit and Moshe (2019) referred to the phenomenon as 'a metacognitive process of 'thinking about thinking' (p. 548).

All the participants described reflection as most predominantly occurring after the event, reinforcing the view from the literature that describes reflection-on-action is the dominant

mechanism of reflective practice, recognising that they need space '*away from the scenario it existed in*' in order to engage with reflection (*Participant A*) (see Leijen et al., 2019). However, some of the participants did mention reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action, the other two mechanism described by Schon (1983):

> '*I think sometimes you can be impulsively reflective. So sometimes, for example, in a session, I might instantly make a decision that this isn't working. So I change that. So I've kind of been instantly reflective in the scenario and the context*' (Participant J)

All participants discussed the need to make a situation or process as productive as possible, common throughout all research literature – '*to inform better practice*' (Participant A) (e.g., Scaife, 2010; Caroll, 2014), but only some of the participants embedded the full continuum of reflective language within their answers, discussing the need for evaluation, values and critical reflection (see Brookfield, 2013; Bolton & Delderfield, 2018).

Participants instead used visceral physiological language related to feelings of anxiety to describe reflection, such as when a head will stop '*buzzing*' (Participant C), and feelings in the '*tummy*' (Participant I) and a '*gut feeling…. a physical thing*' (Participant 3 - Focus Group). Although there is little specifically around 'gut' feelings as observed in the data, many authors recognise such complexity as associated with the confusing nature of reflection, resulting in 'inner discomforts' (Brookfield, 1987), which may manifest as physiological ailments. However, research has shown that such emotion is key to reflective practice, as emotions are intrinsically intertwined with knowledge and experiences (see Fook & Askeland, 2007; Mezriow, 2000). Recognising and being mindful of one's emotions and such inner thought processes, are fundamental aspects of effective ATIP use, necessary to most appropriately and effectively support a dysregulated young person (e.g. Knight, 2007; Morgan et al., 2015).

This evaluative process was governed by significant degree of individual differences, with Participant A describing such a unique aspect of reflection as '*an internalised measure*'. This was apparent in the time taken to reflect:

> '*Some days, you only really reflect it when you're in bed at night? Why not? Sometimes you will, it will come to you instantly. You know, it's a very, even though you have a process and you think about particular parts of the lesson, and what they've done. He sometimes comes very quickly, and sometimes it takes a long time*' (Participant G)

It was recognised that the time participants allocated themselves in order to practice reflection was contextual, with subject based 'single-loop' pedagogical level requiring much less time to evaluate than a critical evaluation of an encounter with a fellow member of staff. ATIP principles recommend the use of 'deeper', more critical reflection that will inevitably take more time for the practitioner to fully process in an effective manner; the emphasis of ATIP is for the practitioner to be curious, looking beyond the superficial and recognising the driving factors that underpin behaviours (e.g., Oehlberg, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012).

Participants highlighted that they have developed their own structures and routines over time in order to promote reflection, whether '*processes*' (Participant C) or regular '*affirmations*' (Participant J). There were considerable differences within participants and contexts in recognising when reflection had taken place, significantly associated with unconscious feelings rather than any concrete process or explanation:

> '*If something if something's happened at work that bothered me whether that be positive or negatively, you know like is it in my mind….. And then so later on. Something might dawned on me. I took an evening and I think, oh my god it's because of this, or, so I'm thinking about it subconsciously*'. (Participant F)

At the time, I can see from my personal journal that I considered such unawareness attributable to different possible causes. Participants tended to consider reflective practice as a binary process, unaware of the different strands incorporated into the chosen reflective model (Larrivee, 2008); they either lacked the skill or ability to understand it adequately enough to utilise it or they exhibited an unwillingness to use the model. I reflected in my notes that all three, while personally frustrating, are illuminating as they will provide useful directions to move forward and ensure that *all* staff are more suitably prepared for the next cycle. Recognising my own experiences, I would estimate that the disruption this term due to COVID relating to staff training and supervision will have a significant impact on the more strategic aspects of school improvement, sacrificed to ensure the operational management remains effective. They also link into aspects of confidence and desire to change, discussed further into this section.

I reflected in my journal that time taken to reflect would have also been impacted by a lack of success measure for staff to strive to attain; the omission of the Larrivee (2008) checklist

meant that staff no longer had concrete items with which to compare their practice. I maintain that this was the appropriate thing to do, as staff had reported confusion and frustration with the checklist but did not at the time foresee this problem, which in hindsight was the cause of personal frustration; I feel that my keenness to support the staff negatively impacted my clarity of thought. Although the staff were provided with the descriptors for each of the reflective stages on the continuum, these may have proven too theoretical and not practical enough that, alongside a lack of ongoing opportunity to practice using the model, meant that staff felt removed from their practice. This directly links to the disconnect between espoused values and tacit knowledge described by Argyris and Schon (1992); staff may be keen on reflecting, but until they are appropriately supported, they will be unable to consistently 'bridge the gap' across the continuum. In in this respect, the data also highlighted that Supervision was not offering an appropriate level of support for staff with which to develop their reflective practice and that there was not yet the necessary consistent shared language and discourse available and used pertaining to ATIP, recommended as a necessary step with which to support staff to reflect and modify practice (see Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994).

4.7.3 Theme 2 Discussion: Desired Impact (Frame of Reference)

> *'Reflection comes from actually if you need something to reflect against'*
> *(Participant D)*

During the analysis, it became clear that reflective practice can only be enacted when it can be compared to some form of predicted outcome; if there is nothing against which to contrast, an action cannot be improved. This is not simply a philosophical musing but a key tenet of reflection, one that has been recognised in the literature (e.g. Zeichner, 1993). Thankfully, all the participants wanted the best for the pupils, but the notion of *impact* varied significantly; Participant A was significantly more elaborate in scope with their understanding of outcome compared to a member of the support staff, representing the fact that many of the high-stakes decisions involved in their role have to be appropriately methodical.

Herbert (2011) describes that reflective practice consists of two components: knowledge and experience, which aligns closely with the data:

'you can only experience or you can only reflect, or you reflect more accurately or more effectively, when you have built up an increased repertoire of knowledge, which is what you were saying. And the knowledge comes from experience' (Participant D)

Many authors have written extensively about the importance of developing *professional* knowledge in education (see Shulman, 1987 for a description of the seven areas of teacher knowledge), thus forming a frame of reference for reflection, developing what Schon (1983) described as *professional artistry.* The literature describes that reflection is utilised in the pursuit of deriving meaning from an experience (see Mezirow, 1991), thus expanding our knowledge base over time. Knowledge can also be advanced in a more explicit manner, through the use of professional development opportunities. In this research, such professional development has been focussed on supporting practitioners to adhere and modify behaviour in line with ATIP principles, such as equity, the promotion of relational practice and professional curiosity, as shown in Section 4.2.1.5.

Such knowledge is not only related to cognitive or rational processes; as described in the previous section, unconscious 'gut' feelings will be more quickly accepted and understood over time. Interestingly, the data showed that participants recognised the 'double edged sword' between experience and developing practice and the two do not necessarily synchronise in harmony:

'I will always try and bring in an example of where perhaps in the past, I've learned from my experiences, I went away, and I did x and it didn't work. And I reflected that I checked, make changes. And I do think experience has got a lot, a lot to offer, actually.... I think, I think sometimes the longer you've been in it, the harder it is to hear that you're doing it wrong.' (Participant B)

There is also a more personal basis relating to knowledge and experience, relating to individual perception of values, beliefs and identity, associated with our actions ('*Standing up for my values and staying true to* them' – Participant C) and recognising similarities in others that we then approach for support ('*You will listen to advice and guidance and criticism from those people'* – Participant 2 - Focus Group). Although it is acknowledged that there may be a significant transactional influence between the professional and personal domains (e.g. Pajares, 1992; Borko et al., 2000), the role of personal values have been recognised as essential for critical reflection to occur (see Brookfield, 2009; Fook & Gardner, 2007: Liu, 2015). As described in the literature review, our *capacity* for reflection is

developed upon a foundation of experiences, aspirations and desires, which in turn have a huge influence on the assumptions and biases we exhibit, both consciously but most pertinently, unconsciously (see Kember et al., 2000).

All the participants were quick to recognise the importance of professional knowledge and the close association with experience in the workplace, despite reflection acting as the important mediator between the two; without productive reflection, years of experience can prove sadly misguided. Only one of the participants was new to the profession and their answers were the most eloquent at describing the knowledge and reflection that they had carried out over such a short space of time (a half-term). Some of their points were embedded within a framework of teaching and learning, focussing on academic / cognitive outcomes. However, many of the participants discussed reflection on a more holistic level, introducing wellbeing and pastoral aspects of their role. This highlights a focus from our staff on a wider remit than many schools would offer and one that is, in my experience, more common in Alternative Provision. Although only a few of the participants explicitly mentioned 'values' in the data, the frequency of such a focus appears to at least implicitly highlight a commonality in their value and belief systems. I would suggest that staff choose to work with us as they have such values, like myself, rather than their values being changed, but the data does not support such an analysis to take place. The data indicated a desire to revisit a collaborative piece of work around shared organisational values, to ensure all staff have 'buy in' to the vision, again to get the best outcomes for the pupils:

> *'having a vision, and so that it makes it easier to be reflective about my own practice, if I have a if there's a shared and clear vision that I know what we're why we're working towards it... And so that helps because, because you know what, what you're aiming for? And so you can think about, am I contributing to that? Yeah, am I doing it? What can I do to help?' (Participant B)*

In highlighting the wellbeing aspect of their work, participants have recognised that there is a bias toward the restorative aspect of supervision and a natural erring toward the wellbeing and combating secondary trauma. Although an important tenet of ATIP, any focus on one aspect of the supervisory triumvirate (see Inskipp and Proctor, 1995) may, of course, mean that outcomes offered from the other two foci (Educative and Normative) are diminished.

Despite a focus on critical reflection in the model, I noted in my journal that we had at that point of the research not provided staff with enough support or opportunity to effectively consider reflective practice beyond a binary construct, nor offer the tools with which to evaluate and uncover their assumptions.

4.7.4 Theme 3 Discussion: Ability to Change (Internal)

'I won't settle with what I've got' (Participant 4 - Focus Group)

Confidence was observed in the data as significantly underpinning an individual's ability to change and utilise reflective practice honestly and effectively. This was a deliberate choice; rather than considering that our staff members actively did not want to change, I initially considered a lack of proactive reflection on a personal level as stemming from a place of low confidence and poor self-esteem. Such consideration aligns with ATIP principle of professional curiosity rather than a judgement based on more surface level decision making; ATIP is a holistic lens with which to view *human* behaviour, not just that of pupils.

Having already covered the concept of personal skills and knowledge, I wanted the model to incorporate a measure that recognises the difficulty in change, as described in the data, but still want to persevere with the possible challenge and discomfort, something that is strongly associated with higher levels of reflection (see Brookfield, 2017; Liu, 2015). As described in the previous section (Section 4.7.3), participants with greater experience seemed to be exhibit greater confidence in their practice but are less likely to want to amend their practice, somewhat at odds with assumed notions of change. It is not possible unfortunately, at this stage to uncover causal factors but is a useful consideration to take to the next round of research.

One of the most commonly observed foundations upon which reflective practice is predicated involves moving beyond an individual understanding of a situation or action and incorporating the perspective of another, findings replicated in the data. Some authors have highlighted the need to utilise a more objective 'bird's eye view' (e.g. Bolton, 2005; Scaife, 2010), thus attempting to remove the potentially negative impact of emotion and ensuring reflexivity is maintained. Other authors promote the role of dialogue as the medium through which reflective practice becomes tangible outcomes (see Dixon, 1998), recognising the

strength of collaboration and utilising shared knowledge. Both approaches can be utilised in harmony, recognising that any *individual* is inherently flawed and will always possess biases and assumptions (i.e. Brookfield, 2009), which need to be addressed before a more accurate representation of a situation can occur. Discrepancy was also highlighted between the efficaciousness of individual compared to wider reflection, with sage observation offered regarding the possible negative impact on reflecting with others and the risk of introducing a '*culture to moan and whinge and not look for a solution' (Participant 5 – Focus Group):*

> *'I think that's also the difficulty with reflection is you can do it like that. So I guess it's the macro micro, isn't it? It's how do you as an individual, but then actually also that wider context? Because people probably can be reflective individually. But are there people reflecting on as a school? I feel heavily that there is not a lot of teamwork here. And I think that is worrying for reflection. And I think I've raised you before, like supervisions, that comfortable-ness of people's groups with supervision, I think hinders reflection, true reflection, because otherwise, it's that echo chamber, and I think we sometimes existed in we certainly do. But yeah, that can be problematic as well.' (Participant C)*

As part of the reflective process, the individual requires confidence to move out of their safe space and be prepared for discomfort, possible loss of ego, challenge in a process which is 'inconvenient and messy' when done right (Raber Hedberg, 2009, p.30). These are associated with physiological feelings of anxiety and concerns over not wanting to make a mistake. Such actions may result in a loss of professional pride or an exposure of incompetence and even some form of reprimand, something that is often described as a significant barrier in the literature (see Bolton & Delderfield, 2018; Driscoll & Teh, 2000). Participants highlighted examples of colleagues who were uneasy at the prospect of such a process:

> *'I think that, you know, for everyone to understand that, you know, it's okay. To reflect doesn't mean you failed, or, or whatever. I think, you know, it's important. A lot of people I think at the beginning, were frightened by all because it was like, well, then I've got to acknowledge that might have done something wrong. Yeah. Whereas now, I think we're so much better at acknowledging we might have done something wrong' (*Participant 3 - Focus Group*)*

This aspect of recognising possible avenues of discomfort and moving to a space whereby possible 'blind spots' and assumptions are considered is another fundamental ATIP skill, allowing the practitioner to be mindful of their reaction and how their own biases may impact these, when faced with potentially challenging behaviour from dysregulated pupils (see Parker et al., 2019; Wolpow et al., 2009). The development, organisationally, of productive

mistake making is another key ATIP tenet, to support practitioners in being more confident in trying new things despite possible anxieties about the ramifications.

The data implied that participants themselves were prepared for such a process, but without any further data currently, it is difficult to verify if there is indeed any discrepancy between espoused and theories-in-use. They did acknowledge their self-critical nature, indicating a willingness of sorts to hear more challenging feedback:

> *'Normally, there's a thought pattern I'll go through, and I think as it's happening, I confess, ah, you think 'why', just 'shut up?... And I just think, Oh, just stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. And then I would go in, you know, seek out a member of staff. And I'd say, Can I speak to you about something off the record? And they'd go, yes. And then I go, look, this happened. And I acted like this…. But yeah, normally, it's happening as I'm in it. It's kind of you. Yeah, absolutely idiot' (Participant I)*

They also did volunteer to participant in this research, so it would appear that they are willing to undergo such a process; however, as discussed previously, without a structure or frame of reference, it is very difficult to ascertain if extensive reflection was completed or was the process more superficial. Such a self-critical nature may also be related to a propensity to ruminate, devoid of any solution focussed approach and productive reflection (Finlay, 1998), which may be improved by using a structured model that incorporates a focus on recognising positive actions and affirmations. For example, participants were quick to focus on the negative aspect of reflective practice but required some prompting to discuss more positive perspectives, with one actively dismissing the need for positive reflection as a worthwhile endeavour:

> *'Some people will want to reflect on the positives because for whatever reason, whether that's, you know, their self, their ego, like, you know who they are that they would need to think of what's gone well to stay on track. I kind of I don't know. I feel like that's wasting my time to think of what went well, but I think my reflection and my attention is better spent on what could get better.' (Participant A)*

At the time, I noted that as I knew the staff team, I would suggest that there are individuals who would only reflect at this superficial level, as the negative consequences would be too great to bear. While analysing the data, I made a point of highlighting this specific consideration for further discussion with my chosen peer group: I wanted to ensure that such a thought was not simply a personal assumption and thus maintain validity in the findings.

We discussed my thoughts and agreed that the summation was an accurate portrayal of character within the centre.

There was also mention of a tendency to remove personal responsibility and place an over exaggerated level of influence on the system. Without guidance and support, they would not be able to reach this level, an issue succinctly summed up in the phrase 'you don't know what you don't know'. Interestingly, the participants recognised that such a lack of willingness to be more vulnerable is impacting their colleagues' capabilities:

> *'I think everybody needs to be more open and people every level. Every little bit defensive, at times, yeah. Don't be. Don't be defensive because if you don't like what I'm doing, do something about it – you don't have to like it, but you can talk about it'* (Participant 4 - Focus Group*)*

Increases in stress are also associated with heightened negative emotions, which have many adverse effects on staff and thus pupil outcomes (see Meyer & Turner, 2006; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013). Emotion is critical in the formation of identity and values (see Zembylas, 2004; Hargreaves, 2001), which therefore increases the likelihood of an ongoing pernicious impact. As such, higher frequency and increase severity of negative emotions such as anger, frustration and feelings of being overwhelmed, are associated with an inability to ensure reflection is consistently reframed to incorporate positive, solution focussed approaches, the impacts of which were discussed previously.

As described in the Introduction, high levels of stress are strongly associated with physical and mental health concerns, thus directly impacting the ability of an individual to complete their role. This then negatively impacts further wellbeing and the ability to productively utilise reflective practice in an ongoing pernicious cycle. A significant and recurring theme in my personal journal was the impact of the pandemic: COVID related restrictions have had significant implications on all such aspects, impacting not just staff, but the pupils and their families. Such personal issues and anxieties from societal issues will undoubtedly influence professional practice. There was a marked increase in workload, particularly the rise in safeguarding concerns that the staff team were dealing with at the time; alongside the physical changes to scheduled supervision sessions, such constraints regarding time available will have had a massive impact for staff to be able to engage productively with higher order reflection (see Thompson & Pascal, 2012: Finlay, 2008):

'I think everyone is shattered. We are a bit less tolerant would be normally…. So you're thinking, actually, you're tired, I'm going to make mistakes, because I'm tired. And then I'm going to get bollocked. So, I'm worried about making mistakes, which makes me even more tired, which means I'm more likely to make a mistake. So, it's like this horrible vicious circle?' (Participant 1 - Focus Group)

However, it is important to recognise that, despite the association, time allocated for reflection has to be practical, as mentioned in the data; sometimes an individual may spend a long time thinking, but not necessarily reflecting, which is a clearly ineffective use of time (see Collin et al., 2013). Also, due to any professional commitment, a useful cut-off point is imperative or else actions would become secondary to reflecting upon them (see Scaife, 2010).

4.7.5 Theme 4 Discussion: Wider Factors (External)

'I think everyone out there has an open door.' (Participant 5 - Focus Group)

As recognised in the data, leadership is hugely influential in the creation of culture and the environment that supports reflective practice and ultimately individual and organisational change (see By, 2005; Gill, 2003; Fullan, 2010). The literature around organisational change is extensive, offering underpinning mechanisms such as via promoting readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993), motivation (Leithwood et al., 2008), as well as both individual and collective measures of efficacy (Goddard et al., 2004).

There are many positive impacts from the organisation wide systems that we have introduced at the centre, in line with existing research on trauma-informed leadership, as described in Section 2.3.2.3 (see Walkley & Cox, 2013; Alexander, 2019). All participants recognised there was a focus on reflective practice and productive mistake making; these are two key ATIP principles which we have been explicit about promoting:

'Added dimension of the reflection includes the challenge that uncovers unconscious bias, yeah. gives them a different frame of reference, which is, you know, supervision obviously does that in terms of that supportive environment but essentially that for me, that's always when I think the best reflective work happens when I'm when I'm called to question on my actions (Participant A)

There was also acknowledgement from participants that they felt they had professional trust from leadership and we able to act with agency, both highly correlated to self-efficacy and ultimately better outcomes for pupils (see Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001):

> *'I think I think the autonomy here is, is, a really powerful thing to have. And I think knowing that you're trusted, and knowing that people will let you make a decision, I think kind of really empowers you' (Participant E)*

Participants were keen to offer lots of positive comments regarding a prevalence of supportive co-workers and feelings of safety, understood to be vital in the development of professional practice and in line with previous evidence indicating a bias toward the restorative aspect of supervision and reflective practice. It is of course, not enough to be personally willing to seek feedback and ascertain different perspectives, as the most productive reflection requires reciprocal, relational dialogue (see Fook & Askeland, 2007). Despite this positivity, there were some discrepancies raised with regard to trust within the wider staff team, indicating that perhaps the level of trust is not necessarily at a level that is widely assumed:

> *'The basic way or the structure of the centre and set up here isn't inherently designed to build trust. Everything is very, this is your job, this is your job. And that's because we're tiny school…. each room is so separate…..to question other people's decisions, I think is always going to happen because we, we, are so segregated.' (Participant D)*

It was recognised that there were concerns over a lack of opportunity to problem solve in a collaborative manner and when this did happen, it was not always effective; concerns were raised over the productivity of some supervision sessions. It was highlighted that the process sometimes lacked the appropriate dialogue with which to stretch the reflective thought process and thus attain critical reflection, recognised as a key aspect of the supervisory process, specifically the normative and educative aspects, in the literature (see Carroll, 2014; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). This was perhaps influenced by a lack of confidence in utilising reflective practice, as discussed previously. It also may be derived from the lack of skill of the practitioners in guiding and challenging each other, with particular focus on the need for supervisors to be effective at overseeing the process (see Berger & Quiros, 2014; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). I reflected at the time, in my journal, that without further investigation, it is impossible to offer firm conclusions regarding which of these had more of an impact.

There were also pedagogical concerns over a lack of collaboration time, with a strong desire to improve knowledge and skill base. This was particularly pertinent from the less experienced participants, who lamented that the nature of the PRU, with only one teacher per subject, means it is more challenging to share expertise in the same manner as a mainstream school. Unfortunately, the move to virtual meetings will have likely had a significantly detrimental impact on the ability to collaborate more effectively; as I described previously, it is very difficult to develop the necessary relational spaces necessary to promote reflection, but this is something that can be considered as part of a wider remit for organisational improvement.

4.7.6 Survey Results Discussion

Data from the survey indicated that participants had felt that the Larivee (2008) model was not effective enough to utilise in a practical sense with which to assess reflection. Many acknowledged limitations of practice, especially collective, with a lack of confidence and skill in encouraging and guiding dialogue resulting in a tendency for superficiality rather than potentially challenging but 'deeper' reflection. There was also recognition, as with the interview data, that it is necessary for novices to desire a structure and examples to use as a frame of reference (see Hobbs, 2007; Finlay, 2008).

There were a few unique points raised, specific to Supervision. The first described standard weekly theme actually sometimes impedes reflection. I acknowledge that setting a theme may well stop the group from being truly agentic, but personally believe that the themes are carefully selected from the practice witnessed in the centre over the week, so some of this consternation may well be staff pushing back against the challenging nature of the specific theme. For example, the theme relating to passive aggressiveness and assertiveness was hugely influential with regard to bringing a common language to the staff team; however, it was noted by several colleagues that there was a feeling of unease for some staff, others noting that their behaviour had been 'called out'. The second was around the ability of the supervisor to guide the dialogue and manage the group. Effective communication is one of the key ATIP tenets and my aim would be that this will be developed in time and could be a useful focus for any future intervention. The final aspect was the tendency for supervision to

be effective at supporting wellbeing but lacking the level of challenge necessary to promote higher order, critical, reflection. This is most definitely a residual effect of the way in which supervision has been setup; in order to promote buy in and trust in the process, we have explicitly chosen to focus on wellbeing aspects, to encourage feelings of safety, with the aim of bringing about longer-term reflective practice. Although some staff are feeling comfortable to reflect, this is clearly not consistent across the wider group.

4.7.7 Further Analysis

Despite the negative ramifications of the data collection being somewhat impeded, this cycle of research has offered a huge amount of experience and learning regarding practice of both myself and my colleagues, positing a number of new questions to consider. From a research perspective, this further analysis was supported by ongoing completion of my personal journal, facilitating reflective consideration beyond the superficial.

Analysing the data according to the themes offered a useful rationale with which to consider how efficacious the ecological model was in describing reflective practice, with many of the factors consistent across all participants. However, it is also important to consider the individual differences represented within the data. Three of the participants had experienced a great deal of reflective coaching and supervisory support in previous roles, allowing them to provide answers of great insight and eloquence; conversely, for some the interview was one of the first opportunities they have had to discuss such a topic.

I had initially conceived *Ability to Change* as a proactive factor, one each individual has equal ability to enact. However, upon referencing the background of the individual interview participants (see Appendix 8.3), I observed at the time, one noted in my journal, an association between staff confidence to enact change and both their specific role in the hierarchy and the level of education. It was clear that those who had possessed both more experience and greater opportunity to submit ideas due to their role (e.g., Senior Leaders - SLT) were much more able to offer thoughts and provide examples of their own reflective practice. The ability of the participant to change was thus not equal, but intrinsically tied to both previous experiences and structural positioning within the organisation.

I had also begun the analysis considering that all staff believed in the changes implemented through the introduction of ATIP principles and that a failure to change was simply because we had not provided adequate support with which to reflect on their current practice. During the analysis it became apparent that this was simply not an accurate representation of the situation, one that I made a note of on multiple occasions in my journal. I realised that I had been overlooking an obvious caveat and not considering that staff simply might not want to change. This may because they don't see the need on a personal level or due to staff values not aligning with those of the organisation. This specific tension is at the heart of reflective practice; encouraging such reflection should not, in my opinion, promote subservience at the expense of human *agency*. This concept, the ability for professionals to have control over their actions, is hugely important to individual decision making and one that possesses huge scope in considering how reflective practice, and thus transformational change, is enacted.

One of the most overt issues I found when assessing what reflective practice *looked* like, in tangible terms, related to the fact that it is, in effect, a spectrum. We never had the opportunity to develop team understanding of types of reflection and in which scenarios and contexts each might be more appropriate. For example, surface reflection can be the most effective process to undergo when considering a relatively minor incident. However, it was my initial desire to encourage staff to utilise more critical levels of reflection; while in my opinion philosophically and ethically admirable, this not necessarily the most effective use of limited resources. I recognise that such decision making can never be assumed to be easily sorted into discrete categories. However, greater development time would not only raise awareness and improve staff's knowledge base, it would also provide the type of opportunity essential when transferring knowledge into experience, the foundation of reflective practice.

This was the first time that I have utilised Action Research as a methodology and as such, have several observations regarding how effectively I think I had implemented it to this point. According to the stipulations for good practice associated with Action Research, as documented in Section 3.0, I felt that the research was proven both valid and successful. While I acknowledge that efforts can be made to increase the depth of discussion amongst those involved, especially in the light of COVID related complications, I believe that the research benefitted from close, productive collaboration. I also believe that in the production of the Model of Reflective Practice, this cycle exhibited technical, ethical, practical and theoretical elements of success. An important aspect of Action Research is the notion of

recognising different selves and how this delineation impacts one's role within the research. Due to the fact that the aim of this cycle was to develop a baseline measure of reflective practice, I felt relatively removed from the research at this stage; the purpose, aside from a brief role for CPD, was to assess the current perception and knowledge in preparation for the next cycle. This distance meant that I never felt any sense of friction between my professional and researcher roles, although I do recognise that this was probably greatly influenced by the fact that many of the planned discussions were curtailed due to COVID. On reflection, I think that the actual lack of time spent with the vision champion focus group did also enforce an element of distance, reinforcing the more theoretical distance described previously. This fact also perhaps contributed to a lack of awareness, even negating the influence of my own seniority in the power dynamic. Although of course this would have had an impact during the individual interviews, it is inherently more difficult to perceive a sense of group dynamic when we could not meet.

I believed at this point that the collaborative foundations are precisely the right way to foster trust and a sense of belonging in the future direction; I noticed the new staff working alongside in a consistently productive manner, which was hugely encouraging. I also consider the use of critical friends in the plan to be an effective way in which to maintain a sense of perspective; I felt fortunate that I have such supportive and yet honest colleagues that were prepared to offer sage advice and let me know when I my thinking was heading awry. One of the key outcomes from the interaction with this peer group was the regular 'sense-check' function that they offered, through allocating themes to the data and most notably when highlighting useful data to show within the research to embellish specific points, while ensuring that my conjecture remained valid. At this point in the research, I felt that although it was difficult to discern between my professional role and that of a researcher, this was not a cause for concern, as things were progressing smoothly, despite the COVID related setbacks.

The data revealed an interesting issue of *what* practitioners chose to reflect upon. The CPD session and supervision was organised in a manner that allowed significant autonomy for staff to have a say in what they wanted to consider and discuss. Supervision, in line with ATIP principles, was designed as a system within which staff can focus on their own wellbeing, outside of the performative aspects of traditional management hierarchies. It was clear that many staff felt that they did not want to use these sessions to proceed with more

challenging discussions and associated critical reflection, finding them at odds with each other. I was hopeful that this will lead to indirect positive consequences for the pupil, through increased feelings of staff wellbeing. However, there is no quality assurance or guarantee relating to the nature of reflection that supervision offers regarding directly improving their practice. The issue of how much to directly intercede in staff practice in this way, to guide them as much as possible without having to become a potentially overbearing watchman figure, is one that is at the crux of staff development and associated reflective practice. I am an advocate of person-centred development and feel it to be important to continue to consider how best to continue to offer practitioners the support necessary to be able to most effectively reflect and refine their practice.

4.8 Conclusion

4.8.1 Cycle One Summary

The aim of this cycle was to ascertain how successfully I was able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP principles and align their actions to these. In collaboration with colleagues, I developed a model of reflective practice that is appropriate for the context of this research, i.e., the Pupil Referral Unit in which I am employed. A summary of the first phase of research can be seen in Figure 21 below.
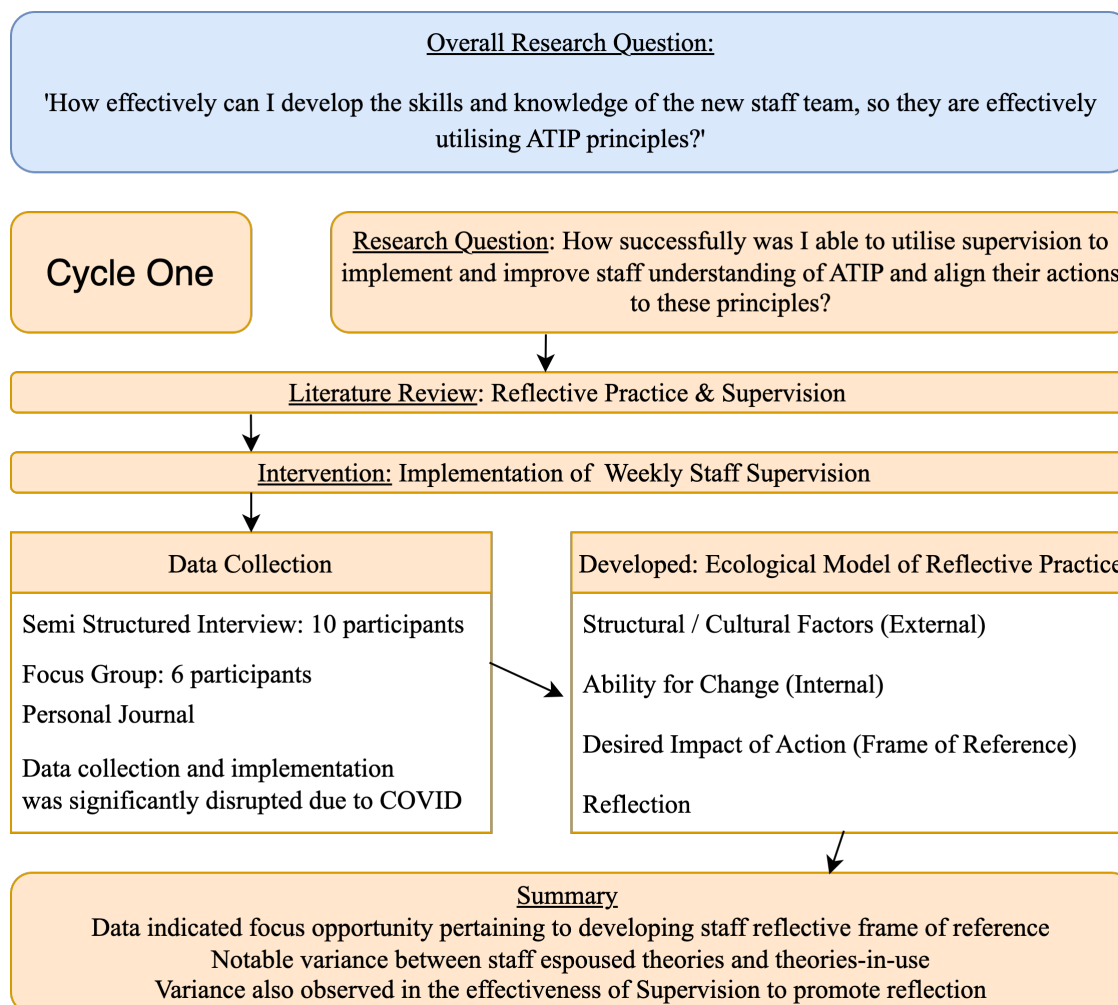
Figure 21: Cycle One Summary

As described earlier in the research (see Section 2.0), such a collaborative approach is aligned not only with wider Action Research methodology but also my personal position regarding a drive for the need for individual learning to take place within a supportive, trusting and agentic organisation.

This cycle of research has showed some level of success, albeit this was inconsistent. I found evidence that staff are willing to reflect, but that in practical terms, this is often not proving as successful as it could; lack of confidence, anxieties regarding making mistakes, impaired knowledge and desire to not challenge or be challenged have all negatively impacted reflective practice. There appears to be a discrepancy between espoused theory and theories-in-use within the staff group, with which they need support to bridge; some staff appear not to be entirely aware of their own espoused theories, which of course is a significant imposition to deeper levels of reflection. Although I acknowledge that I cannot *force*

reflection, I was in a position of power to introduce systems and structures to encourage feelings of safety and trust, while explicitly continuing to promote reflective practice as an organisational focus, particularly in supervision. The data also showed that supervision is currently working effectively as a means to support wellbeing, which is obviously excellent news; however, without the necessary support to draw reflective thinking during the 'Space' and 'Bridge' phases of the supervisory model, supervision is not currently *consistently* supporting the 'Educative' role that it should.

At this point, I reflected on the data gained so far. I recognised that I have such a strong desire to see these reflective systems and foci thrive and was so personally and professionally invested in their worth and success. However, the consensus gained from ongoing discussion with the critical friend group regarding both the analysis and the newly developed model fostered a sense of confidence that the chosen collaborative methodology appropriately re-iterated my own feelings and summations of the situation; that the 'seeds' of progress are present, they just required nurturing. It was also at this point that the negative impact of COVID-19 on daily functioning had started to dissipate quite significantly, which provided a great deal of optimism for the next Cycle of research.

5.0 Cycle Two

5.1 Introduction

The aim for Cycle Two was to incorporate my previous findings and reflective model and more accurately assess and thus improve the reflective practice and capacity for change for the staff at the centre. This section first details my thought process in developing the analysis provided in Cycle One, taking into consideration two key aspects: the roles of values and support for structured reflection. The section then offers a rationale of why the *agency* was chosen as the underpinning framework for this Cycle, before providing a literature review of the construct, as well as details pertaining to an updated model of reflection – the Model of Structured Reflection (Johns, 1995) – that forms an integral amendment to supervision sessions. Interventions are detailed that were enacted to support staff in acquiring and refining their understanding of how values impact their practice, supported with the newly designed model of reflective practice. The method and data collection are then described, using the same processes utilised for Cycle One, incorporating information relevant to the new interventions that focus on improving practitioner awareness of values in their practice. Results are presented, with analysis that supports the conclusion that while a focus on values has proven successful to engage many practitioners with their decision making, studying agency and agentic behaviour has opened many further pathways for future professional development opportunities. These are supported through the development of a new Model of Staff Agency, which can be used to underpin reflective thinking and practitioner consideration for future phases of study.

5.1.1 Consideration of Foci

For this cycle I opted to focus on two interrelated aspects of promoting reflective practice highlighted as important factors from the data analysed during Cycle One. However, I ensured that I was reflective myself and not try and change too much at once, or the process becomes unwieldy, hard to manage and difficult to effectively assess for impact.

The **first** intervention focused on the need to provide *structure*, via a model or framework with which to aid reflection; it is predicted that this will support both individuals in challenging themselves and also guide group reflective practice within supervision. We have a number of inexperienced staff members who will not immediately reflect at a deeper level

and such prompts will encourage both self-questioning but also offer staff the framework to investigate each other's opinions and actions, the foundation of ascertaining assumptions and thus developing critical reflection. It was also predicted that the use of such structured guidance will also hopefully support staff to limit the amount of time necessary to reflect, through the use of specific prompts and questions.

The **second** intervention was a development in the focus on embedding understanding and awareness of personal *values*, thus promoting the importance of assumptions and beliefs on practice. Although this is something that has been started, COVID significantly impacted the opportunity to provide professional development, which has meant this is not yet at the level necessary for this to occur across the wider staff team. As I described previously, both the data and the research literature highlight that reflective practice requires a frame of reference, mirror with which to hold up what we are trying to achieve. This can be offered through experience, but in my opinion, this is not sufficient; we should consider the impact of this research for *all* possible members of the staff team, including those with little experience. Also, I personally reflected that experience does not necessarily equate to useful or effective practice, so it is unwise to assume a sense of equivalence between the two constructs. Alongside revisiting the relevant theory, I looked in more detail at different methods to uncover personal values, uncover assumptions and highlight unconscious biases. We have a large cohort of unqualified teachers and Learning Support Assistants who will lack some of the more formal aspects of professional development offered to the qualified teachers so have not necessarily had the opportunity to formalise uncovering their own professional values in a productive or enlightening manner.

Reflecting upon the analysis derived during Cycle One, it seemed that the data was leading me to, in effect, '*take a step back*' and re-consider how staff were utilising reflection in order to enact transformational change in their practice. It was apparent that staff were encouraged to be reflective, with supervision offering a regular opportunity for constructive dialogue. However, it was clear that despite such efforts, reaching this deeper level reflection was not taking place on a consistent basis, leading to inconsistent use of ATIP principles. I theorised that the proposed focus on promoting a greater understanding of individual values, associated with assumptions and biases, as well as the introduction of a guided reflection model would help increase the depth of reflection exhibited. However, I was still lacking an overarching

framework within which to effectively describe such inconsistency and unpick what were the underlying factors impeding negatively impacting both individual and organisational growth.

My initial thinking perpetuated a theorisation developed upon a false dichotomy with a refusal to engage with reflective practice at one end of the spectrum and consistent deeper, critical reflection located at the other. However, this did not offer a realistic explanation of reflective decision making and subsequent actions. In the data from Cycle One, practitioners recognised the influence of contextual and structural factors in their decision making, implying the desire to change their practice but perhaps lacking the ability to enforce such change.

I considered the association between my personal reflective practice, most notably how it has evolved over time, and how it has impacted the choices I have made. It was apparent that the combination of both experience and wide-ranging literature read over the years has promoted the formulation of clear values and identity, both in the personal and professional domains. In particular, my previous research focus on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model Development (1974) has made me aware of the importance in considering a systemic approach to human development across different domains and the inherent reciprocity that occurs. I also recognised the close association between such values and how I use these to project forward to both short- and longer-term goals and objectives, introducing a temporal aspect to reflective practice, something that I had not fully formed as a concept previously. From a personal perspective, enabling myself to be saturated with the research literature and relevant theory necessary to complete this thesis enabled a persistent focus on *being* reflective. However, I also acknowledged that maintaining deeper levels of reflective practice required more than this; it required a *choice*, a proactive desire to change my thoughts and thus my practice. It was my belief in the research evidence and my personal desire to want the best for the pupils in my care that prompted changes in my behaviour and allowed me to overcome any discomfort, both from my colleagues and in reframing pre-existing rationale and opinions.

I conceived that in order to best understand disparity and inconsistency regarding both the frequency and depth of reflective practice, it was key to consider the decision-making rationale of the staff. This is both in terms of believing they have control over their own actions as well as influence wider, organisational change. Although I personally desired

change, I recognised that the position of power and value alignment that I possess within the organisation, my own professional role which was so inherently tied to the ATIP implementation. Such a strong association was not likely to be shared across all staff in such a manner. Therefore, I needed to consider the reasons *why* staff chose to, or in fact not to reflect and change; following ATIP principles myself, I sought to be professionally curious. In order to do this in a methodical fashion, rather than studying too many aspects at once, I had to decide which influencing factors to focus on first.

The ecological model developed in Cycle One indicated that one of the most important aspects of reflective practice was a frame of reference with which to compare outcomes. It was noted that although relevant experience was important, this was not appropriate for all practitioners, as some colleagues were starting their professional journey. The other source of such a reference was through personal and professional values. Although I recognise that these may change over time, values were universal to all, irrespective of background, role, or experience. As such, they constituted an excellent next step in developing a much more in depth understanding of practitioner change.

I decided at this juncture that **agency** was the most appropriate theoretical framework to understand such staff choices to participate in reflective practice and thus engage in developing practice through change. My rationale was that if staff understood themselves why they made decisions and enacted specific practice, they would be in a position to more confidently consider alternative possibilities or assert their professional rationale. This in turn would support with developing and enacting reflective practice hopefully in line with ATIP principles. Although agentic decision making is influenced through a number of pathways, for the purposes of adhering to the methodical scientific principle, I recognised that I could only focus on one factor at a time and as such opted to focus on the role of values. Both personal and professional values and identity significantly influence one's agency, which not only align closely with the ecological model of reflective practice but also the Action Research as a methodology, offering even further opportunity to consider any possible issues between different 'selves'.

5.1.2 Focus for Cycle Two - Agency

Agency, in a broad sense, describes the ability of an individual to act in an intentional manner, exhibiting control over their motivation and actions, in order to 'exercise some sort of power' (Giddens, 1984, p.14). As such, it refers to the ability to reflect on a situation, taking into account personal practice and social-cultural influences in order to collaborate and develop what is described as 'transformational' change (see Archer, 2000; Bandura, 2001). The current focus on introducing ATIP principles in the centre can be theorised as a form of transformational change, modifying the previous system in such a substantial manner. Agency in the domain of education has been described as Teacher Agency (TA), governed by the dynamic interplay between personal and professional characteristics of the individual (e.g., beliefs and goals pertaining to their role) and their professional contexts (e.g., education and school policy, organisational culture and leadership within the school) (see Lasky, 2005; Goller & Paloniemi, 2017; Etelpelto et al 2013).The conceptualisation of agency as a result of a web of interrelated factors is strongly aligned with both the wider research literature associated with reflective practice, as well as the ecological model developed for Cycle One

Although described as a topic that has not been prominently studied (Biesta et al., 2015), despite it being described vital to research in Education (Goodson, 2003), there has been a recent focus on TA. Research has identified the increased incidence of changes in schools as a result of policy reform and also the important role that teachers have in constructing and supporting (or pushing against) individual and organisational professional development and innovation (Priestley et al., 2012; Imants & van der Wal 2020), with agency necessary to facilitate the renegotiation of identities within professional roles, associated with a background of change (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). This process is associated with greater feeling of professionalism amongst staff (Heilbronn, 2008), an increase in job satisfaction (Avanzi et al., 2013) and ultimately improved outcomes for pupils (see Priestley, 2011).

5.1.3 Research Question

Findings from Cycle One allowed me to produce a model of reflective practice that offered valuable insights into how practitioners at my PRU theorised their actions, in relation to ATIP principles. From these findings, it became clear that the focus needed to be shifted, to appropriately focus on the core concept of values. This was achieved through by utilising a

framework of staff agency with which to consider how staff acted according and in line with ATIP principles.

As such, my research question for Cycle Two is:

'To what extent was I able to develop a staff sense of agency with which to impact their actions so that they are aligned with ATIP principles'

5.1.4 Cycle Two Plan

In Cycle Two, the **aim** was to develop work completed in the previous cycle, focussing on increasing practitioner recognition of how their values impact their practice.

For Cycle Two involved the introductions of two associated **interventions**. The first was staff engaging with a series of professional development sessions that provided the opportunity to refine their understanding and possible impact of how values can impact their practice, specifically reflecting on what outcomes they wish to observe when interacting with others. The second was refining supervision sessions to incorporate reflective prompts that support the importance of values

The **data** for Cycle Two, as with Cycle One, was collected and triangulated from three sources: participants engaging in semi-structured interviews, supervisor focus groups and my own personal journals.

For the interventions at this stage to have achieved their objective, the **success criteria** were an increase in practitioner consideration, discussion and evidence regarding how their values impacted their practice.

This plan can be seen in Figure 22.

Overall Research Question:

'How effectively can I develop the skills and knowledge of the new staff team, so they are effectively utilising ATIP principles?'

Cycle One

Research Question: How successfully was I able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP and align their actions to these principles?

Literature Review: Reflective Practice & Supervision

Intervention: Implementation of Weekly Staff Supervision

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interview: 10 participants

Focus Group: 6 participants

Personal Journal

Data collection and implementation was significantly disrupted due to COVID

Developed: Ecological Model of Reflective Practice

Structural / Cultural Factors (External)

Ability for Change (Internal)

Desired Impact of Action (Frame of Reference)

Reflection

Summary
Data indicated focus opportunity pertaining to developing staff reflective frame of reference
Notable variance between staff espoused theories and theories-in-use
Variance also observed in the effectiveness of Supervision to promote reflection

Cycle Two

Research Question: To what extent was I able to develop a sense of staff agency with which to impact their actions, so that they are aligned with ATIP principles?'

Literature Review: Agency

Interventions:
Staff CPD Sessions to develop reflective frame of reference and importance of values
Refining of Supervision to incorporate systemic use of MSR reflective prompts

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interview: 10 participants

Focus Group: 6 participants

Personal Journal

Figure 22: Plan for Cycle Two

5.2 Literature Review

5.2.1 Teacher Agency

5.2.1.1 Definition

Historically, much like the concept of resilience, agency was considered an innate disposition, something that an individual was perhaps born with or fortuitous to possess (Leijen et al., 2019; Bandura, 2001; Priestley et al, 2015). This simplistic view of the concept ignores the ability of an individual to make a change that they might desire, or even be aware of different possible actions, due to their past experiences and the context they find themselves within (see Ahern, 2001). However, it is also not appropriate to consider human action as beholden entirely to social factors, with no capacity for individual agency.

TA is manifested at 'individual, relational and collective levels' (Molla & Nolan, 2020, p.6), embedded in the many frequent interactions between, pupils, staff, leadership, parents, the wider community and policy that occur on a daily basis (see Greeno, 2006; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to consider a way in which to facilitates the transaction between internal and external domains.

Various researchers have incorporated a socio-cultural perspective as the most appropriate way to conceptualise TA (see Eteläpelto et al. 2013; Biesta et al., 2015), utilising the interdependent but analytically different domains to reach a new understanding of TA. Much like the interaction between nature vs. nurture within human development, TA then is a result of personal and contextual factors (Jones & Charteris, 2017). It is the ability or decision to act (or not), as a result of the transaction that occurs within an individuals own ecology (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). Within this conceptualisation, TA is recognised to be continuously being renegotiated as the individual is impacted by a range of factors in different domains and at different levels. (Biesta et al., 2015).

Such a conceptualisation is associated with further demands for refinement, for what does TA mean, in tangible terms? There are many different definitions of TA in the literature, highlighting the importance of action (i.e., Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015), the need for critical thinking with regard to overcoming an issue (Biesta and Tedder, 2006), taking into account aspects of power within a wider agenda of change (Lipponen and Kumpelainen,

2011; van der Heijden et al., 2015), collaborative learning (Pyhalto et al., 2014) and a key aspect of professional identity (Buchanan, 2015; Stillman & Anderson, 2015). It has been described as the act of exercising judgement, learning and enacting change, both on an individual basis and as part of a collective (Biesta et al., 2015; Pyhalto et al., 2014; Anderson, 2010).

Such conceptual discrepancies have resulted in researchers describing the limitations of the concept, describing it as vague (Pyhalto et al., 2012) and methodologically challenging to capture (Edwards, 2015). Priestley and colleagues (2015) acknowledge it as being 'slippery', highlighting that some researchers would use such issues as a rationale to ignore it as a useful concept completely.

There is a tendency in the literature to describe Teacher Agency in only positive terms, as a necessary precursor to the implementation of change in practice. However, it is important to recognise that advocating and supporting conditions that support agency may result in any changes, particularly organisational reform being difficult to enact, with individuals potentially proving oppositional, taking a critical stance toward proposed changes and desiring continuity (i.e., Engle & Faux, 2006; Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014; Sannino, 2010; Goller & Paloniemi, 2017). Such 'bad' agency may include undermining change (conspiratorial) or acting to shelter pupils from the perceived problematic effects of the change (protective) (Osborn et al., 1997) or even habitually reproduce previously enacted patterns of action, thus maintaining the status quo with regard to power relations (Priestley et al., 2015). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) warn of practitioners acting within the 'flow of unproblematic trajectories' (p.1008), whereby they may not be acting with a high degree of agency as they are lacking the resources with which to appropriately reflect on their situation and offer useful alternatives.

For the purposes of this research, the definition offered by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) will be utilised:

> *The temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations. (p. 970)*

The definition provides the addition of a *temporal* aspect, highlighting the close association between previous experiences, current practice and future planning. It incorporates an ecological perspective, taking into account the interaction between individual and socio-cultural factors and describes teacher agency as either providing transformation or maintaining existing hierarchies in response to a new experience. This aspect highlights a key facet of agentic action; change is not a necessary requisite of agency and the practitioner must maintain reflexivity when considering their actions in response to a specific experience (Molla, 2019; van der Schaaf et al., 2008). Within such a definition, all the actions and outcomes described previously are valid, dependant on the specific circumstances and context.

5.2.1.2 Factors Influencing Teacher Agency

This section looks at each of these influences, offering, providing descriptions for each and detail regarding the underpinning mechanisms of how they might influence TA.

5.2.1.2.1 Personal Characteristics: Teacher Beliefs / Values / Experience / Ideology

Teacher beliefs have been subject to a significant focus of research (see Meirink et al., 2009), with consensus that they exert a high degree of influence over teacher behaviour (see Nespor, 1987; van Driel et al., 2001). The literature has suggested that a large proportion of such beliefs are formed from experiences, specifically relating to the practitioner's own account of schooling (see Pajares, 1992; Nishino, 2012). They are considered to be highly affective, underpinned by a narrative of the individual's evaluation of their past (Nespor, 1987), most prominently in a personal, rather than professional domain (Priestley et al., 2015). Teacher beliefs are also key in mediating reform, an important facet of Teacher Agency (Milner et al, 2012)

Such early formation has been shown to enduringly persevere, despite subsequent experiences that may contradict beliefs (see Pajares, 1992), with Belo and colleagues (2014) highlighting the low incidence of adults changing their beliefs. However, research has shown that practitioner age and professional experience are positively associated with a confidence and skill set from which their practice can be drawn from, which allow for a much greater breadth of agentic actions (see Priestley et al., 2015; Helsby, 1999).

Pajares (1992) offers a conceptualisation of Teacher Beliefs, approximated as beliefs regarding *oneself*, including confidence (efficacy) and understanding of the nature of knowledge (epistemological) oneself, the *pupil* (their attributes) and the *subject* (pedagogical) (p.308). He recognises that beliefs are challenging to operationalise, as without a clear focus ('beliefs about') and the opportunity to consider and reflect upon such a process, they are difficult to consider in practice. Various authors have observed that tensions may (and often do) exist between conflicting beliefs in different domains, whether personal and professional (Wallace & Priestley, 2011) or between disparate professional beliefs (i.e., the false dichotomy of traditional and progressive ideologies) (Wallace & Kang, 2014). It is also recognised that beliefs and associated values do not exist in a 'vacuum', moderated by the contexts in which teachers operate (Priestley et al., 2015), leading to discordance between beliefs and practices (see Rubie-Davies et al., 2012; Nishino, 2012).

5.2.1.2.2 Policy & Professionalism

There has been a great deal of research regarding the association between performance driven policy reforms and the erosion of Teacher Agency (Biesta, 2004). Described by Ball (2003) under the umbrella term 'performativity', Government policy since the introduction of the Education Act of 1988 have utilised a narrow understanding and conceptualisation of 'good' education, increasing the remit of statistical data and the associated audit culture within a neoliberal market environment that forces schools to actively compete with each other (Strathern, 2000; Wilkins, 2010; Apple, 2004). Such a focus on measurement has been associated with malpractice at the organisational level, as schools seek to remain 'successful' and out of the inspectorate's watchful gaze (see Ball, 2003; Sahlberg, 2010; Cowie et al., 2007). It has also raised pertinent questions regarding what such success looks like in practice. Shore and Wright (2000) remark that such specific success criteria have resulted in pressure to focus resources in very specific ways, sacrificing a holistic, wider understanding and development of education for a much narrower results based approach, i.e., 'teaching to the test' (see Ball, 2006; Day, 2002).

As described previously, there is an ongoing transactional relationship between professional innovation and Teacher Agency (see Lasky, 2005). Policies are often enforced within a 'top-

down' model (see Fullan, 2003; Phyalto et al., 2011), causing potential rifts between individual, school level and national foci and values. Even hugely experienced practitioners, possessing clear aspirations may find that such innovation may be beyond the scope of their current ecologies, or 'too risky to enact' (Priestley et al., 2015). Although it has been noted that TA can result in practitioners making 'poor' decisions with regard to reform (see Imants & van der Wal, 2020), it is acknowledged that teachers can *redefine* the reform (Imants et al., 2013) and have a key role in how the change plays out in a tangible manner within the organisation. During any such change, there is an ongoing process of identity negotiation between what exists currently and what is being proposed via the reform (see Billett, 2006), resulting in a misalignment between teachers and the directives enforced upon them.

The narrow criteria of what constitutes 'good education' (Biesta, 2010) has led many teachers to consider education within a discourse heavily influenced by the technical-rational aims and objectives of policy reform (Bowe et al., 1994; Biesta et al., 2015), relating to notions of 'efficiency' and increasingly viewed through a 'functionalist' lens (Biesta, 2010). As with all Government policy decisions, there are only a certain amount of (ever decreasing) resources available, which will impact what each school can offer. Subsequently, a focus on performance has been found to be prioritised over notions of social equity (Sahlberg, 2011), with staff experiencing 'detachment' from their beliefs and values in order to maintain the status quo (Biesta et al., 2015). Nolan and Molla (2017) highlight that this lack of agency also has a significant impact in the key domains of teacher professionalism – *expertise, recognition and responsiveness* – that lead to a reduction in quality of professional practice.

It may not be obvious, on a day-to-day basis, that such factors have a direct influence on staff practices, but the slow 'creep' and change to prevailing culture will have an impact of what is 'normal'. Such cultural and structural factors are significantly associated with agentic action, so any new practitioner may only ever experience such technical rationality. If this is the case, projective considerations also become intrinsically tied to notions of a functionalist agenda, as it may be all they have ever experienced. It therefore becomes increasingly challenging for staff to even theorise outcomes that differ from the status quo. Current initiatives from the Government, such as the National Professional Qualification (e.g., NPQH/NPSL) and Early Career Framework (ECF) provide standardised support for the education sector, but within a relatively narrow 'what works' perspective. This eschews broader, more philosophical examination of education, recommended as part of developing Teacher Agency (see Biesta et al., 2015).

5.2.1.2.3 Professional Development

Although macro level policy reforms have a substantial influence, there are a number of organisational factors that also impact levels of professional agency in schools. Demands associated with unproductive pupil behaviour are negatively associated (see Edwards, 2015), while the prominence of 'vertical' ties and power distribution (i.e. typically hierarchical) rather than 'horizontal' may inhibit agency (Priestley et al., 2015; Daly et al., 2010). In this way, organisational practices are mediated through the actions of school leadership (see Hökkä & Vähäsantanen, 2014; Muijs et al., 2004; Gu & Johansson, 2012). It has been recognised that to support agentic action, school leadership must actively develop a supportive culture, champion positive relationships, encourage reciprocal dialogue within the existing hierarchy and provide opportunity for staff to collaborate and problem solve together (see Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Priestley et al., 2012). Such actions are associated with increased feelings of involvement amongst staff and thus sense of belonging with regard to the reform (Peters & Pearce, 2012), hopefully leading to an increase likelihood of staff buy-in and acceptance. Although many of these are somewhat abstract and perhaps more challenging to consistently enact in practice, one tangible operation that leadership can introduce to promote agency is that of professional learning and thus developing *professional* knowledge in education The literature describes that reflection is utilised in the pursuit of deriving meaning from an experience (see Mezirow, 1991), thus expanding our knowledge base over time.

It is recognised that a key aspect of any professional education should be to support practitioners in exploring the relationship between beliefs and values, both professionally and personally (Anspal et al., 2019; Leijen et al., 2018). It is acknowledged that there may be a significant transactional influence between the professional and personal domains (e.g., Pajares, 1992; Borko et al., 2000), with the role of personal values recognised as essential for critical reflection to occur (see Brookfield, 2009; Fook & Gardner, 2007: Liu, 2015). Priestly and colleagues (Priestley et al., 2015) lament the lack of a 'robust professional discourse' regarding the purposes of education, associated with no 'systematic sense-making' in the profession due to the multitude of conflicting aims, values and purposes held by people in the profession (Biesta et al., 2015, p.634). They suggest nuance is required about any ongoing professional development, moving away from a focus on what education should *produce*, instead emphasising what is *for*, offering three possible domains to focus on. The

first of is *Qualification*, described as 'the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills and disposition that allow children to *do* something'. The second is *Socialisation*, which is 'the way in which through education pupils are invited to engage with existing social, political, professional, cultural and normative traditions.' Lastly, *Person* is the 'regard to the question of how pupils can gain independence of thought, moral judgement and action' (p.144). This type of abstract consideration is necessary in order to open up the realm of possible discourse to the wider teaching community, thus increasing the agency of the profession (see Reeves & L'Anson, 2014; Biesta, 2010).

Explicit teacher education constitutes only a fraction of professional experiences within teaching; a high proportion of learning consists of day-to-day engagement with colleagues and the school culture (Priestley et al., 2015). A recognised strategy that provides such professional development, as well as promoting positive relationships and collaboration is the formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (i.e., Stoll et al., 2006; Priestley et al., 2015). Although it has been recognised that a significant proportion of the literature around PLCs has been overwhelming uncritical (Coburn et al., 2012), ignoring issues of dissonance (Imants, 2002), groupthink (Watson, 2014) and conflict (De Lima, 2001), they are widely considered as a system with which to improve practice (Priestley et al., 2015). They have been conceptualised by De Neve and Colleagues (2015) as:

> "*a school organization in which a group of teachers share and question their practice from a critical point of view. This questioning happens in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, and inclusive way*" (p. 32)

Although professional agency cannot be considered separate from power relations within an organisation (see Zembylas, 2003), the aim of the PLC is to produce not only individual transformation but offer a reflective process through which staff can *together* make sense of a new practice or reform (Stoll et al., 2006; Hairon et al., 2017). The focus on collaborative working is strongly associated with implantation success, as such collective practice is more sustainable (Brodie, 2019). PLCs offer the opportunity for practitioners to collaborate and construct a foundation of shared values and associated inquiry, reflective problem solving (Stoll et al., 2006). It has been found that PLCs are responsible for an increase in relational agency (Edwards, 2005) and trust within the organisation, through the development of more informal horizontal 'ties' (Priestley et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2011; Coburn et al., 2012). The quality of the interaction and thus the chance of providing transformational learning within

the community include frequency of the interactions, how many practitioners are involved (network density) (Daly et al., 2010). It is also strongly associated with leadership and the culture developed within the organisation – the level of 'collegiality' (Stoll et al., 2006) - as well as the specific role of those involved (leaders will likely have greater levels of agency and ability to enact change) (Priestley et al., 2015). Finally, with the ever-increasing demands upon practitioners in the current professional climate, PLCs, if consistently built into the schedule of organisational practice, offer the opportunity the space with which to 'reflect and engage in professional dialogue with colleagues', thus serving as professional and personal development (Priestley et al., 2015, p.33).

In the context of this research, Supervision can be considered a form of PLC; they both offer collaborative environments within which staff are able be agentic and choose what they would like to focus on during the sessions. It is important to recognise at this stage that any form of PLC does not necessitate participants to develop similar values or professional aims; agency, as conceptualised in this literature review, includes an inherent element of individual consideration. Engaging with colleagues *may* offer a route to develop similar aims, but there is always the possibility that it will result in a delineation in such values and aims, something that may have a significant impact on staff behaviour, especially when they are adjacent to prevailing organisational aims (see Biesta et al., 2015).

Kennedy (2005) offers a spectrum of professional development, ranging from training that is provided in a didactic fashion (transmissive) to models that maximise practitioners scope for professional agency, with the purpose of facilitating *change*. He describes this as *transformational professional learning,* based upon transformative learning, as posited by Mezirow (1990). Change in this manner can be considered professional 'deep learning' (Fallon and Barnett, 2009), and has the potential to literally transform practice (Jones & Charteris, 2017; Charteris & Smardon, 2015; Brookfield, 1987; Kennedy, 2005). Key to such learning is reflexivity, occurring when the practitioner is aware of their beliefs, assumptions and values in order to increase their professional repertoire (van der Schaaf et al., 2008). Also vital is critical reflection regarding wider issues in education, such as sense of professional purpose and notions of social equity (Jones & Chartertis, 2017; Leijen et al., 2019). Although beliefs are significantly influenced by past experiences, professional development at this level can serve to transform teacher beliefs (Avalos, 2011; Borg, 2011), which in turn have a significant impact of professional agency. One method with which to provide such

professional development is to provide explicit support for practitioners to be able to appraise their current situation more critically through the use of a consistent, structured reflective model, as detailed in the next section.

5.2.2 Guided Reflective Practice

5.2.2.1 Models of Reflection

Many models tend to emphasis reflection as retrospective, with an overriding focus on technical-rationality and 'surface' reflective practice, a common focus of Western professional culture (Rinpoche, 1992). Such a focus is largely engaged at the individual, rather than collective level and has been associated with surveillance and engendering a 'fear of failure' (see Cotton, 2001; Finlay, 2008). As highlighted in Cycle One, only utilising brief descriptions of the stages and processes means that it is more difficult for practitioners who are less experienced to achieve *critical* understanding of the impact of their values and assumptions in a relational manner (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Gordon, 2001).

During this research, I described a number of models and frameworks that have been designed to help facilitate reflective practice. In the literature review of Cycle One, I discussed two of the most popular models; Kolb's cycle of experiential learning (1984) and Schon's theory of reflection in and on action (1983). Although models offer only a 'heuristic' rather than a prescriptive panacea, they provide a guide for practitioners to explore their experiences (Johns, 2017). However, although these models provide an understanding of underlying reflective processes, they lack the level of detail and guidance necessary to support relative novices.

Thus, I utilised the continuum of reflection proposed by Larivee (2008), based upon previous work completed by van Manen (1977) and Mezirow (1991). This four-stage framework posited that the ultimate aim of reflective practice is to move beyond using experiential learning and wider knowledge, desiring critical reflection in professional practice. However, as I described, the data suggested that the framework was unwieldy; the associated questionnaire that assigned items to the four stages was found to be difficult to understand and time consuming to complete.

It is acknowledged that such a model is merely a 'substitute for practitioner mastery' (Gordon, 2001, p.228) and has been noted that mastery in the domain of critical reflection is desired but challenging for inexperienced practitioners to achieve (see Risko et al., 2002). In order to support reflective practice while such practitioner mastery is developed, the aim is to provide an updated reflective model that builds upon a foundation of critical reflection described in the previous cycle. Although the manner in which the model is used has been noted to be more important that any individual element (see Bolton & Delderfield, 2018), it will aim to incorporate appropriate descriptive guidance for less experienced practitioners but also be less complex to utilise in practice.

I took into account advice from Johns (2017), who argued that cyclical and stage models offer an unrealistic advance between the different stages; as such, practices inevitably end up being 'forced' into the different stages, which can become removed from tacit practices. The reflective cycles offered by Gibbs (1998) and Fergusson and colleagues (2019) were discounted for this reason. Other models, although offering useful underpinning theory, were discounted as they lacked any form of the higher levels of guidance required in this context (see Kember et al., 2000; Black & Plowright, 2010; Taggart & Wilson, 2005). Driscoll (2000) and Rolfe and colleagues (2001) provided very similar frameworks, both developed upon a foundation of three stages – 'What?', 'So What?' and 'Now What?' – that can be utilised within the Kolb model, if necessary. Both of these frameworks provide useful prompts that offer support to novice practitioners, while the three stages are closely associated with questions of personal values, relational factors and proposed goals that are essential for the achievement of critical reflection and reflexivity. However, I felt that despite such positive aspects, the prompts lacked suitable descriptive quality and specific guidance necessary to most effectively support my colleagues to access 'deeper' levels of reflection that were often missed due to a focus on a more superficial strata.

As such, focus was turned to the Model of Structured Reflection (MSR) (Johns, 2017).

'*Insights are like transitional points between old and new practice*' (Johns, 2017, p.59)

For this research, I have opted to utilise the MSR as the tool with which to support reflective practice; it offers a framework based in empirical research, yet also underpinned by a theoretical understanding of the association between experience and learning. It is relatively brief, easy to understand and is closely associated with aspects of the ecological model of Teacher Agency.

Christopher Johns began developing the MSR as far back as 1991, derived from data gained during empiric research of reflective supervision in a Nursing context. It consists of a number of key questions that the practitioner is required to ask themselves, offering explicit support to those who possess lower levels of mastery in the domain. Johns designed the MSR for use both independently and also relationally, for example within supervision (see Cox, 2005), highlighting the importance of peers to co-create insights that lead to perspective transformation. The questions ('cues') have been refined over the years, but throughout the structure has been always closely aligned with notions of professional learning and critical reflection, moving beyond the technical-rational limitations of some models, uncovering unconscious biases, interpreting what is habitual and encouraging practitioners to gain insights into their personal practice (Johns, 2017).

The MSR utilises Fundamental Ways of Knowing, designed by Barbara Carper for use in Nursing, as the underpinning framework through which all we learn through experience. As described by Johns (1995), Carper (1978) posits that all experiences can be framed with regards to knowledge in one of four ways. The first is *empirical*, related to the way in which the practitioner can refer to existing evidence to guide their practice. The second is *ethical*, focussed on understanding if practice is in line with personal and professional values, whether internally, inter-personally or within the community of practice. The third is *personal*, describing the ability of the practitioner to remain emotionally literate and self-regulated due to a clear understanding of self, including feelings, emotions and attitudes. Fourth is *aesthetic*, similar to Schon's notion of professional artistry; it describes the practitioner being in the moment, problem solving, using their repertoire of skills. Johns (1995) describes this way of knowing as the process of 'grasping, interpreting, envisioning

and responding' (p. 230). Johns adds a final, fifth strand to this list: *reflexivity*. He describes this as the 'essential' manner through which experience leads to learning, bringing together all the other ways of knowing over time

The MSR consists of a number of cues that correspond to one of the 'Ways of knowing' as described above; the latest version can be seen in Figure 23 below:

Reflective Cue / Question	Way of Knowing
Start: Focus on a description of an experience that seems significant in some way	Aesthetic
What particular issues seem significant to pay attention to?	Aesthetic
How were others feeling and what made them feel that way?	Aesthetic
How was I feeling and what made me feel that way?	Personal
What was I trying to achieve, and did I respond effectively?	Aesthetic
What were the consequences of my actions on the patient, others and myself?	Aesthetic
What factors influenced the way I was feeling, thinking or responding? (See table)	Aesthetic
What knowledge did or might have informed me?	Empirics
To what extent did I act for the best and in tune with my values?	Ethical
How does this situation connect with previous experiences?	Reflexivity
How might I respond more effectively given this situation again?	Reflexivity
What factors might constrain / impede my responding in new ways?	Personal
What would be the consequences of alternative action for the patient, others and myself?	Reflexivity
How do I NOW feel about this experience?	Reflexivity
Am I more able to support myself and others better as a consequence?	Reflexivity

Figure 23: List of Cues from Model of Structured Reflection (MSR)

(Johns, 1995)

What factors influenced my response?			
Conforming to 'normal practice'	My assumptions	Positive and negative attitudes	Time / priorities / resources
Habit	Past experience	Emotional entanglement	Uncertain how to respond
Fear of sanction if I don't conform	Lack of support / poor leadership	Deeper psychological and socialisation issues	Transactional Organisation
Knowledge to act in a particular way	How others were feeling	The need to be in control	Lack of confidence
Ethics – Doing what is right	How I was feeling	Anxious about conflict	My values
Expectation from others about I should react		Expectations from self about how I should react	

Figure 24: List of Possible Factors Influencing Response

(Johns, 1995)

Using the MSR, the practitioner is pushed to consider their professional values, inherently associated with aspects of current practice. These are subsequently associated with goal setting and intent, the 'purposeful action' described by Johns (2017, p.39) as necessary in order to consider the consequences and alternatives of potential actions, in order to make an ethical judgement and exhibit practical wisdom or Phronesis (See Section 2.1). The cues ask the practitioner to consider possible factors that influence their decision making, guiding them to move beyond regimented patterns of thinking, while linking their decision making to previous experiences and their wider knowledge base; the factors listed are not exhaustive, but the base from which to start a dialogue regarding possible factors. All the cues are strongly tied to the ecological model of Teacher Agency; highlighting previous experiences and values, developed from previous life histories, represent the *iterative* aspect of professional agency. The *projective* aspect is inherently linked to values but is also implicitly discussed through dialogue regarding intent and reflecting upon possible alternatives, especially when considering how the practitioner feels as a consequence of the guided reflected process. Finally, the *practical-evaluative* remains an over-arching aspect of agency, covered in terms of the typical reflection-on-action type questions.

As can be seen in Figure 15, there is clear and explicit recognition of the importance of 'values'. When taken in conjunction with the other prompt reflective questions, I hoped that the MSR would be an effective framework with which to support practitioners in reflecting on their experiences with the aim of enacting change in practice.

5.3 Method

Different authors describe that a key aspect of teacher professional development is to support practitioners to understand and explore not only their professional and personal values, but also the relationship between them (see Anspal et al., 2019; Leijen et al., 2018). During this cycle I developed a series of professional development sessions based on the work of Priestley and colleagues (2015) that offer staff at the centre the opportunity to increase their reflexivity around their values and beliefs. van der Schaaf and colleagues (2008) describe that this is the most effective method with which teachers can develop their practice. I am also confident that it will widen the breadth of possible educational purpose, offering the opportunity to move beyond functionalist or instrumentalist outcomes (see Biesta, 2010).

It is imperative that professional discourses remain at the fore when discussing TA, as it through this mechanism that we can consider the difference between becoming aware of our situation and how we actually enact this awareness, through our socially construed discourse At a basic level, thinking cannot happen without language with which to frame thoughts. Vocabularies and discourses are the lens through which practitioners are involved in the ongoing perception and interpretation of their professional and personal worlds, the 'abstract' made 'concrete'. These *vocabularies and discourses* are part of the cultural structures derived by the ecological interplay of across the different domains (see Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). Limiting the 'quality' of the language that the practitioner uses to understand and engage within their situation is associated with a reduction in their ability to act, engage and fundamentally express themselves fully in practice and offer alternative actions, which then reduces their agency (see Leijen et al., 2019; Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015). Recognising this, the interventions designed for Cycle Two aimed to provide practitioners with the requisite language necessary to most effectively productively engage in an agentic manner.

5.3.1 Interventions

Interventions for Cycle Two were designed to provide staff with the appropriate tools with which they can then independently recognise how their values might impact their decision making and ability to change and refine practice. These 'tools' were provided in the form of CPD sessions, organised and run by me, over the course of five weeks during Summer Term 20-21. The sessions were 30 minutes in length, taking place on a Wednesday after school; all

staff were in attendance, irrespective of their role. Due to COVID-19 guidance, although group discussion and sessions had to take place in a virtual forum, one-to-one sessions took place in-person, provided the two metre 'safe' physical distancing rule was maintained.

The aims of the interventions were as follows:

- To develop practitioner awareness of their own values in relation to Education
- To consider how these values are enacted in practice
- To explicitly teach an updated model to support reflective practice (MSR) for use within Supervision sessions

The interventions were designed to improve staff awareness of their own practice, thus supporting them to make choices that offered improved outcomes for pupils. The interventions were specifically designed to provide staff a more intense, *persistent* consideration of reflective practice, with an overarching focus on the role of practitioner values. The aim was to provide a rare opportunity for colleagues to have time to discuss educational philosophy and how it would be enacted in practice, away from the constraints of more teaching and learning focussed topics. In hindsight, previous attempts at CPD were too fleeting and superficial to be able to produce significant change in staff behaviour, a situation adversely impacted further by COVID. Critical reflection requires an element of discomfort, so it is important that I was able to 'keep up the pressure' on the staff team and ensure that the narrative of reflection was at the forefront of their mind over the extended four-week period, rather than spreading the sessions out. It is important to note that throughout all the content covered in the sessions, the aim was not to provide 'easy' and straightforward or clear answers but provide space and the appropriate skills to allow staff to develop their own thinking moving forward.

Please see Appendices for more detailed information regarding research timeline (8.1: Appendix One) and full details of the interventions completed (8.4.1 – Appendix Four: Cycle Two Intervention Resources)

5.4.1.1 Intervention One: Recap, Introduction & Underlying Factors

The first aim of this professional development series was to offer a summary of the work that had already been completed regarding reflective practice. As described in detail during the analysis for Cycle One, COVID significantly impacted the ability for both supervision and professional development opportunities to take place. High rates of absence and related changes to schedules have reduced the ability for all staff to be engaged in meaningful manner with reflective practice theory for a number of months. Therefore, it was an appropriate time to not only recap previously covered content, but also offer highlights of the results from Cycle One.

To begin the session, the Ecological Model of Reflective Practice and the results from Cycle One were introduced to the wider team. Then the session consisted of four main sections. The first focussed explicitly on the need to embrace change as a positive outcome, introducing *transformation professional learning* as a key word. The second section used examples regarding 'The Curse of Knowledge' as a way to review the potential pitfalls in assuming that what we *think* we are doing is what we are *actually* doing. The third section offers insights into tangible examples of the Dunning-Kruger effect and how our own biases and ignorance, whether conscious or unconscious, can have significant negative impact on any desired outcomes. Lastly, the Model of Structured Reflection as a guided framework was introduced briefly, running through all the prompts and ensuring there is a shared understanding of the language used, as this was an issue with the model used previously.

While mostly didactic in nature, this session incorporated one task, a virtual Google 'Jamboard' session. The task required staff to consider how underlying factors can influence their response to a situation or event by writing suggestions (i.e., tiredness, expectation from others). The aim was to broaden the depth of reflective thought by acknowledging any underpinning rationale for actions, as well as developing a shared staff list of influencing factors to support with answering the relevant MSR prompt. Once completed, I added new suggestions to the existing table of influencing factors compiled by Johns (2017) that will be used by staff.

The second CPD session was explicitly designed to provide staff the opportunity to consider their professional values. Our values govern our assumptions of the world, and it is important to keep identifying them, so future decision-making becomes less likely to be impacted unconsciously. It was also the first CPD session to facilitate dialogue between staff members, personally arranging collaboration between staff members that would not usually closely liaise or work together. This was a deliberate choice, as it not only encourages reflective 'verbal interaction' as recommended by Collin and Kersenti (2011), but it was also hoped it will develop relational bonds and thus act to strengthen team building.

Staff were brought together at the start of the session for a succinct virtual summary of the task and the importance on both values regarding reflective practice, as well as offering a reminder regarding of the possible discrepancy between what we *think* we do and what is *actually* perceived by others. The aim of this task was to encourage reflective dialogue to explain and understand possible differences between espoused and tacit practice, as well as providing an explicit link between values and current practice

Staff were organised into pairs and shown the plan, including the classrooms where the conversations would be held, and informed the session will consist of three sessions, each seven minutes in length. Each pair were provided with an initial (non-exhaustive) list of thirty values; the aim is for the pair to agree the top five values they consider to be essential with respect to working at the centre. If disagreement occurs, staff are instructed to discuss and agree which values are to remain.

Once the top five values have been agreed upon, the pair were required to consider what these would look like *in practice*. They were provided with a range of prompting questions with which to extend their thinking, including:

- How would someone else know if you've been true to that value?
- What would they expect to see from you? Examples?'
- Are you consistent at exhibiting these values?
- Is it different in different contexts – i.e. certain staff or pupils? Why might this be?

- Consider any underlying influencing factors that may impact enacting your values
- Are there some that you aspire to but struggle to maintain?
- Are there any that you differed significantly from your partner?

5.4.1.3 Intervention Three: Statement of Purpose

The third CPD session again ensured staff were partnered with colleagues they would not necessarily interact with, again utilising three lots of seven min sessions after a brief introduction. The session is based around the notion of a 'Platform Statement', described by Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) as:

*'A written statement that expresses one's stated beliefs, **values**, orientations, goals… it is one's philosophy of education, a concise statement of what one intends to do' (p67)*

Again, this task was designed explicitly to draw attention to the importance of values relating to practice. However, I refrained from asking staff to write their own vision statements; I had attempted a narrative task previously, relating to an unrelated CPD session and the unanimous feedback was that staff preferred not to have to write after a long day teaching. Therefore, I instead elicited this information from staff through discussion of key questions pertaining to philosophy of education:

- What do you believe is the grander purpose of education in a society and community?
- What do *you* believe the purpose of the centre to be?
- In a general sense, what are *your* goals for the students?
- What qualities do you believe an effective staff member should have?
- Do you believe that all students can learn?
- What is your **own** overall goal as an educator?
- How do *you* create an inclusive supportive environment? Is this for staff *and* pupils?
- How do you incorporate new techniques, activities, and types of learning into *your* work?

5.4.1.4 Intervention Four: Model of Structured Reflection

For the final intervention, the new model of reflection was introduced, so staff could practice utilising it. As part of the explanation, the MSR was broken down into temporal sections, to highlight the importance of antecedents (i.e., the past), what is currently happening (i.e., the present) and possible consequences (i.e., the future):

- **Past** – Values / Previous Experiences / Theory
- **Present** – Feelings / Thoughts / Underlying Influences
- **Future** – Goal of action / Consequences (Intended AND Unintended) / Use of alternative actions

Groups of approximately five staff were arranged, deliberately different to standard supervision groupings; again, the aim was to move away from typical or traditional bonds and perhaps unconscious assumptions that exist within groups and encourage discussion and constructive reflection with alternative colleagues. Six role play scenarios had been prepared for the groups to discuss and the MSR prompts provided, to support with reflective practice. To ensure that any issues were minimised, I ensured that I visited the different groups to offer my support or 'iron out' any potential problems.

5.4.1.5 Intervention Five: Considering Outcomes

The final intervention acted as a summary of this professional development topic designed around reflective practice and values. The aim was to try and get staff to develop their thinking beyond the philosophical and toward something more tangible and to consider how they might take any new thoughts into practice and then what success might like look in this new future, posing the question:

'How do we ensure that our work on reflection will have an impact on our practice, both <u>individually</u> and in a <u>team</u>?'

I thought it would be most effective to provide staff with further space to reflect on what has been covered, using prompt questions to discuss with colleagues about how they might want to

- *How do we **know** what we need to improve / change?*
- *How do we know when we have been reflective?*
- *How can we put things in place to make us confident we have successfully reflected?*
- *How would we collaborate with our teams to support reflective practice together?*
- *What are you going to **do** moving forward that is going to make a difference to your reflective practice? Consider some targets*
- *How do we support colleagues that find it difficult to change or perhaps don't see the need to reflect?*

5.4.1.6 Supervision

Throughout the intervention sessions, and indeed through the entire research, supervision sessions continued unimpeded. As each intervention was completed, supervisors were asked to incorporate relevant thoughts and considerations from session they thought would be appropriate to their groups, for further discussion. Perhaps the most important session with regards to its impact on Supervision was the explanation and practice of using the MSR, which now provides the underlying framework with which to analyse any issue or incident raised during a session.

5.3.2 Plan

Figure 25 shows the plan for Cycle Two, identical in process to research completed for the first phase.
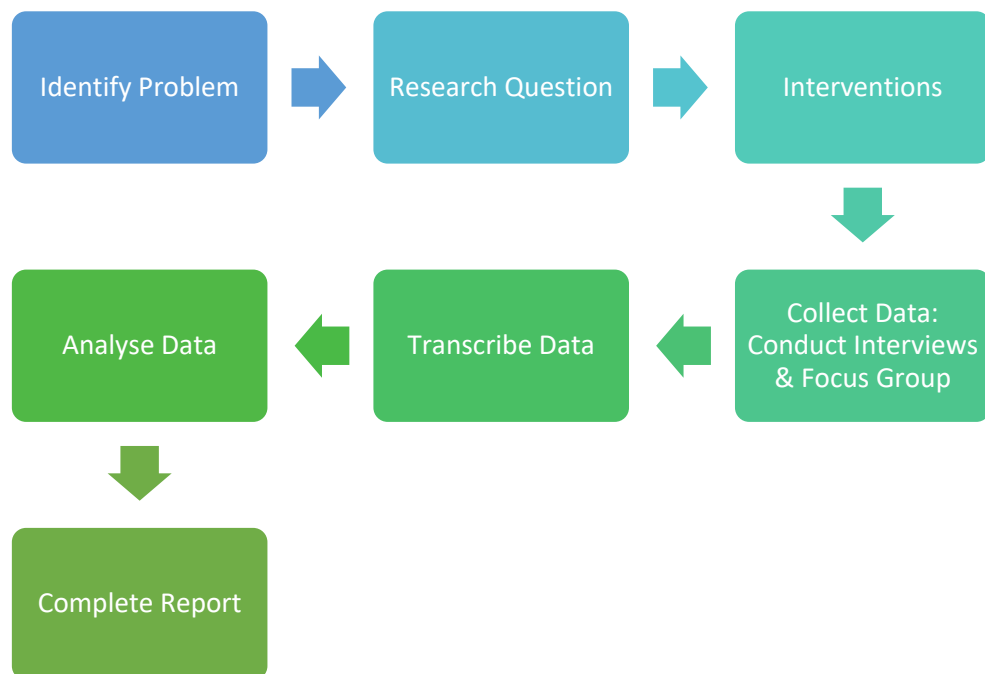
Figure 25: Cycle Two Implementation

5.3.3 Data Collection

Following the professional development sessions described above, I continued to triangulate data described during Cycle One. This involved conducting one-to-one interviews, regular recording of discussion with the supervisory team and using my personal journal. I was mindful the adverse impact that COVID had previously but was fortunately at this point able to return to face-to-face collecting of data, which negated technological issues and permitted the use of prompt and follow up questions to record more detailed data.

Details of the data collection can be seen in Table below (please see Appendix 8.5 for excerpts and examples of coding from each evidence source):

Data Source	Number of Participants	Data Collection Narrative
Interviews	7	Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour each Interviews took place over period of a half-term (7 weeks) Each interview was recorded and transcribed
Focus Group	5 (5 in the group)	Focus group sessions lasted between 10 and 25 minutes Sessions took place on a weekly basis over period of a half term (7 weeks) – 7 sessions Sessions took place after supervision sessions Focus group consisted of 5 supervisors/vision champions Sessions were recorded and transcribed
Personal Journal	n/a	Personal journal completed by myself during period of half term (7 weeks) Journal was split into two sections: Left hand side of the page is 'Thoughts and Feelings', Right hand side is the 'factual' narrative

Figure 26 - Table of Data Sources and Process

5.3.3.1 Individual Interviews

I planned to interview the same ten participants involved in Cycle One. I followed a similar theoretical approach to that which had been undertaken during the CPD sessions, using some of the questions posed to practitioners. I enquired as to individual rationale and basis for choosing different outcomes and values, utilise questioning skills gained from solution focused techniques such a scaling questions in order to elicit detail, most pertinently regarding the difference between their espoused values and their tacit practices. These questions are listed below, as is a list of key words used as prompts to encourage and engage reflective thinking during the interview process:

- In your role, what values do you feel are important to you?

- Can you give some examples of when you've been able to put them into practice?

- Do things ever get in the way of putting these values into practice?

- How can you be sure that, as a practitioner, your actions are faithful to your values?
  To what extent does this matter?

- How can we accurately gauge if what we *say* we do is the same as what we *actually* do?

- In your experience, how could you describe reflective practice that you enact in your role?

- How important is reflection in your practice?

  What practical value has reflection had in improving your practice?

- How would you identify when it would be helpful to implement a change in practice?

  How would you recognise when this is useful?

- How can we support colleagues that find the change process difficult to manage?

  Why do you think some people are less likely to change

- Can you describe in detail what you feel has been an important change that you have made in your professional practice (can be anything from T&L to co-regulating with pupils)

Possible Prompts	
Experiences	Beliefs / values / identity
Previous instances	Culture of work & processes
Structures	Knowledge
Norms	Resources available
Assumptions	Seeking feedback
Constraints	Reflection: Could it have been done differently

Impact
  - Desired impact
  - Unintended consequences?
  - Short / long term
	Feeling
	  - Confidence
	  - Nerves
	  - Regulation

5.3.3.2 Staff Supervision Survey

In contrast to Cycle One, this part of the research did not utilise a staff wide Supervision Survey. Although this was useful for developing operational understanding and awareness of the Supervision process in the centre, necessary in my professional role, it was felt that it offered limited insight to factors underpinning staff behaviour and opinion. The lack of

ability to prompt and question staff in more detail meant that the feedback was unfortunately inconsistent in detail and very broad in nature, with many of the themes produced similar in scope to the interviews. It also must be recognised that staff may well feel obliged to answer such a whole school survey with positive feedback as to not to 'rock the boat' which, of course, may not produce worthwhile outcomes or recommendations that could be enacted upon to produce change. There are plans for a refined survey to be constructed in the near future, but this will be too late for inclusion in this cycle of research; the survey will not be replaced by any equivalent data source.

5.3.3.3 Supervisory Team Focus Group

Once again, the supervisory team of vision champions formed a source of data. Despite previously being negatively impacted due to the negative implications of COVID physical distancing and isolation, the previous barriers were at this point removed, which means that I am able to have a much more direct impact and role in eliciting information from the short weekly meetings that take place after the supervision session. Despite these complications, I felt that it was important to have an avenue where ongoing feedback could be provided; not only would this offer the most up to date information for this report, but it also enabled the opportunity for real time refinement and support to be enacted. I no longer utilised an unstructured form of data collection; instead, I used a semi-structured approach that incorporates both a standardised set of specific questions and an opportunity for open discussion.

The aim of this was to introduce a degree of consistency to the supervision sessions. Upon considering how supervision promotes reflective practice during the analysis for Cycle One, it became increasingly clear that there existed a disconnect between my own espoused understanding of what supervision *should* be providing and what was *actually* occurring in practice. As the focus had now turned to utilising the MSR in developing reflective discussions, I felt it was appropriate to incorporate questions that ascertained if a) the supervisors were using the prompts consistently and b) if the supervisors had any specific issues with their groups understanding or answering the prompts beyond the superficial. Although on the surface this seems akin to surveillance and misjudged power dynamics, it was my intention to be upfront with the supervisors from the start of the process, highlighting

the importance of consistent practice in professional development with regard to improving skills.

5.3.3.4 Personal Journal

I shall continue to complete my personal reflective journal, detailing my own personal journey. As recommended by Argyris and Schon (1992), I have developed technique that separates a more *factual account* (right hand side of the page) from the associated *thoughts and feelings* (left hand side of the page).

5.3.3.5 Other Considerations

For Cycle Two I utilised the same data collection techniques described in Cycle One, which I am going to only revisit briefly here (please see Appendix 8.4.2 for examples from each of the data sources). These include adherence to all the same ethical procedures, data recording and confidentiality. I shall also again utilise critical thematic analysis to draw themes from the interview data, using NVivo software to help support the coding process.

The key tenets of validity (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) are once again essential foundations for such action research. These will be achieved most significantly through the use of critical friends and shared ownership; I developed the initial codes from all the transcribed data then met with these 'friends' to discuss my proposed thematic analysis for each phase of the coding process until such a point as it was felt that the most appropriate final coding had been reached.

A major difference this time round is that I was confident with the proposed changes that the supervisory team will be afforded more of an opportunity to share ongoing discussions regarding the use of efficacy of the MSR and CPD sessions, which was something that was adversely impacted by COVID previously.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Data Collection: Narrative

Thankfully, the data collection completed for Cycle Two was not duly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were able to go ahead face-to-face, enabling the use of reflective prompting to follow up the structured questions. Similarly, the supervisor briefing sessions took place on a regular basis, unimpeded by concerns around physical distancing, gleaning valuable data for the first time. All the CPD sessions were completed as described; anecdotally, they were very well received. I ensured that I chose three different members of staff each week to 'check-in' with how they believed the sessions went. All opined that mixing up the groups and forcing staff to converse with colleagues they would not necessarily usually do was a huge success, as was the short, practical discussions. These sessions were also the first opportunity that we were able to work face-to-face after almost 18 months, which as a direct contrast to the stressed feeling amongst staff previously, led to a somewhat exultant mood which increased the engagement level of the staff.

Three of the previous participants unfortunately chose not to participate in this second round of structured interview questions (Participants A, F and J); this was due to scheduling issues, a request to withdraw and one colleague leaving employment at the centre. As it was stressed throughout that involvement was voluntary, I did not believe it appropriate to question or follow up their decision, instead opting to move ahead with the remaining group. Again, full details of the research timeline can be found in the Appendices (8.1: Appendix One).

5.4.2 Data Analysis: Iterative Process & Narrative

As detailed in Cycle One, I utilised an iterative process of drawing codes from the three sources of data (Individual interviews, Focus group discussion and personal journals), refining the coding and grouping continuously until it was felt that it most accurately described the data. Examples of coding from the three sources of data can be found in Appendix 8.5: Examples of Evidence & Coding Analysis.

In Phase One, the initial coding stage, there was a great deal of crossover in the language chosen, with some excerpts impacted by semantic subtleties and able to be placed in different codes that provided the most succinct description. At this stage, no themes were considered.

Phase One: List of Initial Codes		
Agency	Feedback	Recognising Factors Beyond Individual Control
Authoritative	Flexibility	Recognising Need for Different Approach
Belonging	Guidance	Reflective Process
Care	Gut Feeling	Respect
Coaching & Positive Spin	Humility	Routine
Communication	Integrity	Self-Doubt
Confidence	Making A Difference	Self-Improvement
Consistency	Measure of Success	Success Criteria
Culture	Passion	Sustainability
Definition Issues - Evolution vs Revolution	Peers	Systemic
Desire for Self-Improvement	Perception	Transparency
Difficulty Considering Values	Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	Trust
Empathy	Personal Issues	Unaware of Own Behaviour
Enacting Values	Personal Responsibility	Wellbeing
Ethical	Personal vs Organisational	Fear of Change
Experience	Problematic Values	
Fairness		

Figure 27 - Cycle Two: Phase One Coding Analysis

The first part of Phase Two involved omitting overlapping across codes, ensuring that codes remain distinct and individually valid. This included merging 'Desire for Improvement' into 'Self-Improvement' and splitting the existing 'Personal Responsibility' into various other coding groups. Phase Two was the first point of the analysis to consider how to split the data down into appropriate groups. I opted to incorporate a *Values* theme that would offer a home for all the many personal characteristics offered in the data, although in hindsight I can see that having is as a group on its own does not fit well with the other three groups, all of which directly relate to effecting change in some way. I already started to recognise the similarities between the codes gained in Cycle One, which influenced my initial development of the remaining three thematic groups. This phase highlighted the strong association between the values that appeared in the data from participants and those that are fundamental to the successful implementation of ATIP, such as empathy and care.

Phase Two:			
Factors Impacting Change	Supporting Change	Values	When to Implement Change
Agency	Authoritative	Belonging	Gut Feeling
Confidence	Coaching & Positive Spin	Care	Recognising Need for Different Approach
Culture	Feedback	Communication	Reflective Process
Definition Issues - Evolution vs Revolution	Guidance	Consistency	
Desire for Self-Improvement	Peers	Difficulty Considering Values	
Experience		Empathy	
Fear of Change		Enacting Values	
Perception		Ethical	
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions		Fairness	
Personal Issues		Flexibility	
Personal vs Organisational		Humility	
Recognising Factors Beyond Individual Control		Integrity	
Routine		Making A Difference	
Self Doubt		Passion	
Success Criteria		Problematic Values	
Systemic		Respect	
Unaware of Own Behaviour		Sustainability	
Wellbeing		Transparency	
		Trust	

Figure 28 - Cycle Two: Phase Two Coding Analysis

Phase Three involved a great deal of refinement; at this point I was not sure how to move forward with the analysis, and almost restarted the process. All the existing sections of transcript were carefully reviewed and coded with greater accuracy, avoiding semantic similarity (e.g. fairness – consistency, ethical - integrity). At this point, I placed greater onus on grouping codes further, but the two chosen ('Factors Impacting Change' and 'Supporting Change') were very similar themselves, so needed to consider a way of demarcating them more appropriately. This arrangement was deemed to be far too simplistic to develop a suitably detailed understanding so was promptly modified again.

Phase Three:	
Factors Impacting Change	Supporting Change
Personal	Coaching & Positive Spin
Confidence	Feedback
Self Doubt	Guidance
Desire for Self-Improvement	Peers
Experience	
Gut Feeling	
Reflective Process	
Perception	
Unaware of Own Behaviour	
Values	
Enacting Values	
Problematic Values	
Personal	
Flexibility	
Passion	
Sustainability	
Relational	
Communication	
Consistency	
Fairness	
Empathy	
Humility	
Integrity	
Respect	
Transparency	
Trust	
The Pupil	
Care	
Making A Difference	
Wellbeing	
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	
Personal Issues	
Recognising Factors Beyond Individual Control	
Success Criteria	
Wider Factors	
Culture	
Definition Issues - Evolution vs Revolution	
Personal vs Organisational	
Systemic	

Figure 29 - Cycle Two: Phase Three Coding Analysis

Phase Four acted akin to a reset in the analysis process, after somewhat of a false start in the previous phase. I started to introduce temporal aspects of behaviour, breaking down the notion of change into past, present, and future. At this point, the codes were reduced further (e.g., 'self-doubt' was merged with 'confidence', 'peers' with 'support network'). I decided to move forward in this way for two reasons. Firstly, it this temporal consideration aligned closely with the Model of Structured Reflection that practitioners were using as a framework with which to consider their practice. Secondly, I felt that the explicit link between what has

happened or been experienced previously and what the practitioner is doing now was incredibly valuable, in an ongoing pursuit of understanding possible antecedents. At this point, I conceptualised the present as barriers to change, attempting to locate factors that perhaps stopped practitioners from changing their practice, 'in the moment'. The future described how best to support the practitioner to change their practice, looking ahead as a 'model' colleague. I felt that, although I had now reached a point whereby I could offer a useful conceptualisation of agency from the data, it didn't align with my preference for ecological thinking in a satisfactory manner. The framework at this time did not adequately permit cross domain and temporal factors to reciprocally interact in an accurate way to influence outcomes, as with ecological thinking. It also inherently assumed that the outcome of any particular agentic action would adhere to the status quo, with no deference regarding if such decision making was right; it lacked the subtlety to consider agentic outcomes.

Phase Four: Considering Change		
The Past (Understanding Behaviour)	The Present (Barriers to Change)	The Future (Supporting Change)
Characteristics	Culture	Coaching & Positive Spin
Confidence	Definition Issues - Evolution vs Revolution	Feedback
Desire for Self-Improvement	Enacting Values	Support Network
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	Problematic Values	
Reflective Process	Personal vs Organisational	
Experience	Recognising Factors Beyond Individual Control	
Gut Feeling	Wellbeing	
Perception		
Personal Understanding		
Success Criteria		
Values		
Personal		
Flexibility		
Passion		
Sustainability		
Relational		
Communication		
Consistency		
Fairness		
Empathy		
Humility		
Integrity		
Respect		
Transparency		
Trust		
The Pupil		
Care		
Making A Difference		

Figure 30 - Cycle Two: Phase Four Coding Analysis

For Phase Five, I made some slight adjustments in the coding groups, merging 'Passion' with 'Making a Difference', 'Integrity' and 'Humility' into 'Transparency' and 'Flexibility' into 'Sustainability'. I also reduced the number of personal characteristics to the minimum possible that I felt would effectively convey the overarching message of support and positive regard as not to over complicate any possible future consideration. Throughout the analysis, I wanted to ensure that I was being as open as possible with regards to maintaining an open, inductive stance regarding data analysis. I felt that it was important to keep ensuring that staff were always thinking about what factors were impacting on their practice *in the moment*, so incorporating an explicit consideration of looking back to the past <u>and</u> forward in time as to make decision on the present – the 'here and now' - was the most effective way to support this. As such, I moved to three temporally based themes, removing the additional meanings from each; in this way, I aligned the conceptualisation to an ecological understanding of development. In this framework, the past and future act as reference points with which the practitioner assesses and alters their decision making to enact agentic action. The past acts as a source of experience and values, which guide the setting of personal and professional goals for the practitioner to aim for in the future, both of which guide their daily practice. Daily practice was split up into four clearly delineated sections, *individual, cultural, structural,* and finally *an incorporation of reflective process*, developed using the analysis from Cycle One, now moved from 'The Past' as described in the previous phase of analysis. *Individual Factors* describe personal characteristics and most prominently influences from the personal sphere that are possibly impinging on current practice. *Cultural Factors* offers an insight into the processes and systems that govern aspects of practice in the centre, from explicit policy decisions to more implicit levels of trust between colleagues. *Structural factors* outline more tangible ways that staff described as important for reviewing and changing practice, most notably through direct involvement from colleagues.

As can be seen in Figure 29, there are links inherent between the past, present and future as would be expected, with past experiences shaping both personal beliefs, assumptions and experiences, as well as notions of success criteria; these links align with an Ecological conceptualisation as posited during Cycle One. An important refinement of this conceptualisation is that is facilitates practitioner change as a result of the factors at all of these levels. It also does not explicitly imply a 'correct' decision, leaving the practitioner able

to judge according to their own sense of agency, which is something that I feel is an important aspect of transformational professional learning.

Phase Five: Temporal Ecological Model		
The Past	The Present	The Future
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	**1. Individual Factors**	Success Criteria
Experience	Personal Characteristics	
Values	Wellbeing & External Factors	
Sustainability	**2. Cultural Factors**	
Communication	Cultural Norms: Communication, collaboration, productive mistake making, trust	
Consistency/ Fairness	Feedback	
Empathy	Personal vs Organisational Alignment	
Making A Difference	**3. Structural Factors**	
Respect	Coaching & Solution Focused	
Transparency	Support Network	
Trust	Workload	
	Regular Interventions & CPD	
	4. Understanding of Reflective Process	
	Enacting Values: Espoused vs. Theory-in-use	
	Gut Feeling & Experience	
	Perception & Interpretation	
	Personal Understanding of Construct	

Figure 31 - Cycle Two: Phase Five Coding Analysis

The iterative coding process over time can be observed in Table 32 below. Diagrammatic representation of proportional weightings for the final coding analysis from NVIVO can be found in Appendix 8.5.6: Cycle Two Coding Weighting.

Initial Codes	Focused Coding	Final Coding
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	The Past	The Past
Experience		
Values		
Sustainability		
Communication		
Consistency/ Fairness		
Empathy		
Making A Difference		
Respect		
Transparency		
Trust		
Personal Characteristics	The Present	The Present: Individual Factors
Wellbeing & External Factors		
Cultural Norms: Communication, collaboration, productive mistake making, trust		The Present: Cultural Factors
Feedback		
Personal vs Organisational Alignment		
Coaching & Solution Focused		The Present: Structural Factors
Support Network		
Workload		
Regular Interventions & CPD		
Enacting Values: Espoused vs. Theory-in-use		The Present: Understanding of Reflective Process
Gut Feeling & Experience		
Perception & Interpretation		
Personal Understanding of Construct		
Success Criteria	The Future	The Future

Figure 32 - Table Showing Iterative Coding Process

5.6 Discussion

This section offers insights into the data gained from the participants. As described in the previous section, these were categorised into three overarching themes: The Past, The Present and The Future.

5.6.1 The Past

> *'Relationships, isn't it? And if you can be all those things, and not make them feel unsafe, then you're going to be developing a trusting relationship'* (Participant 3 - Focus Group)

The data showed that participants overwhelmingly espoused values and beliefs that were relational in nature. Interestingly, much of the discussion regarding values and beliefs, at least at a superficial level, pertained to professional experience, largely omitting explicit influence from the personal domain. Although this is contrary to insights from previous research literature (e.g., Priestly et al., 2015; Pajares, 1992), it may be as a result of the lack of fidelity inherent in the research design. Participants utilised a range of language that provided a rich understanding of the emphasis they placed in developing and maintaining relationships with pupils. Descriptors such as '*honesty*' (Participant H), '*humility*' (Participant I) and '*empathy*' (Participant J), all considered under the theme of *transparency*, indicated that they, much like myself, consider a primary function of their work.

Many of the participants opted to leave employment at mainstream schools, openly disenfranchised at the limitations of the prevailing 'functionalist' system (Biesta, 2010), and seeking to practice in a more holistic learning environment that is often more readily found in Alternative Provision. In such provision, class sizes are smaller and there is as a stronger focus on the importance of a relational approach with pupils and developing high levels of trust. As such, the ability for AP to offer credence to notions of social equity (Sahlberg, 2011) has meant that staff are much less likely to experience 'detachment' from their beliefs (see Biesta et al., 2015). In this way, 'Making a difference' was another facet that was widely shared by participants, a '*primal desire*' (Participant D) to give pupils that have already experienced a multitude of educational challenges the best possible support. In this way, the data supported the assertion that practitioners chose to work in AP due to the ATIP focus on relational practice, collaboration and equity (see Alisic et al., 2012; Mendelson et al., 2015; Oehlberg, 2008).

The data reinforced wider research literature that observed experience to be positively associated with reflective practice and enacting a wider range of agentic options (see Priestley et al., 2015; Helsby, 1999):

> *'I think as I've got older, I'm much better at being reflective. And I think, also, I don't think I care….Well it's not that I don't care. I care about the job passionately. But I don't think I care about pissing off my seniors. I now feel like I'm quite happy to make decisions, which perhaps historically, when I was just a classroom teacher, I didn't feel comfortable to me, I think because I've been on that journey, and I've come back down at the classroom. I've just thought I just got the confidence do those things'* (Participant B)

This 'double edged sword' makes sense, when considering human behaviour in general; people don't tend to prove effective at changing their behaviours, irrespective of acknowledging the benefits of alternative practice (see Belo et al., 2014). The research design utilised cannot provide the level of fidelity required to ascertain if such a correlation does exist; I am very much relying on personal account, which may well be influenced by historical inaccuracies but also by a personal bias in the way they perceive themselves. The data uncovered some notable discrepancies, related to frustrations with colleagues and organisational limitations, leading to a loss of enthusiasm for change:

> *'Over two years, I've kind of adjusted that full process into thinking, Well, some people just aren't gonna get it'* (Participant 3 - Focus Group)

Of course, again, this opinion cannot be verified without introducing specific, targeted research and possible observation but is the anthesis of ATIP principles, showing a lack of willingness to look beyond the superficial.

In the context of this research, I noted on more than one occasion in my journal that it was pleasing to see that many of the values espoused by the participants correlated strongly with those promoted through the introduction of ATIP; beliefs such as empathy, respect and trust are key foundations of such principles and this observation provided promise of a workforce that was keen to engage productively with such organisational change. While hugely encouraging and pleasing, I think there are three factors to take into consideration when acknowledging the data. Firstly, participants would not want to appear to be admitting to enacting values that would make them look 'bad' or significantly different to the status quo to myself, a senior leader in the organisation. Secondly, I think that the impact of self-selection

bias in participant selection means that those involved will be staff that are drawn to similar perspectives publicly espoused by myself and as such are more likely to confirm my own assumptions. Lastly, it is the lack of individual connection, perhaps more succinctly termed *practical ignorance*, between espoused values and theory-in-use, as described by Schon (1993) that has the most significant effect how values are enacted.

As described in Cycle One, it became apparent early on that while offering evidence that participants have at least started to consider the significance of wider educational philosophies and beliefs, there was quite a difference how such practice would be enacted. For example, one that I discussed on multiple occasions with my 'critical friend' peers related to the notion of espoused versus theoretical values. We opined that, through no fault of any individual, staff may possess different understanding of empathy, exacerbated by differing contexts. We spoke at length about this discrepancy being a fundamental tenet of human nature, a subjective individual experience that would require significant discursive agreement, much like that required for Action Research. This generalised understanding meant that participants found associated projective elements, most notably negotiating success criteria, extremely difficult to describe beyond very generalised terms. Although it is acknowledged that, due to the highly individualised nature of the provision, participants raised that any outcome measures are not easily replicated across the cohort, participants found it difficult to accurately convey what they might expect a specific value and associated success measure to look like in practice. While a useful starting point to the discussion, when not considered more deeply and in context, such broad considerations had limited tangible use in practice.

As described in the literature review, iterative aspects of agency refer to the influence of experience and personal beliefs, developed throughout the life course; our past plays a significant role in our decision making, via personal beliefs and assumptions. ATIP principles highlight that it is imperative to ensure that practitioners are able to themselves reflect and recognise their own 'triggers', particularly how their own past and experiences may influence the 'here and now' (see Jacobson, 2021; Knight, 2007; Morgan et al., 2015).

5.6.2 The Present – Current

5.6.2.1 Individual Factors

The data revealed that such factors could be split into two specific aspects; personal characteristics, influenced by previous experiences, and external factors, described as stresses negatively impacting wellbeing that are occurring in a personal domain.

There was an explicit recognition how engagement would prove limited in wanting to improve practice if other factors were impeding the level of focus and effort required to maintain such a change:

> *'It takes a lot of energy to change you can change for you is the sustaining the change, that's really difficult. And I think people find that really, really hard. And I think that's true, particularly when you're trying to build or repair relationships with students' (Participant B)*

A significant number of staff have been absent through both mental and physical health issues, which emphasises higher levels of pressure on the remaining team, exacerbating the situation further. Participants recognised the need to avoid burnout, which although in my experience true in any year, has been particularly pronounced and influential this year, due to the ongoing pernicious influence of COVID-19 and the need to ensure that energy levels were sustainable:

> *'Sometimes it's self-preservation isn't it? You're so tired. So protect yourself and you have to let things slip a bit, because you ain't got the energy to tackle this or tackle there and you just let it slide… this year is being self-preserving' (*Participant 5 - Focus Group*)*

The other cited individual factor was the ability of the practitioner to continue to improve their practice in the face of possible stresses. Whether more appropriately described as confidence, resilience, or a self-esteem, it was offered as the main mechanism through which practitioners are willing to develop their professional repertoire and conversely the cause of their reticence to affect consistent and significant change in practice. For the purposes of this research, I shall use *Resilience,* as it is a topic that I have studied previously and accurately summarises the behaviour described (see Section 1.0). Such resilience (or lack of) has a direct influence on the ability to enact reflective practice and agency, highlighting a significant gap between the two domains. I had initially constructed a separate theme that

described the importance of being proactive in seeking to refine personal practice. However, upon reflection, I opted to utilise a foundation similar to the Rogerian concept of unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1959).

I considered that providing they are offered appropriate support, all people want to be the best they can be, it is just a case of supporting them in their endeavours. Therefore, such an issue became one of developing skills (through coaching and structured guidance) and building confidence. This perspective was recognised by one of the participants:

> *'A lack of confidence in people, they, they might know that they need to change, but they just simply don't feel that they've got any of those tools in their toolkit… that's where coaching comes in' (Participant B)*

Characteristics stemming from a lifetime of experiences can be transferred between the personal and professional spheres, resulting in a reduction of willingness to try alternatives and thus expand practice. The data revealed that many of the participants were aware of at least a few such characteristics, such as the desire to '*save everyone*' (Participant J) or seeking to '*avoid being told that I've done something wrong*' (Participant D) which stymied confidence in the professional domain. Perhaps the most insightful observation described how such awareness is an essential part of the reflective process and personal development, but not at the expense of detrimental outcomes:

> *'Everybody's own sort of personal situation and external factors. But I also think that part of your flexibility has to be not bringing that into the equation, which is a difficult one, isn't i… the problem is, I think, is that you're, you're talking about human behaviour. So in terms of do things ever get in the way? Well, yeah, because people actually were, you know, as we've seen this week, for certain situations, you're so at the mercy of how somebody else wants to conduct themselves in a situation that that can get in the way' (Participant C)*

The data highlighted the ability to enact change in practice while in the face of possible discomfort exerts a significant influence on agentic action, offering such emotive language as expressing difficulty moving from their '*comfort zone'* (Participant 1 - Focus Group) and '*fear'* of failure (Participant G). In this way, such resilience leads to the practitioner proactively seeking feedback as to change their practice. However, this exposes greater considerations regarding how individual practitioners might *perceive* such support. Participants widely recognised that it is the personal responsibility the individual to ultimately enact change in practice; however, they expressed doubts amongst their colleagues

as to the veracity with which they were implementing changes, as to most effectively support the pupils. They also indicated that the change process has resulted in negative unintended consequences:

> *I think we will have to be honest about how willing people are to accept feedback about their practice. Unfortunately, yeah. Is it worth it, that process, it's just gonna cause more issues.. I think people's own trauma makes them unable to accept weakness. And I think too often people see it as a weakness, if they need to change something, when it isn't always a weakness' (Participant C)*

The implications are that staff have reacted in such a hostile manner that it has subsequently caused friction with colleagues, which will most likely have had a problematic impact on pupil outcomes, whether directly or via the negative atmosphere created in the centre, a particular concern in such a small provision.

At the time, I reflected in my personal narrative that close association between personal and professional characteristics is challenging to navigate in tangible terms; if a lack of confidence is so strongly associated with personal experiences, then it is a substantial request for any organisation to offer the level of holistic support necessary that can exceed the professional remit. We facilitate certain structural supportive elements (see next section), but it is not usually within the realm of professional responsibility to provide the opportunity for practitioners to access specialist support for any potential influence from the personal sphere. While supervision is akin to therapy in many ways, we are clear with all staff that it is not therapeutic and that the process does not utilise practitioners that are qualified as such. Even if we did have significantly improved resources available for this to happen, the question remains whether it would be ethical practice to enforce mandatory therapeutic work with practitioners to negate any seepage between the personal and professional domains? For example, what outcomes would be deemed 'good' – who would be the ultimate arbiter of such decision making? Also, adopting a voluntary stance could well exacerbate pre-existing divisions between those staff members who are more willing to engage in deeper reflective thinking and those who are still operating at a superficial level.

During this research, I had long considered the importance of adding an element of influence that incorporated factors outside of the professional sphere and it was good to observe this as such a frequent perspective in the data. As a practitioner during two years of COVID

influenced education, I noted again and again that it would be impossible to overstate the impact that worry and stress over family, and society more widely, had in the way that I enacted my professional role. Stress in the personal domain, and its impact on mental and physical health, cannot be separated from the professional. In the absence of effective coping strategies, negative experiences at home will prove equally pernicious in the professional sphere. When desiring professional agency, focus and energy are a necessary pre-requisite; ensuring effective and consistent change is not an easy path and if one is feeling drained, it is incredibly challenging to maintain the level of impetus required to enact such positive, focused clarity of thought. I think that as I wrote this part of the research, I was hoping to be approaching the end of COVID influence, but such personal impact will exhibit their influence on all at some point. Personal stresses are an important aspect of personal growth and without which we would not be able to sufficiently develop effective levels of resilience. However, it is essential to recognise that during these times, the desire to enact agency in the workplace may not be prioritised for many.

5.6.2.2 Cultural Factors

The most important cultural factor was that of the ATIP principles that provided the *vocabularies and discourses* that provide practitioners with the foundation of their practice and decision making (see Lasky, 2005; Biesta et al., 2015) and the extent to which these were communicated across the organisation, another key ATIP principle. It was apparent that there were some heavily emphasised elements of practice, such as communication, trust and productive mistake making, which participants recognised as different to their previous experiences:

> *'I remember at my previous school and people were saying, you know, don't be frightened to experiment me to teach in in all this kind of stuff, and then when things did go wrong, you get a bollocking... If you're going to make changes. You got to management and staff need to accept that those changes may not work, And they might, they might go completely the other way' (Participant E)*

These terms appeared consistently across the data, indicating a systematic focus on key terminology and important practice, ensuring shared understanding across staff, both in theoretical and tangible terms. In this way, it can be observed that staff had at least started to use the ATIP related vocabularies and discourses in order to modify practice. Although

participants discussed that they had used similar techniques and had possessed comparable knowledge previously:

> *'If we look at a lot of the ATIP stuff that we've, we've done in tangible terms, a huge amount of that wasn't that different to what it was before. We just now call it something together. it's just a case of doing things in a different order, or missing a piece out, or putting a piece in here. You've got the building blocks'* (Participant 4 - Focus Group*)*

Such vocabularies and discourses cannot simply be assumed to be acknowledged and utilised in a consistent manner; they must be explicitly *taught*, for want of a better term. It can be assumed that cultural norms only become such when they are provided the necessary structural impetus, the focus of the next section.

A related, less positively afforded aspect of such vocabulary and one that will require further work in the future is the variance amongst staff regarding the conceptualisation of *change*.

> *'It doesn't always have to be about change all the time. And I think we really fall into that gap here, all this talk about differentiation and everything else, which is not what anybody's even been asked to do. It's about adaptation, and refinement'* (Participant C)

For many, change was synonymous with a professional uprooting of practice and thus it is perhaps understandable that practitioners might consider change to be somehow insurmountable and overwhelming. It is important to be clear in future iterations of planning that enacting change does not have to involve any more than small scale refinements, small steps to improve practice spread over an extended period, rather than all at once.

Observable in the data was a dichotomy between an awareness and appreciation of personal values and pedagogical philosophies and those of the organisation, aligning closely with the iterative aspect of agency. Although acknowledging a possible need to acquiesce in certain domains and instances perhaps, participants felt it important to maintain the need for personal values to endure:

> *'If there's a breakdown in communication if you haven't been told something if you put on the backfoot if there's like a systematic failure, and something isn't done. It prevents you doing your job. But at the same time that shouldn't necessarily or inherently cost you your values, there should still be integrity'* (Participant D)

Due to the nature of their role in the education ecosystem, PRUs face their own unique pressures. For example, although still at the mercy of decision making at policy level regarding decreasing funding (Sahlberg, 2011), notions of performativity (Ball, 2003) have a less pernicious impact as PRUs, while still operating under the gaze of OFSTED, are not beholden to academic league tables. Due to the relative flexibility afforded PRUs, and the specific nature of their cohort of pupils, staff have made a deliberate decision to work in what can be a more challenging setting. However, staff have made this decision most prominently on the basis that they recognise the broadening the criteria of what constitutes 'good education' (Biesta, 2010), to move away from the technical-rationalist approach (see Biesta et al., 2015). As such, the lack of overt dissonance between organisation and personal values in the data can be explained by recognising that colleagues opt to work at the PRU, rather than mainstream, because they are so inherently associated with a more holistic perspective on child development, underpinned by the development of positive, close relationships, in line with ATIP principles. This in turn is overwhelmingly associated with their individual values and beliefs, reducing the friction between the two domains. I noted during this phase of the research that also, as an organisation, we were at this point not yet far enough into the 'journey' for staff to offer such thoughts and as such it *feels* that the two are still mutually exclusive to all but a few participants, even though the two domains are inherently intertwined. Thirdly, this could be due to the interview proving ill designed to capture such information or not necessarily relevant to this round of data collection, something that could be refined for the future.

5.6.2.3 Structural Factors

Structural factors are those processes and systems, operating at different levels, within which staff operate. There was significant mention of strong support networks within the school community, with many participants espousing the positive qualities that such strong relationships offer:

> *I've got good pals here that pull me up on things. So I think that's really important to have those people that can come into that. So x will come and say, that was a bit out of order what you said or something. And y would do the same thing. So I think that's really important to have those people that can come into that. So probably through feedback, how we think and not just oral feedback, because there's also people's body language (Participant B)*

The most prominent aspect of this was using supervision as a form of Professional Learning Community (PLC) (see Stoll et al., 2006). The sessions provided *all* staff with the opportunity to engage in reciprocal dialogue and problem solving (see Priestly et al., 2012). Since all staff were expected to attend and provided groups different to their usual organisational hierarchy, it also developed informal 'horizontal' ties within the team (see Lee et al., 2011; Coburn et al., 2012), increasing the level of collegiality (Stoll et all., 2006) and thus increasing the likelihood of agentic action (see Daly et al., 2010). In effect, supervision helped to re-mould existing dynamics within the team, supporting the development of closer relationships; many of the staff would utilise their supervisory group as a sounding board outside of supervision sessions, emphasising its positive impact. In this way, the sessions offered practitioners the opportunity to collaborate, one of the key tenets of trauma informed practice, as well as provide a normative role in sharing knowledge across the organisation (see Inskipp & Proctor, 1995; Jacobson, 2021; Knight, 2007; Morgan et al., 2015)

'The KITs have been coaching really haven't they?' (Participant E)

Keeping In Touch (KIT) meetings, performance management meetings held monthly with the line manager, also provided the opportunity for coaching and the introduction of reflexive dialogue (see van der Schaaf et al., 2008), to introduce elements of transformative professional learning, as theorised by Mezirow (1990). However, the depth of dialogue offered during such meetings was reported as often being inconsistent, with no standardised process or framework to utilise. As such, the discussion could sometimes be superficial in nature, with the primary focus instead targeted on performance targets and aspects of wellbeing. Members of the leadership team participate in regular coaching sessions with an external practitioner, utilising a general framework of open questions; while a promising start to any reflexive questioning, it perhaps lacks the specificity or ability to probe more deeply. They have also completed 360 reflective processes, discussing scores gleaned from the wider staff team across a range of domains. Such a process, while very challenging personally, illuminates specific areas of practice to refine, permitting a higher level of reflection to occur. Despite the acknowledgement of the benefits of such a culture, there was also tacit realisation of the more negative ramifications of such formalisation, particularly the potential lack of reciprocity:

'I think the 360 process is great in theory but hideous for the person who's got suffer that. Yeah. Because I think and also, I think you're giving it to people, and they might be in the right mood with you on that day. And that might be day. Absolutely. Next day, they would have written something completely different.' (Participant J)

While participants were positive about the impact of supervision and KIT meetings, they lamented the intensity of working in education, with many specifically mentioning the lasting impact of COVID and ensuing changes to day-to-day practice:

*'You don't always get time for reflection, you know you finished your teaching. you do marking your preparation, making the room save tidying up, going to meetings, working on this initiative, whatever. You come home, you do the jobs at home, when do you reflect?' (*Participant 2 - Focus Group*)*

Interestingly, policy reform or performative measures were not discussed at all. I think that alongside COVID currently being the overwhelming source of frustration and tiredness, working in Alternative Provision affords staff a certain level of detachment from such issues, particularly with respect to mainstream colleagues. I noted in my journal that despite the lack of explicit mention, there is an element of indirect causality that perhaps the data lacked the fidelity to accurately identify; current historically low levels of funding to education and social care services have meant that we are now operating with much larger class sizes than 4 years ago and witnessing higher frequencies of unproductive behaviours. Due to the nature of the provision, all staff have a direct role in the pastoral care of pupils, as well as any teaching commitments and as such, these developments will have undoubtedly had a significant impact on staff workload. The issue of workload directly influenced consideration of how to prove sustainable when seeking to support the pupils; it was recognised that '*burnout'* (Participant E) as a result of excessive workload will result in diminished productivity. The data also showed that participants recognised the possible negative ramifications of doing your '*best'* (Participant C) and regular requests to amend practice that will ultimately provide small tangible benefits to pupils:

'Hours and hours of work into this or lots of people for hours and hours of work into this. And it's gonna make such a small difference ain't worth the time and effort that people put any' (Participant I)

The final aspect of the structural aspect relates directly to the provision of ongoing professional development that is mandatory for all staff. The interventions described in this

research constitute the initial part of a planned long term staff training project designed to upskill staff in their reflective and agentic capability, promoting the shared vocabularies and discourses, as described in the previous section.

> *'I think, framing it and giving some context... I think that would massively quell any frustrations. But I think people just struggle with change, I don't know the best way to. I think one to one conversations. I think coaching, a Relational Approach, I think, them having a relationship…. the adults are not that much different from the kids. (Participant D)*

While still in its infancy, the project has long-term ratification from the Head and appropriate resource allocation to support success. I think that at this stage, it was premature to ascertain the impact of the intervention yet; the introduction of the ATIP principles and practices at our other site took almost three years to embed successfully, so encouraging the use of the more complex framework that encourages critical reflection and reflexivity involves practitioner cooperation on a much more personal level will most likely take longer.

5.6.2.4 Reflective Process

The purpose of incorporating reflective process as the final step in the model of agency was to conceptualise the process of all influences being taken into consideration before enacting agency. If this does not occur, there is a significant danger of stymying reflection, as many (inaccurately) conclude that reflection is complete at superficial levels instead of being able to progress, when appropriate, to double-loop and critical reflection. Put most simply, without explicit teaching that ensures that practitioners can conceptualise the full breadth of the reflective spectrum, practitioners will not be adequately equipped to enact to the fullest degree reflective practice that most accurately parallels their value and belief system:

> *'You've identified what's, what stopped the pupils from learning, what's actually stopped them from gaining as the best education and what's actually what is it something from how you presented it? You've the amount of work which you've presented before them. And Could it have been better? Could it have been more improved? Could it have been through a process of doing something different'? (Participant G)*

Although the interventions utilised in this research offered such teaching, this is an aspect of reflective practice that will require regular revisitation rather than remaining a singular, one-

off event. Values, beliefs, and experience reform continuously over the life course, so it is imperative that practitioners are provided with the opportunity to regularly consider amending practice. The aim is to upskill practitioners to be able to reflect on their reflective practice:

> *'It's almost like meta reflection in a way, isn't it? So you're talking about reflection, and sometimes that's literally just on through hard experience. And then you actually you're thinking about how you can reflect better'* (Participant 1 - Focus Group)

One of the aspects of the data that featured most prominently was also one that was discussed frequently by supervisors and considered in my own personal practice. As dramatically metaphorised by Schon (1991), the reconciliation between the high peaks of espoused theory and the swampy lowlands of daily practice on occasion constituted an insurmountable challenge. I was pleased that many of those interviewed possessed similar values with which I use as foundations for my practice. As touched on previously, I think that Alternative Provision in general and our provision more specifically tend to attract practitioners eschewing the mainstream focus on teaching and learning, more interested in a holistic child-focused development available in such provision, so this was not surprising. Perhaps more surprising was the consistent mention of the discrepancy in practitioner values and their actions, across many different contexts and domains; in essence, people were often not *doing* as they *thought* they were in the moment:

> *Have you have you really done what you said you were gonna do? Have you really lived by that event? I think it probably comes with a lot of self doubt. Because I don't I think, you know, am I doing the right thing? Am I doing the right job? Am I in the right place? So I always think, you know, I think learnings always been really important to me as well. So I just want to know that I'm doing the best I can whether I can do any better (Participant H)*

One of the specific outcomes of the interventions was to narrow this reflective gap, but it seems that as an organisation at this point there was still some way to travel in this journey. Many of the staff are proving increasingly adept at engaging with reflection-on-action, discussing with consideration a specific situation, but are not yet able to consistently transfer this process into a situation as it arises, nor able to draw upon a deeper understanding of reflective process. Only a few of the participants were currently confident to offer reflections regarding personal assumptions. This may be due to a lack of practice in translating the intervention theory into practice, perhaps a sign that we have not yet completed this work for

long enough. It may also be due to a lack of confidence, with practitioners feeling unable or unwilling to offer such insights into their thoughts and feelings; perhaps this is a negative side effect of engaging with a member of SLT and not wanting to appear somehow unconfident or 'weak'.

It is very difficult to accurately summarise the impact of experience and the accompanying '*gut feeling*' that relates to reflective practice. The data shows that experience is closely associated with a form of reflective wisdom, but as opined in the analysis for Cycle One, this is not something that can be relied upon as a foundation for a conclusive certainty:

> *'It's about kids that are in class at the moment. So there's something that's not quite right. But I can't put my finger on it. So I mean that is going to unfold. I think it's not just me it's a lot of people but it's what are we going to do about that? I think that's really important that we think about how we're going to change things they might just be about engagement might be the time of year and you know, everyone's had enough - it's been a long year. So it might change in September. But it's when things aren't working right that you need to think about changing your practice. Like, I want to think about how I deliver that lesson again. Try. Yeah. But so that's sort of short term, but also long term as well. (Participant H)*

I reflected in my journal that years of experience can equate to thousands of instances of limited practice. The adage 'repeating the same mistake many times' rings true for many of the colleagues; this is not reflective practice or agentic behaviour in its fullest condition, yet simply a means to adhere to the status quo and '*what works*'. But 'what works' is of course, not always, what is most positively impactful for pupil outcomes and is hugely subjective and context driven. To support novice practitioners, emphasising the importance of any gut feeling is unhelpful at best; it implicitly ignores the promise of considered reflection and in effect, expediting the process of professional growth (see Risko et al., 2002).

The final aspect of this section includes two facets altered from the original model of TA as offered by Leijen and Colleagues (2019); Interpretation and Perception. As described by different authors (e.g., Biesta et al., 2015; Priestly et al., 2015), these two facets utilise the vocabularies and discourses to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In the context of this research, practitioners utilise principles and theorisation offered by ATIP with which to guide their practice, manifesting at all levels of organisational practice, including policy level, curriculum intent and relational interactions.

A key part of the reflective process is interpreting a huge number of influences that must be juggled on an average day, associated with the busy day-to-day life of a school - notions of agency in practice, offering descriptions and accounts of differing influencing factors and justifying choices regarding decision making, both in terms of pupil outcomes and personal wellbeing:

> *It's just tricky. Thinking about your values and how you live them in school. Unfortunately, the environment… it's hard not to respond sometimes in a way that is more of an adult when you've got 10 little mini transactions or whatever it is going on, and actually it's really difficult to keep that (*Participant 2 - Focus Group*)*

That this is overtly considered is hugely encouraging, as it suggests that staff are already able to show confidence in both sharing opinions more publicly, but also make decisions that may well operate counter to organisational or policy norms (e.g., recognising the limited impact that school staff may have on pupil outcomes). Such a finding implies that through further development of the new model and continued use of interventions, staff will be able to develop a refined framework of agentic decision making, leading to better informed outcomes and, hopefully, better outcomes for all involved.

Perception significantly impacts how actions are perceived. This factor is closely associated with notions of unintended consequences and the ability to recognise outcomes of actions:

> *'The trouble is, is when you don't know you've done something, that lack that awareness of how they impact other people. I think some people believe their own rhetoric and cannot possibly see that their way is not the way that you know, there is a better way than their way…. I think others, it's, they're exhausted' (Participant B)*

Without the ability or skill to accurately assess the ramifications of any specific action, it is impossible to amend behaviour in a systematic or productive manner, instead utilising at best a 'scatter gun' approach to change; this is true at an individual as well as an organisational level. This is also relevant to perception of oneself and one's ability to maintain perspective, most notably faced with challenging situations. Many of the participants observed that they have developed a very Stoic perspective over time, most prominently choosing not to focus on what is not in their realm of control, while also ensuring they focus on improving what they are able to. They also made reference to the fact that it is hard to maintain enthusiasm

for change when faced with so many different and new initiatives, many of which repeat over an extended period of time:

> *'I've got the experience I, you know, I listened to some people there, especially the younger members of staff talking, I think, you know, it doesn't matter. I've been there, done that, yeah, I've gone through that cycle twice now, those who've been in fashion and it's out of fashion, it's in fashion….. Have a bit more perspective, and to say, I'm not going to get quite so bothered about it is' (Participant E)*

As an organisation, if we are adhering to ATIP principles, we need to ensure that we exhibit consistency, collaboration and empowerment (see SAMHSA, 2015); in tangible terms, this means embedding the professional development and make it clear to colleagues that we are going to continue to review and modify current ATIP related principles, for the betterment of the staff and pupils.

5.6.3 The Future

Data gathered in Cycle One described acknowledging outcomes as a fundamental tenet of reflective practice; without considering success criteria, how can any endeavour be deemed to warrant replication? This round of analysis builds on such foundations but developing the discussion from a wider perspective, in line with the interview questions and associated CPD.

Participants offered some elements of tangible success criteria at a school level, highlighting the discrepancy within settings, even in such a small provision:

> *'I think most, some people in school would say whether they're behaving sat on chairs, they're doing this and that, when really it should probably be attainment that what they're taking away more or less. Yeah, probably a bit of a mismatch across the school' (Participant C)*

Most comments relating to outcomes was much broader in scope, with participants offering a more 'philosophical' understanding regarding the nature of what constitutes success. The literal nature of success in education was commented upon, highlighting the unfairness of an examination system that, at least unofficially, champions arbitrary grade markers as a measure of school achievement:

> *'There's the societal construct that says the (Grade) D is the problem….. but for that kid a D might be really good. And all I could think about was the kid who got a D and that's when it came to do my catch up thing that my supervisor where they were at the time.' (Participant E)*

Interestingly, the data revealed a worry that, in tangible terms, success criteria are not perhaps considered as fully as is necessary to effect accurate reflective practice and change. It describes a reluctance to engage fully in the change process due to concerns regarding the negative fallout:

> *'I think there's an element, we don't always want to gauge it. Because if you gauge it, you then you then have to action something. And it's the action thing stuff here that has the knock on effect, which is very negative, and that shouldn't matter. But we know people respond to emotionally…. it makes you not want to say it makes you not want to do it' (Participant C)*

5.6.4 Alignment with Ecological Model of Teacher Agency

Upon consideration of the data and analysis offered in the previous sections, it became increasingly clear that the conceptualisation used so far bore distinct similarities between an existing Ecological Model of Agency. Although I tried to be as neutral as possible, this can be classed as an example of tangible balancing between inductive and a more deductive approach as a result of immersion in the literature, as discussed previously (see Section 3.5).

The work completed by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) was refined by Biesta and colleagues (2015) to form the Ecological Model of Teacher Agency. It builds upon the foundation provided by Emirbayer and Mische's Chordal Triad of agency (1998, p.972), split into three temporal dimensions that provide a relational framework that can be used to understand the engagement of the individual, highlighting the potential discrepancy between personal professional practices and possible social & cultural constraints (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

The *iterational* dimension is defined as 'the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.971) and relates to the skills, knowledge, beliefs and values that an individual would have developed during their professional and personal experiences. The *practical-evaluative* dimension relates to practice in the 'here and now', defined as 'the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among

possible trajectories of action, in response to ... presently evolving situations' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p. 971). Finally, the *projective* dimension, defined as 'the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action' (p 971), concerns both short term and longer-term goals that the individual sets for themselves, shaping current actions to correspond with possible aspirations and trajectories (Leijen et al., 2019). Such goals are noted to be firmly grounded in previous histories and experiences (Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015; Leijen et al., 2019), thus forming a clear link between past, present and future practice.

The ecological model offered by Leijen, Pedaste and Lepp (2019) (Figure 33) is largely based upon the original ecological model offered by Biesta and colleagues (2015), including the notion of social, cultural and material influences on agency.
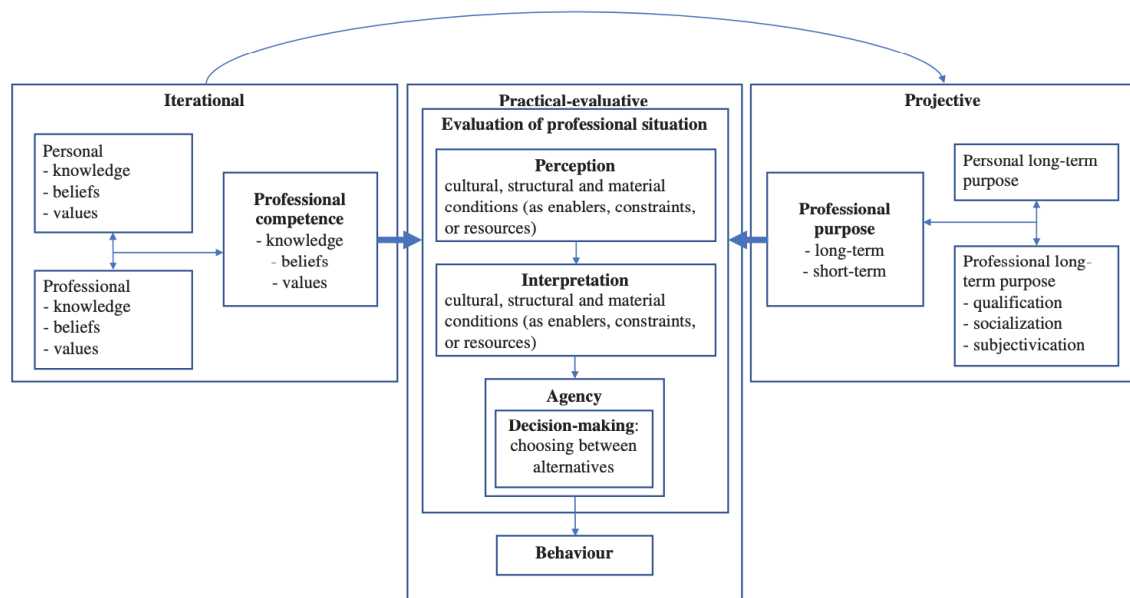
Figure 33: Ecological Model of Teacher Agency

(Leijen et al., 2019)

I recognised the high degree of synchronisation with the research completed in Cycle One and the way in which this model of Agency utilises temporal aspects of any given situation to consider reflective practice and analyse decision making and outcomes. In this way, the model represents a more detailed version of reflective practice, one that elaborates and elucidates on the underlying mechanisms that interact to form decision making. I also recognised that it is underpinned with an ecological, transactional, approach, one that I have long advocated for (Section 1.1) and believe to be the most appropriate way in which to consider how different influences impact on decision making at various levels.

Finally, it also makes explicit the importance of how agency is impacted by the manner in which the individual *evaluates* their professional situation, inherently associated with the language with which the practitioner is able to describe, plan and act (Lasky, 2005). This refinement of evaluative capability, specifically regarding the role of values, was the focus of the interventions enacted during Cycle Two.

Embracing such close alignment between models, I opted to utilise the 'official' terminology of Iterative, Projective, as well as Practical-Evaluative (P-E) as appropriate themes for the data, replacing those of Past, Present and Future. I had already utilised sub-categories of *structural* and *cultural* factors, although had not found any specific evidence to utilise *material* factors as its own definitive category, finding that such descriptors were subsumed in the structural group. Another difference was that I had deemed it necessary to add two new sub-categories: Individual Factors and Reflective Process to accurately represent *all* the data.

Phase Five: Aligning Reflective Process & Theory of Agency		
Iterative	Practical-Evaluative	Projective
Personal Beliefs & Assumptions	**1. Individual Factors**	Success Criteria
Experience	Personal Characteristics	
Values	Wellbeing & External Factors	
Sustainability	**2. Cultural Factors**	
Communication	Cultural Norms: Communication, collaboration, productive mistake making, trust	
Consistency/ Fairness	Feedback	
Empathy	Personal vs Organisational Alignment	
Making A Difference	**3. Structural Factors**	
Respect	Coaching & Solution Focused	
Transparency	Support Network	
Trust	Workload	
	Regular Interventions & CPD	
	4. Understanding of Reflective Process	
	Enacting Values: Espoused vs. Theory-in-use	
	Gut Feeling & Experience	
	Perception & Interpretation	
	Personal Understanding of Construct	

Figure 34: Table of Refined Themes

5.6.5 Updated Model of School Staff Agency

In the model of Teacher Agency shown in the previous section (Leijen et al., 2019), the authors offer a broad description of how a worker might evaluate their professional situation and thus, their ability to enact agency over their choices. The past & present aspects of the model align well with the data from this research, with particular synchronicity regarding the importance of our experiences in offering a glimpse of what we are to become. I included both 'Perception' and 'Interpretation' as the drivers that enable decision making to occur in the present but opted to frame them as factors that underpin all evaluation rather than discrete categories of their own.

An aspect of the model that was revealed in the data, one not overtly evident in the previous model, is the importance and detail of factors impacting on an individual level. The previous model considered the association between life experiences and later values and beliefs but did not offer detailed explanation as to the underlying psychological mechanisms that act as a 'bridge' between such experiences and current practice, offering instead a perspective that was most prominently sociological in scope. Factors as simple and common as being unwell have the potential to induce significant ramifications on professional agency, yet in my opinion are not sufficiently incorporated into the existing model, based in my opinion on a predominantly sociological perspective of agency, seemingly focused largely on professional factors and discounting any ongoing possible influence across domains.

In order to account for these factors, I made the decision to develop an updated model of Agency, again utilising an Ecological perspective, incorporating it with the existing model (see Figure 34). I amended the model as I felt that the previous iteration did not accurately represent the factors that influence the decision making of practitioners working in our PRU; the data did not align well enough to 'force' any form of analysis. I made the decision to develop the new model for two reasons. Firstly, I felt that physically designing a model provided myself with a much-improved understanding of the pathway that leads to decision making and agentic behaviour; seeing it down on paper in such a way helped conceptualise the construct. Secondly, I theorised the model as a tool with which to support colleagues in their reflective practice; by utilising it as the basis for perhaps individual coaching sessions, the different domains and aspects possess the opportunity to open up discussion around what each aspect means to them. Through explicitly providing staff with increased understanding

of the pathways and processes that permit change, the new model can form part of future professional development across the wider staff team

Firstly, many of the participants involved in the research and a significant proportion of the wider staff team here at the centre are not teachers. We have a considerable team of support staff and while specific pressures may not be the same, they will have significant commonalities. We strive to maintain a culture of collaboration and reinforce the role that *all* staff have in developing pupil outcomes, having previously made mistakes where directives have been ignored to a certain extent by non-teachers due to the title or message within the delivery. It may sound somewhat slight, but we want to be able to encourage reflection about agency for *all* staff, so the message must remain inclusive; thus, the updated model (see Figure 35) will be renamed School Staff Agency.
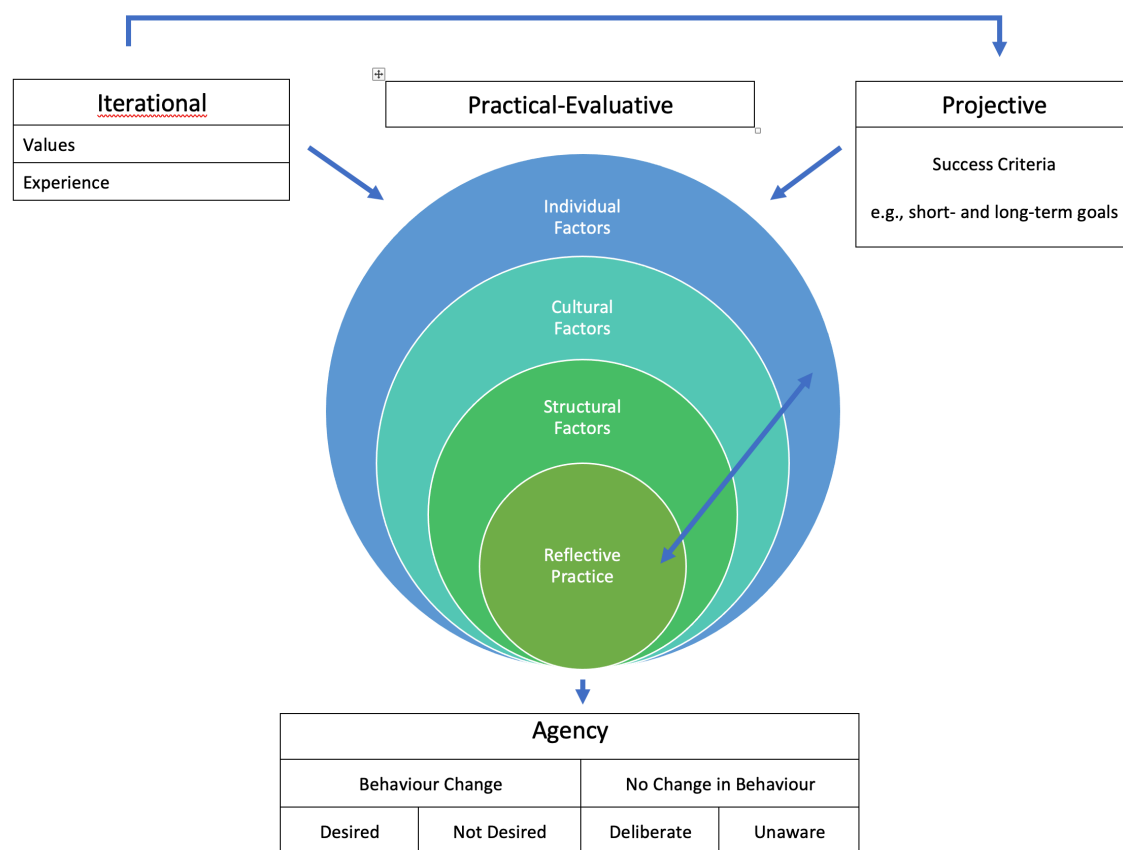
Figure 35: Updated Model of School Staff Agency

The updated model contains an addition of both Individual Factors and a greater acknowledgement and understanding of Reflective Practice developed in Cycle One. As

described previously (see Section 1.1), an ecological perspective aligns the model more naturally with human development, acknowledging that all the factors will interact in a fluid and dynamic manner. In the updated model perception and interpretation are deemed as only one strand of the reflective process, a necessary but not sufficient aspect of such practice. The model, therefore, provides a method with which to conceptualise that influencing factors at different levels act to influence agency.

For example, someone experiencing mental health worries (individual factors) may be exacerbated or supported in the professional domain, whether through organisational processes (structural) or social networks (cultural), which impact on a bidirectional basis. For this member of the team, when a change of some form is demanded from them, they are able to consider how it aligns with their values, but also the demand of the resources available to them at that time, whether time, health, organisation culture or skill in enacting reflective practice. The process hinges on the ability to enact such reflective practice, placed as the final pathway through which all actions are deliberated and the final step in agentic action; it acts as the point of the process where all factors are considered, and a decision is made.

The second most prominent refinement of this model pertains to the explicit provision and acknowledgement of the four different outcomes that I believe can occur as a result of reflective thought regarding change. Although perhaps many people consider agentic action to result in a clear and obvious change in line with any measure of organisational directive, this is of course not necessarily the case. Practitioners who fundamentally disagree with actions may well weigh up all the factors and decide to not adhere to instructions or suggestions; likewise, some may not even be suitably aware of the situation to the point where they are able to enact change. In this way, the model is designed to supports practitioners in recognising the factors that influence the decision-making process, offering an opportunity for discussion and reflection when considering actions.

The focus for this Cycle was related to improving understanding of values. However, data indicated that many other factors that influence agency and change. The Ecological Model of Staff Agency enables useful consideration of values alongside any other influencing factor which can be the focus for future cycles of organisational foci.

5.7 Conclusion

5.7.1 Cycle Two Summary

The aim of Cycle Two was to ascertain the extent to which I was able to develop a sense of staff agency with which to impact their actions so that they are aligned with ATIP principles. In order to achieve this, a sustained period of professional development interventions were organised for practitioners, alongside continued weekly supervision and ongoing use of a new structured reflective framework, designed to support practitioners. A summary of research, incorporating both Cycle One and Two can be seen in Figure 36.

Overall Research Question:

'How effectively can I develop the skills and knowledge of the new staff team, so they are effectively utilising ATIP principles?'

Cycle One

Research Question: How successfully was I able to utilise supervision to implement and improve staff understanding of ATIP and align their actions to these principles?

Literature Review: Reflective Practice & Supervision

Intervention: Implementation of Weekly Staff Supervision

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interview: 10 participants

Focus Group: 6 participants

Personal Journal

Data collection and implementation was significantly disrupted due to COVID

Developed: Ecological Model of Reflective Practice

Structural / Cultural Factors (External)

Ability for Change (Internal)

Desired Impact of Action (Frame of Reference)

Reflection

Summary
Data indicated focus opportunity pertaining to developing staff reflective frame of reference
Notable variance between staff espoused theories and theories-in-use
Variance also observed in the effectiveness of Supervision to promote reflection

Cycle Two

Research Question: To what extent was I able to develop a sense of staff agency with which to impact their actions, so that they are aligned with ATIP principles?'

Literature Review: Agency

Interventions:
Staff CPD Sessions to develop reflective frame of reference and importance of values
Refining of Supervision to incorporate systemic use of MSR reflective prompts

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interview: 10 participants

Focus Group: 6 participants

Personal Journal

Developed: Model of Staff Agency

Iterational

Projective

Practical-Evaluative
- Individual Factors
- Cultural Factors
- Structural Factors
- Reflective Practice

Agency
- Behaviour Change: Desired / Not Desired
- No Change in Behaviour: Deliberate / Unaware

Summary
Data indicated CPD was effective at promoting staff understanding and recognition of values
Significant addition to previous model of Agency was highlighting importance of personal/psychological factors and the emphasis that agency might lead to staff enacting no change
Disconnect between espoused theories and theories-in-use still prominent
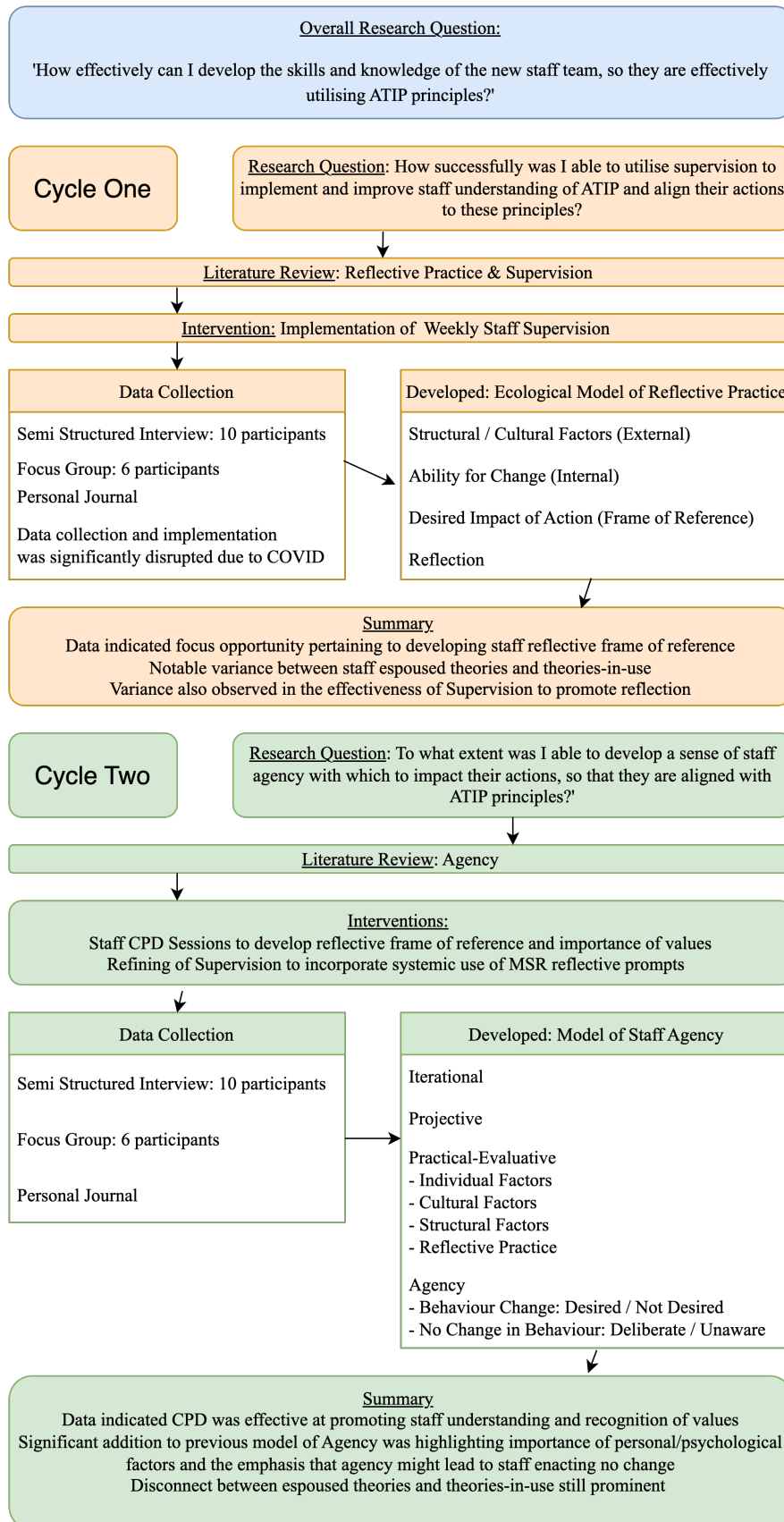
Figure 36: Cycle One and Two Summary

Through the amalgamation of the research completed in Cycle One and by utilising existing research literature pertaining to Teacher Agency, it was possible to provide increased recognition and understanding of the underlying mechanisms that influence practitioner agency relating to their individual decision-making processes. The data indicated that agency proved the basis for an effective conceptualisation of how values directly impacted practice. The data also showed that staff possessed strong values, which they recognised were used as a foundation for practice.

Reflecting on the observations made and evidence gathered regarding the success of Cycle Two highlighted somewhat mixed feelings. I believe that the interventions were highly successful in promoting discussion and engaging staff with more theoretical aspects of their own educational philosophies, something that has been omitted from our professional development curriculum for some time. I also believe that the key role values play in self-reflection – the literal self-recognition of what one stands for – and its impact on practice. However, As the evidence collecting progressed, the spectre of Schon loomed large, with discrepancy between 'thoughts' and 'actions' becoming increasingly clear over time. Interview data can be used to infer thoughts and opinions but is not suitable to assess if these are different to what the practitioner is enacting in their practice. This ultimately means that with this current experimental design, it is not possible to accurately assess the efficaciousness of any intervention or framework designed to support reflective practice.

The evidence suggested that the updated Model of Staff Agency offers a framework that can be used to incorporate factors in different domains and on different levels of influence, that all interact in an ecological manner to impact agentic actions. I started this research with the expectation that reflective practice and agentic action is directly associated with the practitioner recognising 'the error of their ways' and conforming to the status quo, changing their practice accordingly, the *desired* change in behaviour. At inception, I believed the opposite of this was an element of the practitioner being *unaware* and that with enough support, they would be able to refine their practice. However, as the research developed, it was clear that while I still feel these provide the foundation of the research, as with all human behaviour, the reality is somewhat more complicated. It became clear that some practitioners exhibited agency, by enacting practice not ascribed by ATIP principles. This misalignment between organisational and personal values and corresponding desired outcomes is a tension that has been discussed in the literature previously (see Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011; Imants

& van der Wal 2020). Promoting staff agency encourages independent consideration and reflection, which may result in minority of staff engaging in resistance and 'conspiratorial mediation' (Osborn et al, 1997).

Although the overarching aim of the research was to study the implementation of ATIP principles and practitioner adherence to change, I have maintained throughout that my aim has been to foster the development of reflective capabilities and consideration of personal rationale for practice. I have recognised and been willing to respect possible alternative perspectives, providing the individual has permitted full engagement with such reflective practice. Unfortunately, the current research design does not permit detailed investigation into differentiating between those who are acting deliberately and those who are more ignorant. It also fails to recognise the rationale of those practitioners that are enacting deliberative actions different to those advocated within the ATIP approach.

My aim was that the new model can be utilised as part of ongoing professional development opportunities for staff. Using the model, staff can be supported to continue to expand their professional knowledge, using the model as a guide with which to support in the process of both assessing how practitioners 'arrive' at their decisions, while also predicting possible consequences of such actions. The model could also be utilised to focus discussions with those who lack adherence to the new organisational norms, 'drilling down' to uncover possible underlying reasons for this discrepancy, whether deliberate or otherwise. It can be aligned with the multi-tiered approach to trauma informed care, supporting decision making in specific contexts at both the individual practitioner and organisational level.

5.7.2 Further Analysis

One observation of note was that despite the different backgrounds and hierarchical standing of the participants, many of the themes and comments were very similar across the data. It seems that the culture associated with ATIP has been welcomed by all involved, which is positive; the challenge now, as some of them mentioned, is to ensure that effort is made to collaborate with those less overtly willing to engage with reflective practice and agentic consideration. Unlike the data collected from Cycle One, there did not appear any undue themes or association between hierarchy or role and the type of value espoused by participants. Perhaps the lack of specific, detailed examples and the tendency toward broader

accounts made such a delineation difficult to ascertain, something that could be elucidated further in the future.

The research completed during Cycle Two has further developed my understanding and expertise of utilising Action Research in practice, with the implantation of the interventions and associated Model of Staff Agency achieving technical, practical and theoretical aspects of success. An avenue for further development would be the clarification regarding measures of ethical success, specifically relating to how practitioner values align with those being encouraged by the organisation. It is essential to recognise throughout any such research pertaining to agentic behaviour that deliberate action to the contrary should be an acceptable expectation. In this way, I might reframe ethical success as ensuring the practitioner has engaged thoughtfully in their own reflective practice, something that aligns well with my own personal perspective.

Considering the more passive nature of Cycle One, I found the proactive element, most notably refining supervision and presenting interventions, to be frustrating for different reasons. Again, although I recognise that consideration could always be allocated to increasing collaborative opportunity, I feel that colleagues have been provided with appropriate occasion with which to raise any facet they believe to be important. With COVID no longer a concern, the face-to-face meetings permitted much more consistent and in-depth discussion regarding how supervision was providing practitioners space to discuss the role of values. However, such an increase in frequency served to highlight inconsistencies regarding the group participating in the review discussions and the depth to which they offered their input. There could have been several underlying reasons responsible for this. Having been a supervisor previously, I appreciated that after a busy day and then supervision, it can be difficult to maintain levels of clarity and energy necessary for the highest levels of reflective thought and conversation. However, I reflected that it may have been the influence of my role that was having a detrimental impact; the power dynamic rearing its figurative head. I had thought to arrange the group to self-facilitate, providing them with equipment to appropriately record any conversation. Unfortunately, due to the stresses from the various other aspects of my role, by the time I had appreciated this fact, it was too late to enact. I think that, were another cycle to be completed, it would be prudent to provide the tools with which to empower the supervisory team to offer their thoughts, away from any possible direct influence from myself, thus hopefully negating some of the undue power differential.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Research

This research set out to ascertain to what degree I, as a senior member of staff working within a Pupil Referral unit, could influence the practice of my colleagues so that they are able to effectively enact principles aligned with Attachment and Trauma-informed practice (ATIP). In order to do this, I completed two cycles of Action Research.

The premise of the start of the research was the assumption that for one to change practice, they must first be able to recognise the purpose and consequences of such practice, to *reflect* on practice. To begin, I deemed it most effective to provide staff with the opportunity to develop their own reflective toolkit with which to judge the effectiveness of their practice. Therefore, Cycle One offered organisation-wide supervision for all staff as an intervention and collated how my colleagues theorised and enacted reflection. From this information, I designed a model of reflective practice specific to the context of the organisation. This model offered different avenues with which to focus the next wave of intervention. Cycle Two focussed on increasing understanding and awareness of practitioner values across the organisation, specifically relating to how they are enacted within practice. Agency was utilised as the overarching construct, recognising that reflective thought underpinned behavioural choice, in the form of such agentic behaviour. A focus on values provided the basis for the series of professional development opportunities completed by all staff. From this second wave of data collection, I designed a Model of Staff Agency, using and developing the theorisation from Cycle One. This model revised those offered by previous authors, explicitly highlighting the reciprocal influence of individual factors between personal and professional domains. It also offered a more explicit recognition of agency as a form of resistance, describing four possible outcomes that arise from the cognitive processing of agency according to the model.

This section offers a description of the four main thematic findings drawn from the overall data, as well detailing my contribution to knowledge, offering an assessment regarding the quality of the research and a section highlighting concluding personal thoughts from undertaking this research.

6.2 Overall Analysis/Findings

This section offers an overall description of the findings that emerged from the data, grouped into four main themes, relevant to the context of the PRU:

- Supervision in Education Settings
- Leadership, Organisational Change and the Development of ATIP
- Reflective Practice and Practitioner Change
- Challenges of Conducting Research

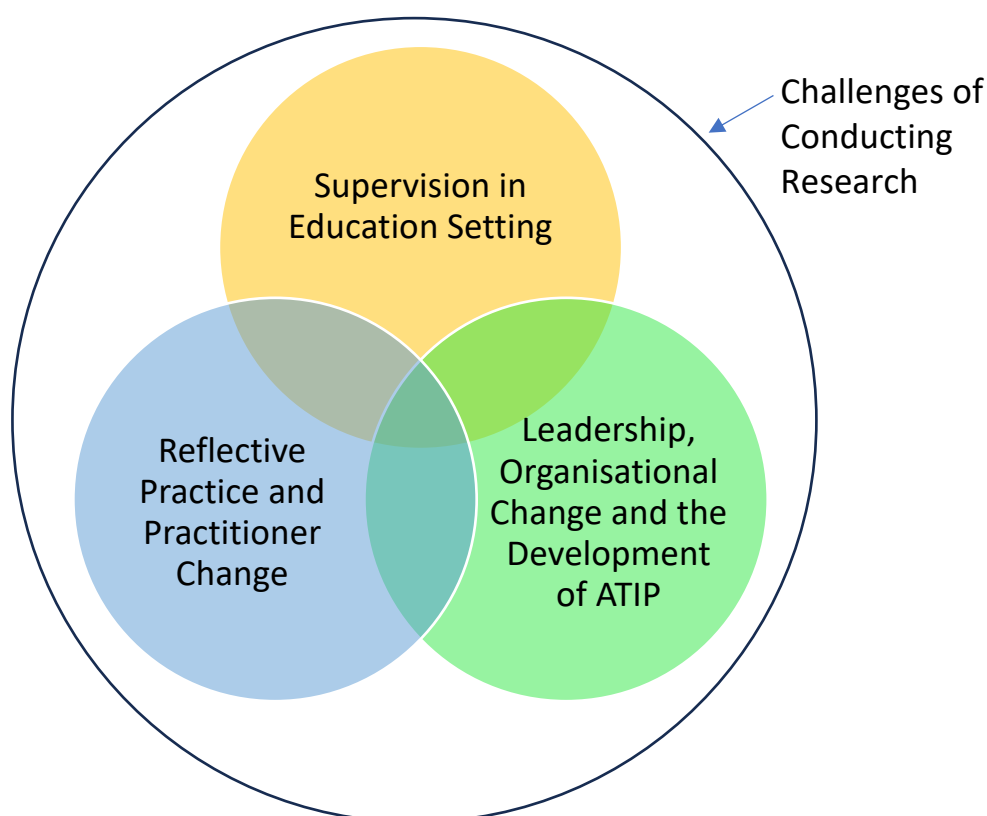The manner in which these four themes interact can be seen in Figure 33 below:

Figure 37 - Diagram Showing Four Main Findings

6.2.1 Supervision in Education Settings

The systemic implementation of regular ATIP supervision sessions is one of the main foci and most significant contributions to knowledge offered within this research. Such supervision sessions are extremely rare within Education, mostly only utilised by

practitioners involved in Safeguarding teams and other specialist staff. In this case, such sessions were mandated for all staff across the team, irrespective of role. The sessions proved a successful method, albeit inconsistently, with which to facilitate and develop ATIP principles in the wider staff team in Alternative Provision. Supervision most promisingly supports staff wellbeing and countering the negative impact of secondary trauma, something that is a significant risk when working with high levels of unproductive behaviour. However, the use of supervision has had a mixed impact when considering the envisaged role in supporting the development of practitioner reflective practice to guide agentic behaviour. As the narrative offers, there were limitations to the interventions, most prominently regarding the fact that it is very difficult to ascertain a consistent measure of effectiveness across all practitioners. However, even considering this discrepancy, the research does offer evidence that supervision has a role to play in the dissemination of reflective processes and ATIP related vocabulary and discourse. There is, however, further work required to discern how effective supervision has been with regards to directly influencing a change in staff practice. In this vein, the data indicated the restorative aspect of supervision was the primary outcome, but the educative and normative foci need greater development to improve either efficacy or perhaps communication of such outcomes.

During the research, both the benefits and limitations of supervision shone through with increasingly polarising intensity. It became clear that it had transformed most prominently into an opportunity with which to enhance and support practitioner wellbeing, with staff prioritising their engagement with supervision accordingly. This is of course not an issue of itself and indeed indicates agency, with staff able to use the space as they feel is most important and overwhelmingly praising and observing that they appreciate the sessions for this reason. However, it does mean that it can become more difficult to utilise the sessions to access deeper reflection, which can require a greater degree of discomfort and challenge, to many antithetical to the concept of 'wellbeing'. The group nature of supervision may also constrain the development of individual insight. Although those involved in the research were proactive about their own professional development and the cultural and structural interventions organised within the centre, they opined that certain colleagues were not engaging in such a productive manner. To ensure that practitioners are able to develop the full breadth of reflective thoughts, it is imperative that they are afforded the opportunity to allow this to occur. Despite the concerted effort to ensure a safe space, some staff always exhibited greater levels of reluctance in proactively offering thoughts in a session, especially

relating to an incident or event that may have been more worrying or problematic. In a similar vein, the group dynamic can lack the subtlety and time with which to provide the necessary riposte, clarification and probing that some practitioners may require in order to develop such deeper reflective thinking regarding their actions. It was clear that for Supervision to be able to maintain the three core foci – normative, restorative and educative – that a level of structure needs to be maintained and ongoing training to both supervisors and all supervisees offered, ensuring that all participants are afforded the opportunity to engage in reflective dialogue in a meaningful and truly participative manner.

6.2.2 Leadership, Organisational Change and the Development of ATIP

Although there exists an inherent *slipperiness* when considering reflective practice and notions of change, I believe that as an organisation, we have made significant gains in terms of upskilling staff in providing them with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to keep honing their reflective practice. However, despite word limit constraints officially ending this research, the ambition to maintain this progress will not diminish. This ambition is shared across the wider Senior Leadership team and by the Headteacher, who was instrumental in prioritising the incorporation of space within the CPD calendar and weekly Supervision opportunities into scheduled staff 'contact' time. Without such a level of belief and focus regarding the benefits associated with these interventions, the change in staff practice would have likely proven much slower and with greater inconsistency across the organisation.

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the research is how effectively ATIP has been developed across the staff team. The data indicated time and time again the use of shared language, directed by the leadership team, with participants offering consensus, clarity and a strong sense of desire in their willingness to discuss organisational values and practice underpinned by ATIP, such as recognising equity as a foundational building block, the need to understand the motive 'behind' the behaviour and the importance of developing emotional literacy. It was also clear from the data that the leadership team had effectively implemented a multi-tiered approach to trauma-informed support, as recommended in the research literature and that such efforts has led to such a clear communication of this shared language and development of related skills and processes.

6.2.3 Reflective Practice and Practitioner Change

Another key contribution to our professional knowledge is, whether at the personal, professional or organisational level, mindfully reflecting and altering practice can take a significant amount of time to enact in a consistent manner. I experienced this most notably during Cycle Two, with the success of the interventions in enabling change at a much slower pace that I would have wanted. As time progressed, it became increasingly clear of the disconnect between two types of practitioners. There existed those who were proactively taking on board the reflective lessons from the interventions and utilising them not only during supervision, but in the centre, with both pupils and colleagues. It was also clear that there existed a minority of those who were *perceived* to not engage in such a productive and proactive manner. At the time, I became very disheartened, and this negatively impacted not only the responsibilities that form part of my professional role but also the willingness and veracity with which I pursued completion of this research write up. The dichotomy of the different 'selves' was laid bare causing a negative rupture in my confidence in a manner which, despite previous experience completing research at a Post Graduate level, I had never experience prior to this and was one that took quite some time to wholly recover from. I think that perhaps the unique challenges that arise from an Action Research approach, particularly in completing research relevant to one's own role lack recognition and importance in the academic literature. I found that I read a great deal of content explaining the difficulties with regards to ethical practice and the need for careful consideration on a more theoretical, abstract, level. However, I feel such readings did not adequately prepare me for how to navigate the unique challenges represented by the two pronged academic and professional disappointment. Over time, I took time to reflect on the specific situation, recognising my tendency toward perfectionism and the frustration of the lack of enthusiasm exhibited shown by some colleagues in wanting to develop their practice. What was most helpful, alongside the support from my two supervisors, was the consideration in the research literature of the overwhelming glacial pace that describes organisational change. In the development of the Ecological Model of Staff Agency, I worked from first principles to rebuild my confidence in the notion of ecological practice. Ironically, taking myself as a case study, my temporary crisis in confidence can be considered as a prime example of how individual factors can impede agentic action.

To support practitioners in recognising and reflecting on their behavioural choices in the face of such proposed change the refined framework of Ecological Staff Agency was able to conceptualise the difficulties practitioners working in Alternative Provision may experience when faced with organisational change. The Ecological Model of Staff Agency recognises that a unique aspect of working within Alternative Provision is the prominence across the wider staff team in the responsibility shared for pupil outcomes. In this way, it highlights the importance of *all* staff, not just teachers, and emphasises the influence that individual factors, manifested in the updated model by emphasising the explicit inclusion of the importance of individual and psychological factors.

The model augments previous work completed for a more generalised conceptualisation of Agency in Education and aligns it with the needs and influencing factors of practitioners working at the PRU. The model has been developed for use with staff that have perhaps not considered research evidence for some time, designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The analysis provided by this research offered a level of explicit vocabulary and discourse, describing shared understanding of reflective practice and then agency, necessary for *all* practitioners to be able to consider how their thoughts, feelings and behaviours impact their own development and thus those of their colleagues and pupils. The model can be utilised to offer various different foci that can be targeted for support, that can become the foundation of a highly individualised curriculum of development. In this way, alongside core content such as Teaching & Learning and Safeguarding, broader agentic topics that directly support practitioner toolkit of change can be enacted. This can be utilised alongside other specific, more targeted interventions, continuing to offer all staff the opportunity to continue to discuss educational philosophies and how they might be enacted into practice.

The updated Ecological Model of Staff Agency offers an explicit opportunity for practitioners to engage with deliberating on their decision making. In this way, I have added resistance as a possible agentic outcome. True to my own values, described during the introduction (Section 1.1), I believe that all practitioners should be provided the tools with which to reflect as effectively as possible on the choices that they make. In an ideal world, I would prefer colleagues to enact practice aligned with ATIP principles but am personally more interested in supporting them to consider both the path <u>to</u> and the possible ramifications resulting <u>from</u> their actions. A key addition is the explicit recognition that agency may well

be enacted in a deliberate manner, opposite to one I'd hoped for; however, it is the *journey* that most interests me, both as a researcher and a Senior Leader. I would hope that my colleagues have the skills and reflective repertoire to analyse and offer robust debate regarding any decision-making opportunity. I acknowledge that extrapolating such a mindset may lead to possible confrontational opinions. This is an interesting philosophical quandary; how far would it be deemed acceptable to entertain an opposing perspective? I envisage that at some point in the future, I shall be faced with such a dispute, which will provide rich content for reflective purposes. Of course, without context, an answer cannot be offered but ultimately if perceived negative implications exist, whether to pupils or staff, then my role as Senior Leader takes precedence.

6.2.4 Challenges of Conducting Research in AP

The research findings indicated that there existed a number of challenges of conducting research, related to the specific domain of reflective practice and change, and also pertaining to research in AP as a specific context.

One facet that became clearer over time was that there existed a juxtaposition between the kind of broad, *philosophical*, values offered as important by practitioners and what they look like in *tangible* terms - in practice. These are important both with regards to being in different contexts, e.g., from one pupil to another, but also how different colleagues conceptualise and exhibit these values. As obvious as this might seem during this write up, but we tend to deliberate what we believe in, without necessarily advancing far enough with regard to how one would exhibit these values and beliefs and understanding how such beliefs came to be. I setup the interventions with the aim on putting values into practice, providing staff with the tools to develop their understanding. However, in hindsight, I think that despite the sustained focus, some staff lacked, on the surface, the 'desire' or skill maturation necessary to develop their reflective repertoire as much as I would have hoped. The reasons underpinning any lack of desire or skill set could only be assumed at this stage, not confirmed.

Without the inclusion of an observational aspect in the research design, allied by an explicit method of assessing an individual's 'values in-practice', the evidence included in this research requires significant trust and omission of the impact of possible bias. To most

accurately assess change, it would be necessary to complete a longitudinal study of staff practice against clearly defined and agreed measures of success. ATIP, by its nature, relies overwhelmingly on a level of flexibility that would make a more rigid measure of achievement more difficult to complete in a meaningful manner. Due to the time constraints of this research, by the time I had capacity to reflect more accurately myself, it was too late to enact a longitudinal design, thus meaning that I was effectively left to rely on proxy self-report measures. Observational techniques and follow up coaching opportunities over time would permit a greater focus on the promotion of highly individualised and oriented professional development, including discussion of outcomes aligned with agency as a form of resistance. As I was evaluating the research as a whole, I brought into question my own decision making at the start of the research, critical of the manner in which I failed to focus initially on a research design based upon observational techniques. However, upon reflection, I recognised that before I could examine practice, it would have been necessary to traverse theory and that my journey, using an Action Research methodology, has permitted a wider scope of knowledge with which to judge such practice. In essence, despite my frustration that it feels an obvious step now, there has been significant work completed underpinning such a seemingly glaring conclusion.

Associated with this is the recognition that practitioners working in Alternative Provision possess certain character traits, perhaps not observed in mainstream. Although I acknowledge that the Model of Teacher Agency (Leijen et al., 2019) did highlight the importance of beliefs developed over the life course, the updated model highlights the possible impact of psychological constructs in the adherence and commitment to change. Factors such as poor self-esteem, illness or stress, whether at work or at home, short or long term, can all have a significant detrimental impact on agentic action. My experience is that Alternative Provision requires a much more relational approach compared to that of a more heavily regimented mainstream provision, one that is underpinned by honesty and empathy. As such, practitioners may often be a lot truer to themselves in practice, rather than keeping the kind of 'distance' that I experienced as a mainstream practitioner due to significant limitations outside of my control, i.e., large class sizes, large cohort of pupils. This level of closeness potentially blurs the professional and personal domains and 'spillage' from one to the other. I believe that the nature of working in an Alternative Provision will result in such a crossover to be observed much more readily than in larger, mainstream provision. This is not to say that I would be concerned over a lack of professionalism from my colleagues in Alternative

Provision. Rather, I would reinforce that all practitioners choose to work in Alternative Provision as they want to achieve the best possible outcomes for some of the most vulnerable pupils in society and working in such a manner has, in my experience, been proven to work most effectively at re-engaging those pupils previously left wandering.

It did not surprise me that colleagues professed to such strong values, based upon a foundation of care and empathy. I recognise that Alternative Provision can offer a stressful workplace, with pupils exhibiting a number of unproductive behaviours stemming from the multitude of risk factors that far surpass the typical academic remit that schools are designed to support. In my experience, colleagues have often overlooked such issues in order to continue supporting pupils whom they consider to be some of the most vulnerable in society; although I am undoubtedly biased, I believe that it takes unquestionably high levels of passion and dedication to work in such provision. While such strong values are undoubtedly a positive, perhaps even necessary, stipulation of such work, they also profess of an unintended consequence regarding staff practice in the face of change. As the research indicates, values are inherently associated with practice, a precursor of how effectively the practitioner can reflect and change. The data showed a number of staff who are finding it challenging to develop their practice in the face of organisational change. One way to theorise this is to assume that the strong value system held by practitioners in the centre is directly preventing, or at least encumbering, their ability to enact reflective practice. At this stage, the mechanism through such influence is occurring is unknown, but I predict that practitioners might be firmly 'set in their ways' and believe that their value system and practice is the most effective way forward, acting as a barrier to alternative consideration. An amended research design would require a focus on opening up discussion around practice, relevant to staff agency and decision making, in an attempt to elucidate why staff make the decisions they do. Further research would be required, if appropriate, to discover if such a finding is limited to practitioners working in such provision or one that is common across the educational ecosystem.

Finally, due to the small-scale nature of AP, there exists inherent methodological constraints and issues that became increasingly apparent during the course of the research; colleagues leaving and significant changes in the cohort both made assessing success more challenging. The ultimate aim of any intervention implemented with Education is to best serve the pupils, improving their outcomes; as PRUs are subject to significant changes in cohort, sometimes

even half termly, it is impossible to observe with a high degree of accuracy the impact that staff behaviours have on the pupils over time.

6.3 How Well Did the Research Address its Aims? *Professional Knowledge & Implications for Practice*

> Research Question: 'How effectively can I develop the skills and knowledge of the new staff team, so they are effectively utilising ATIP principles?'

As described in Section 1.2, this research was predicated upon personal beliefs and assumptions that have been developed during my journey to this point:

- That theoretical conceptualisations were important but should not constitute an exhaustive element of research.
- That practitioners will bring expertise and lived experience from their individual backgrounds, both personal and professional.
- While I recognise the efficaciousness of previous research, I believe along with experience, context plays a significant role in determining how practitioners best enact interventions in practice, i.e., staying true to the maxim 'Everything works somewhere; nothing works everywhere' (William, 2018)
- As experts in their context, practitioners should be afforded the appropriate levels of *trust* necessary to make such an informed decision
- Finally, that practitioners will ultimately always want the best outcomes for the pupils in their care and that practice to the contrary should be assumed not to be a deliberate enactment with the aim to actively 'worsen' the situation.

The previous section (6.2) offered a narrative, detailing the overall summary findings of the research, including any relevant aspects that could be considered original contributions to knowledge. The table below (Figure 38) offers a detailed representation of the original contribution offered by this research, split into empirical, theoretical and related to professional policy and practice

Empirical	Theoretical	Professional Practice
Evidence that ATIP principles can be implemented in AP	Model of Reflective Practice	Nature of Reflective Practice in AP
Evidence that Supervision can inconsistently support Reflective Practice	Model of Staff Agency	Impact of Supervision with Education Settings
Strong evidence that Supervision in Education can support staff wellbeing / Impact Restorative aspect		

Figure 38 - Table Showing Original Contribution to Knowledge

This research has provided a somewhat unsatisfactorily inconclusive answer to the Research Question of how effective I have been in supporting colleagues to develop their practice, in line with ATIP principles. I am able to offer anecdotal evidence of some colleagues effectively and consistently exhibiting and offering accounts of what I recognise to be practice aligned to personal and professional values exhibiting such ATIP principles. The data did indicate a high frequency with which participants used terminology relevant to reflective practice and ATIP principles, indicating a willingness to utilise relevant discourse and vocabularies, which in turn can be used an indicator of wider staff usage and 'buy in'. However, at this point I am not able to offer evidence that can adequately ascertain the deliberate worth of such practice nor judge its effectiveness, or comment on the level of consistency of such use across the organisation. It is somewhat of my own disconnect between espoused theory and practice, a missing bridge between words and actions.

As I discussed earlier in this section, my most significant moment of enlightenment was recognising the protracted nature of change. The breadth of academic literature processed during this research could not prepare me for the dissonance of what that might mean, to *me*, in practice; it seems that despite any rational consideration, I was still adamant that I would possess the skills to enact the outcome that I wanted. Whether this was the fault of hubris or naivety, it is where theory interacts with experience – *phronesis* – that will provide invaluable professional knowledge with which to guide future success.

As highlighted in the Introduction (Section 1.2), my aim was to offer research that would contribute to my professional knowledge in two specific domains, both relating to my own personal professional context: Alternative Provision and Attachment and Trauma Informed

Practice. While the aim of Action Research is not to necessarily produce research that is transferable across contexts, I believe that the areas detailed in this summary will offer guidance and consideration for any Senior Leadership team interested in both domains. A focus on tangible, professional knowledge is not only an important emphasis of an EdD programme but important to my own desire to make research accessible 'on the ground' to wider colleagues who may not be well versed in academic literature or research skills. Moving from the Micro to Meso level, this research can be viewed as the first step in the development of an important significant piece of professional knowledge regarding upskilling and developing staff practice at my PRU. I also strongly believe that the research has provided underpinning theory onto which can be constructed an organisational system of professional development to guide practitioners in the future.

6.4 Is this 'Quality' Research? Methodological Consideration of Success

The assessment of 'quality' Action Research in this section related directly to the criteria proposed in Section 3.3.3. When considering success in relation to the specific criteria for Action Research as a methodology, I believe that I managed to adhere to all four principles described by McNiff (2013). However, I acknowledge that such adherence has been achieved with varying degrees of success.

The *technical* aspect has been challenging to offer a concrete measure of success. As I described in the previous section, I think that I cannot be sure of ultimate success until I am able to accurately observe and comment if practitioners are enacting their values in their daily practice. With regards to the work completed and taking into consideration the research design, I am confident that I have effectively offered clearly demarcated criteria against which to assess the degree to which ATIP has been implemented. I have ensured that my data collection and analysis were within the boundaries of suggested methodological processes, with my personal practice underpinned by a foundation of collaborative dialogue and analysis.

At a *practical* level, I am confident that the research has provided the tools with which staff can develop their reflective practice; while I acknowledge that this is still inconsistent, it is important to remember that this is only the first stage of a long-term plan to support staff, so it may be some time before the positive consequences are observed in a more consistent

manner. With regards to the quality, while I have acknowledged that I have now recognised that the next step of the research will have to incorporate a level of observational data, the work completed to this point does offer useful, appropriately and narratively rich data with which to develop understanding of staff perspective regarding ATIP and change.

With regards to the *theoretical* importance of the research, I am confident that both the Model of Reflective Practice and the subsequent Model of Staff Agency can offer a foundation for future personal supervision and coaching opportunities, based upon the identification and development of individual influencing factors. Due to the ongoing collaborative efforts during the analysis process with 'critical friends', as well as the many discussions with the staff focus groups, there already exists an inherent level of 'buy-in' within the wider team, pointing toward a hopeful positive judgment across the hierarchy. Due to this wide ranging involvement, I am hopeful that the work will prove meaningful in instigating tangible and appropriate change in the ATIP processes.

Lastly, due to the nature of the research supporting the best outcomes for some of most vulnerable pupils in society, the *ethical* aspect of the research can be deemed to be satisfactorily met. ATIP, as its core, is based upon principles designed to support both the most vulnerable pupils in society and those adults supporting them; these are fundamentally ethical foundations and the research has been designed to provide staff with opportunity to offer their voice regarding their opinion, to exert agency over an ongoing project, which is itself inherently ethical.

I believe that I refined my own practice as a researcher, a key aspect of successful Action Research (Kemmis et al., 2013); the ongoing narrative presented in this project, most notably in this concluding section, shows that I have increased my knowledge and experience of research, specifically around qualitative methodologies and analysing textual narratives.

Throughout the research, I was able to evidence both my intent and then subsequent completion of incorporating social validation into my work, as recommended in the literature (see Habermas, 1978; Kemmis et al., 2014). Critical friends and focus group validation enabled an ongoing level of dialogue that supported collaborative action and shaped the narrative and planning at each stage of the research. I was also able to evidence clearly, as can be observed within this research paper, a clear methodological process, including

offering a narrative of my own reflexive considerations, another important aspect of achieving validity (see McNiff, 2013).

Despite being really pleased with my first Action Research project, an aspect that requires improvement moving into the next phase is improving the communicative action that drives improvement and refinement. I believe that while I have enabled such communication, to achieve the best possible outcomes for staff across the organisation, the research needs to move beyond being run solely by myself and into a space where a team, ideally across roles and hierarchies, can organise and implement the next phase. This sharing of the responsibility will strengthen collaboration and refine and hone the vocabularies and discourses necessary to enable the level of transformational learning required to develop a more attuned and comprehensive level of reflective practice. In this way, I would hope to, over time, make progress in easing the potential negative impact of the power differential that arises from my own role as a Senior Leader within the organisation.

Despite this somewhat slight disjunction, I feel pleased with this cycle of research, most pertinently with the fact that I was able to provide my colleagues with the kind of holistic professional development opportunities that I have only accessed through post graduate study. In this way, for me, I feel able to share and spread knowledge, supporting and developing not only a sense of agency but also hopefully enable colleagues to develop their own sense of participatory action research in the future.

6.5 Future Direction for Research

As highlighted in Section 5.2, although the research to this point has served to introduce various processes that will hopefully provide a foundation for wider organisational and professional development, there are clear avenues available with which to refine current practice.

A future direction in respect to supervision is to consider how to support staff in appreciating the benefits of short-term levels of discomfort associated with honesty and candour, balanced against the longer-term benefits of greater levels of harmony and closer professional relationships. In the short term, this will be rectified by using other weekly PD sessions to revisit the work completed during previous interventions relating to developing 'deeper'

reflective practice, with the aim of transferring the processes into the supervision sessions in a more explicit manner. To ensure the emphasis on staff wellbeing, we are trialling a Diary Project in conjunction with Dr Lucy Kelly at The University of Bristol; the aim is to provide the tools with which practitioners can develop further agency over their wellbeing, providing them with reflective prompts specifically regarding their values, feelings and emotions (see Kelly, 2020).

A small, but important refinement for the future is that the supervision sessions will introduce a relevant weekly theme with which to discuss the MSR prompts, based on a prominent event or incident from the week, to provide the opportunity for all staff to engage in structured reflective dialogue. Another is to work in collaboration with the supervisory team to ensure the quality assurance of the sessions on a regular basis; it is important that we recognise that the supervisors are not 'qualified' and will look at what support we can access so that all groups are afforded a consistent quality, using the Supervisory model and the highlighting the importance of asking probing reflective questions. In the short term, this will be completed through the post-session roundup, allowing me to ensure that staff have followed the Supervisory model which has an inherent feedback step built into the process.

The structure offered by the MSR has been an effective mechanism to begin discussion around the vocabularies and discourse relating to agency and reflective practice. In order that the theorisation present in work around reflective practice and agency be utilised most effectively, it is essential that the professional development proceeds on a regular basis, revisiting theory and making explicit the vocabularies and discourses necessary (e.g., definition of 'change') for agentic practice. I think there remains for many a significant bridge to cross between both theory and practice, as well as personal and professional spheres of behaviour. The new model can provide an important and often diminished focus on transforming broad descriptions of values and experiences into tangible, contextual examples of practice which can be discussed and replicated, particularly using the MSR to promote deeper reflection. Judging on my own experience, within the education sector, this is something to which precious little time is allocated, making a more challenging task to develop the level of confidence of staff to discuss research evidence (also see Biesta et al., 2015). For the academic year 2022-23, we are embarking on a 360-degree feedback process, aiming to offer another avenue with which to develop practitioner reflective capacity. I hope that the work already completed pertaining to vocabularies and discourses will support

colleague's ability to offer more meaningful and appropriate comments regarding their peers. I do feel however that we need to prepare staff more rigorously with regards to framing how to deliver such information, in order to maximise the benefit of such a process. For some colleagues, most prominently those who perhaps lack confidence, this may be a process that will result in significant ramifications and problematic consequences.

While teaching staff experience coaching of sorts, most prominently relating to teaching and learning, other staff do not often receive such professional development. It is my personal belief that all staff interact with pupils in the centre, so need to be continuously reflecting on their actions as fundamentally, we need to be ensuring that the pupils get 'the best possible deal'. Although we complete regular performance management sessions, they are largely performative in nature, so is it hoped that individual coaching, utilising the updated Model of Agency, will provide the necessary time and space to reflect on specific actions that feel important; this process doesn't have to necessarily be completed by the direct line manager, to help keep the focus on professional development and positive growth. The ability to expand on thoughts and feelings, away from a lack of confidence derived from being in a group, will also allow staff to be more honest and develop confidence, as well as highlight the transference across domains that may be impeding practice (e.g., stresses from home). The process will also provide the opportunity to assess the final outcomes of agency from the new model, something that has not been possible during this research. For example, the ability to probe will ascertain if the practitioner was not enacting change in behaviour deliberately or were completely unaware of the impact of their behaviour. The structure will depersonalise what could be perceived to be an emotionally charged meeting and will offer important clues of how to beneficially refine practice for the future. One of the most prominent foci for this coaching model involves a mixed research design consisting of both observation and interview, allowing a specific focus on how the practitioner perceives their practice and how they account for their theories-in-use. Individual coaching has the opportunity to enhance communicative action, ensuring improved shared understanding of vocabularies and discourses, as well as enabling the emphasis on critical reflection and transformational learning to be achieved. As offered in the conclusion for Cycle Two (Section 4.6.5), without acknowledgement of this possible discrepancy, an accurate summation and analysis of what *actual* change cannot be developed. Currently, such an intervention is in its infancy but will be developed ready for the start of the Academic year 2022-23, with a view to incorporate observational methodology such as Video Interactive

Guidance (VIG) planned for subsequent years, as to provide further level of evidence to discuss and enact change.

I think that another aspect of learning to be taken from this research might be to use this case study to support fellow practitioner-researchers to the challenging realities of balancing work and academic pursuits. This is especially true to those practitioner-researchers that, like myself, lack the wider support networks that are more easily accessible when studying a full-time taught course. This is of course not directly related to the Research Question, nor the overarching themes but is perhaps one of the most important facets to monitor. As I can personally attest to, there likely exists a strong association between wellbeing and the ability to engage with the research in the most productive manner possible; external stresses related to what can be considered 'researcher' isolation may lead to a distinct loss of research fidelity.

6.6 Personal Reflections

This work has been revelatory in developing my comprehension of both the practical and theoretical aspects of research. My own values and beliefs have not altered regarding fundamental philosophical aspects of education; I still believe that best outcomes for all, whether staff or pupils will be achieved by the implementation of an organisational model that consists of positive, empathic relationships. However, the manner in which these are enacted, the *practice*, has developed significantly, as has my recognition of how to use my professional knowledge to offer the support to my colleagues in the most efficacious fashion. I have developed a heightened understanding of the difference between theories and practice, something that I believe to be at the crux of reflective practice and thus agency. I know recognise the level of sophistication necessary to support practitioners to enact change, all with difference starting points on their agentic 'journey' – allied with my role at the centre, this is something that I had not experienced on the same level previously. Despite the recognition that the research did not produce the anticipated outcomes, I need to reflect and reframe and ensure that I consider this research to be just the starting point. It will hopefully become a project to support our staff to develop their professional learning and themselves recognise their own agency, even if such a process may result in diverging interests and desires.

I am most particularly disappointed that I could not achieve evidence that supervision supports staff to develop their practice in the way that I have envisaged; this is something that will need further consideration, as to identify the mechanism that is 'faulty'. The reason that this weighs most heavily on my mind is that irrespective of the avenue, the fault lies with me, making the burden hard to bear. Whether due to poor research design and data collection, lack of training for the supervisory team leading to inconsistency or poor support in supervision, or perhaps a naivety and inexperience when probing interviewees, leaving the data somewhat 'light', all of the possible issues derive from my own practice. As I explained in the previous section, the notion of multiples selves and the delicate balancing act necessary to maintain equanimity throughout the research process is one that was novel to me. As such, I am confident that now that I have had the opportunity to reflect on such frustrations and re-evaluate the perspective as one setback along a much longer axis of time, I will be able to learn from this and ensure the right balance of identities is maintained in the future.

I believe that using Action Research has dovetailed neatly with the overarching research theme of reflective practice and as such, has compelled me to analyse and evaluate all steps of the research and has provided a methodical system with which to do so. I also believe that using AR has led me to be a much more effective researcher; the emphasis on embracing reflexivity led me to be much more considerate of the 'subjective' in a way that I never realised previously. However, using such a methodology necessitates a level of personal reporting that brings together both personal and professional domains in a way that has the potential to be quite damaging to oneself; taking extensive time to write about an investigation about your job that has been disappointing has been a challenging task with unintended negative consequences in other domains. Despite this, I am now advocating for colleagues to utilise an Action Research perspective, as to develop and refine their own personal theory of practice.

Facilitating organisational professional development during a huge number of amendments to policy directive, against a background of extreme societal uncertainty will have an impact on the efficaciousness of any project. Taking into account the personal impact the situation has had on my ability to keep focussed beyond the day-to-day stresses found balancing my own professional role and writing up the research, it has proven an incredibly challenging venture at times. However, the research has vindicated my belief regarding the use of ATIP principles and the focus on supporting colleagues to develop their reflective practice and thus phronesis.

We educate some of the most vulnerable pupils in society and as such, it is my belief, aligned with the values espoused by ATIP principles, that staff are provided with the most effective, holistic, interventions and staff input possible. This will require commitment to personal and organisational development, some of which will provide a level of discomfort, but this is a step necessary to achieve the best possible outcomes for the individual needs of the pupils.

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8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix One: Timeline of Research

Academic Year	2018-19	2019-20			2020-21			2021-23		
Term	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Spring	Summer
1 - Methodology	Considering My Personal Journey	Completing Literature Review: Action Research								
2 - Cycle One			Completing Literature Review: Reflective Practice & Supervision							
				Completing Documentation for Ethical Committee						
				INSET: Reflective Practice						
				Enlist Participants						
				Collect Data						
				Data Analysis						
3 - Cycle Two					Literature Review: Teacher Agency & Models of Reflection					
						Interventions Completed				
						Data Collection				
								Data Analysis		

4- Completion Of Work									Overall Refinement of Research

8.2 Appendix Two: Ethics

This appendix contains all the documentation necessary to complete Research in an ethical manner, line with regulations enforced by the University of Reading; it was provided as described in the report to all participants.

8.2.1 Ethical Approval Form

Information Management and Policy Services

DATA PROTECTION DECLARATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

This document can be used to provide assurances to your ethics committee where confirmation of data protection training and awareness is required for ethical approval.

By signing this declaration I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the requirements for data protection within the *Data Protection for Researchers* document located here:

  http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/imps/Data_Protection_for_Researchers__Aug_18.v1.pdf

- I have asked for advice on any elements that I am *unclear on* prior to submitting my ethics approval request, either from my supervisor, or the data protection team at: imps@reading.ac.uk

- I understand that I am responsible for the secure handling, and protection of, my research data

- I know who to contact in the event of an information security incident, a data protection complaint or a request made under data subject access rights

Researcher to complete

Project/Study Title: An Action Research Study of Organisational Change through the Implementation of Trauma Informed Supervision

NAME	STUDENT ID NUMBER	DATE

Supervisor signature
Note for supervisors: Please verify that your student has completed the above actions

NAME	STAFF ID NUMBER	DATE

Submit your completed signed copy to your ethical approval committee.
Copies to be retained by ethics committee.

███████████████████████████████████

| **1.0** | IMPS | Annually | IMPS |

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Form A

Tick one:
    Staff project: _____   PhD ____   EdD __X__

Name of applicant (s): Oliver Ward

Title of project: An Action Research Study of Organisational Change through the Implementation of Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP)

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Rachel Roberts

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	X	

g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	X		
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	X		
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants			
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	X		
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X		
Please answer the following questions			
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	X		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X	
4) Staff Only - have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/PeopleDevelopment /newstaff/humres-MandatoryOnlineCourses.aspx Please note: students complete a Data Protection Declaration form and submit it with this application to the ethics committee.			
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	X		

	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	x		
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	x		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent			X

	Yes	No	N/A
form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	X		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			X
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		X	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			X
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		X	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			X
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		X	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			X
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

- Complete **either** Section A **or** Section B below with details of your research project.
- Complete a risk assessment.
- Sign the form in Section C.
- Append at the end of this form all relevant documents: information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules, evidence that you have completed information security training (e.g. screen shot/copy of certificate).
- Email the completed form to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration.
Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:	

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	x

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc

There will be a total of 14 participants involved in this research. 6 of the participants are involved in the group / supervisor sessions and there are also 8 participants that will be interviewed individually. All are consenting members of the staff team..

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words.

1. Title: An Action Research Study of Organisational Change through the Implementation of Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP)

2. The purpose of the research is to ascertain the effectiveness of utilising regular supervision sessions to develop staff reflective practice in order to promote organisational change, in this instance based upon Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) principles

3. Data will be collected and analysed via triangulation, with measures including: Personal diaries and logs (written on a regular basis), Semi-structured interviews with staff (to be carried out once per half term at the participants convenience), Recording of group discussion (taken during post-supervision reflection time, carried out on a weekly basis – unstructured and based on what occurred during the supervision session) and whole school audits (completed online on a half termly basis). Any recording will take place with two devices, to take into account any loss of functioning and will be transcribed personally, to allow 'deeper' understanding of the data and identify themes as the research progresses. There are also associated centre wide Supervision policies, CPD sessions relating to Reflective practice (including the use of Larivees Reflective Practice checklist – see Appendices - and individual supervision presentations that will be used as part of the evidence. The checklist items will be discussed, to assess any developments in understanding or reflection, going through the measures and relating them to their personal experiences. In the current societal climate (i.e. with COVID related possible lockdown), as an organisation, we have plans in place to continue to move forward with weekly supervision to take place virtually, so all the measures described above will be replicated online, with a dictaphone or dictaphone software used to record the interview; this way I have complete control and knowledge of where the data is collected and stored, thus negating some GDPR concerns over recording virtual online sessions.

4. Participants for the group discussion have already self-selected to come forward to act as supervisors with the organisation; there are six in the group. Participants for the interviews will also be self-selected, drawn on a volunteer basis; if there are many volunteers, participants will be taken from a cross section of roles and hierarchies, utilising a purposive sampling method. My aim is to select at least 6 but maximum of 8 participants for the individual interviews.

5. Each participant will be provided with a consent form and information about the aims of the research, so they are aware of the aims of the research, are clear regarding Data Protection and the planned anonymising of data.

6. This research is part of a centre wide evaluation and subsequent refining of the organisational change relating to introducing ATIP principles. My role at the centre is a Senior Leader, specifically to organise and implement this change. This means that there are potential ethical considerations relating to the need to maintain a critical lens around power dynamics that may influence the level of accuracy / honesty that the participants choose to share. This is covered in the information sheet, where participants are asked to engage in honest feedback as part of the opportunity to shape future policy and decision making regarding organisational change relating to ATIP principles. Following the description offered by Noffke & Somekh, ethical decision making can be built on a foundation of caring, respect and action, ensuring these are agreed with all the participants, so shared values are developed and realised throughout. As it is Action Research, as well as the standard ethical principles regarding anonymity, data protection and confidentialiy, ethical guidance from Hopkins (1985, p134) will be adhered to, ensuring descriptions and accounts of any interviews will be discussed to ensure there is agreement in meaning and regularly reporting back any actions (keeping participants as informed as possible, to develop trust), to ensure as much as possible that a shared understanding is reached and then utlised, with which to futher promote reflective practice. The aim is to remove as much of the potential influence stemming from the existing power dynamic (deriving from my professional role in the management team) as possible. For the focus group interviews, the recorder will be left with the group to organise their own recording, so my presence does not have an impact, to help further reduce this.

7. The methodology chosen for this research is Action Research. Thus, it will start in the Autumn 2 term of the academic year 2020-21, and will continue in three cycles that will last the whole academic year. Depending on the outcomes of each cycle, the precise measures and measurements may change.

RISK ASSESSMENT: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	An Action Research project to ascertain the effectiveness and impact of organisation change in embedding and promoting ATIP principles in a Pupil Referral Unit. The research seeks to enquire with staff how they believe their personal actions and beliefs, and that of their colleagues, have changed due to this introduction.

Where will data be collected?	At the Pupil Referral Unit in which I am employed

Significant hazards:	None identified. The interviews and Supervisor weekly focus group will take place in meeting rooms suitable for the task. There will not be any trailing electronic wires which could cause a trip hazard. Audio recording devices are battery operated and pose minimal risk of injuring someone.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	N/A

Existing control measures:	The rooms fall within the schools / Local Authorities health and safety procedures and responsibilities.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name: Oliver Ward

Date: 3.11.20

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: ……………………………   Print Name……………………….
Date…….
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

7.2.2 Participant Information Sheet: Focus Group

University of Reading

Participation Information Sheet: Supervisor Focus Group

Promoting Organisational Change Through the Development of Reflective Practice

I am an EdD candidate at the University of Reading. You are being invited to take part in the above research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this Action Research project is to explore the impact of introducing Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) principles on organisation change, through the use of reflective practice and weekly supervision sessions.

This aim will be achieved through the use of three cycles of data collection; the first cycle will utilise data gained from interviews with individual staff members, regular centre-wide audits, personal logs and information from the weekly Supervisor Focus Group.

Why have I been invited to participate?

As a supervisor, you take part in the weekly supervisory focus groups.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in a weekly focus group consisting of 6 participants (the other supervisors) lasting between 15-25 minutes focusing on your experiences of the supervision session that took place just previous to the group; this will take place in the organised reflective space arranged after the supervision sessions. With your agreement, the focus groups discussion will be audio recorded and transcribed.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving reason by contacting me via email on oliver.ward@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

In agreeing to take part in this study there will be a time commitment to consider, as the focus group is likely to last between 15 and 25 minutes. While there will be a time commitment required from participants, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs. Your involvement will allow me to explore key issues related to supervision and make recommendations for improved policy and practice and thus have the opportunity to make a direct impact on the future plan and direction of the supervisory and reflective practice used in the centre in the future. Therefore, it is important for you to be honest to make the outcomes as accurate a representation of the situation as possible.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants cannot be identified. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared PC and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office.

In line with University policy, data generated by the study will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project. If, as hoped, this research is published, you will be notified and while the University will be identified, the pseydonyms will remain.

The organisation responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact either Richard Harris or Rachel Roberts.

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register

Access your personal data or ask for a copy
Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
Restrict uses of your data
Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.
You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at https://ico.org.uk
You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The anonymised data will be analysed and used in an EdD thesis. It may also be used in future publications in academic journals, books and presentations relating to both academic and professional forums, in terms of presenting to local schools and community partners. If you would like a summary copy of the research findings, these will be sent to you on request.

Who has reviewed the study?

This application has been reviewed following procedures of the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Name, position and contact address of Researcher	Name, position and contact address of Supervisor
Student name Oliver Ward	

University of Reading

Participation Information Sheet: Individual Interviewee

Promoting Organisational Change Through the Development of Reflective Practice

I am an EdD candidate at the University of Reading. You are being invited to take part in the above research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this Action Research project is to explore the impact of introducing Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP) principles on organisation change, through the use of reflective practice and weekly supervision session.

This aim will be achieved through the use of three cycles of data collection; the first cycle will utilise data gained from interviews with individual staff members, regular centre-wide audits, personal logs and information from the weekly Supervisor Focus Group.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have volunteered to take part in this research, as someone who has experienced the organisational changes and implementation of the ATIP principles at the centre.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in a series of one-to-one interview lasting between 30-45 minutes based on your experiences of the organisational changes that have occurred as a result of implementing ATIP principles, specifically reflective practice and supervision. This interview will take place face to face at a mutually convenient date and time. With your agreement, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. As part of the interview, you will be asked a number of questions regarding your thoughts and experiences of supervision

and how you perceive your own personal reflective practice has developed, using the Reflective Practice checklist as a base guide to discuss any experiences, thoughts and issues you many have encountered.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving reason by contacting me via email on oliver.ward@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

In agreeing to take part in this study there will be a time commitment to consider, as the interview is likely to last between 30 and 45 minutes. While there will be a time commitment required from participants, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs. Your involvement will allow me to explore key issues related to supervision and make recommendations for improved policy and practice, so please do be as honest to make the outcomes as accurate a representation of the situation as possible.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants cannot be identified. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared PC and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office.

In line with University policy, data generated by the study will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project. If, as hoped, this research is published, you will be notified and while the University will be identified, the pseydonyms will remain.

The organisation responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact Richard Harris or Rachel Roberts.

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register
Access your personal data or ask for a copy
Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
Restrict uses of your data
Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.
You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at https://ico.org.uk

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The anonymised data will be analysed and used in an EdD thesis. It may also be used in future publications in academic journals, books and presentations relating to both academic and professional forums, in terms of presenting to local schools and community partners. If you would like a summary copy of the research findings, these will be sent to you on request.

Who has reviewed the study?

This application has been reviewed following procedures of the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Name, position and contact address of Researcher	Name, position and contact address of Supervisor
Student name Oliver Ward	

8.2.4 Consent Form

Research Project:

An Action Research Study of Organisational Change through the Implementation of Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice (ATIP)

Name, position and contact address of Researcher	Name, position and contact address of Supervisor
Student name Oliver Ward	

This application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

Please tick box

Yes   **No**

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

8.3 Appendix Three: Participant Information

This appendix provides brief information of each participant, their background and role within the centre.

Participant	Context & Details
A	The Head Teacher of the centre, with a great deal of experience working with pupils at risk of exclusion. This is their second headship, the first being in responsible for a school within a Youth Prison.
B	Member of the teaching team, who has worked in Education in many different roles in their career, at different levels of authority, from support staff, through senior management and in an advisory capacity to the local authority.
C	Member of staff who is relatively new to the education sector, as a teacher, but has a great deal of experience in youth work, both with pupils, but also families and external agencies.
D	Another member of the team who has a great deal of experience in other professions but has only been working with youth for a short time. They have a great deal of personal interest in psychology and human behaviour, which is what drew them to working in AP.
E	This colleague is a member of the support team, working in a pastoral role with pupils and their families. Although only working in AP for a few years, they have many years of experience working in mainstream in similar roles.
F	Another member of the pastoral support team, this colleague has a huge amount of experience (12+ years) working in AP in such a role. Before they worked at the centre, they had a role in business with a significant degree of responsibility.
G	Another member of the teaching team, this colleague is relatively inexperienced in working in AP. They are very interested in supervision

	and coaching as a model of personal development, identifying it as the reason they opted to participate in the study.
H	A very experienced member of the teaching team, who has worked at various different AP during their career. Another participant who was vocal regarding their desire to want to improve practice
I	Member of the support team, a colleague who has worked at the centre for the longest out of all the staff.
J	A new addition to the team, the youngest participant involved in the research. They have only a limited amount of experience, but offer a great deal of knowledge around reflective theory and a keen desire to want to always improve their practice.

8.4 Appendix Five: Additional Information

8.4.1 Detailed Intervention Resources: Cycle Two

8.4.1.1Intervention One

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8.4.1.3 Intervention Three

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5   6

1   2

3   4

5   6

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Scenario 3

Scenario 4

Scenario 5

Scenario 6

Scenario 7

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8.5 Appendix Five: Examples of Evidence & Coding Analysis

8.5.1 Individual Interview Transcript Excerpt

Evidence presented is an excerpt from the transcription of the interview that took place with Participant C on 27.5.21, including relevant coding analysis

Interviewer
So number one, in your role, what values do you think are important to you? Because I know you mentioned values. And actually, it was interesting because it was your conversation or our conversation around values that got me thinking about values in the first place...

PARTICIPANT C
Depends what values your mean? Like personal values?

Interviewer
Professional

O Ward
Deleted: *00:48*

PARTICIPANT C
Professional? Well, I mean, I've guess patience is still a professional word. And that's necessary. Flexibility. I think just I'm not going to use the C word, that consistency word, because it's important, but it's not I don't know, if consistency is a value word, people wouldn't be talking about so much all the time. On professional values. I think it's just No, I think it's just around doing, doing the best you can is that there's not really a word for that, I guess. Actually, I was just talking to Tom about this a minute ago about something else, I think it's just, it's just actually just doing the right things and, and doing your best. So like, and if that's what you've done, then like and in the spirit of reflection, like, then actually being able to stop yourself from like overthinking, or, you know, eating up too much time, actually. And as long as you know, you're doing that all the time, then. And that's fine. Making sure that you know, and that's for yourself and for the students as well, because obviously you want to come in and do the best for the students, but you also need to make sure that you're doing the best thing for you. So like, I would say maybe things like organised but I don't think you can be organised in a job like this. So, you know, I think it's about probably that flexibility part of the more important I suppose.

O Ward
Consistency

O Ward
Care

O Ward
Reflective Process

O Ward
Flexibility

Interviewer
So, follow on question. Can you give an example of when you've been able to put that flexibility into practice?

PARTICIPANT C
I don't think can think of one specific example. I'm used to doing it daily isn't it, it's just being able to, like every day you come in and you have an idea of what it is you're going to do that day and probably by how fast it is out the window. So I think it's just about having the flexibility to go 'that's fine. I'm not going to go get too caught up and what I was meant to do'. I'm now going to do this because this is taking priority. And I think, again, that priority comes into that bit about doing your best if you can, you have to be able to prioritise. Otherwise you just get lost in amongst it all. And I think again, you have to leave here at five or whatever and go right. I did what I needed to do today, even if it wasn't what I intended to do. And that I guess, in itself is flexibility. Because then you're there and then not beating yourself up about it.

O Ward
Flexibility

O Ward
Routine

O Ward
Consistency

Interviewer
How do you think people measure their best? I mean, this isn't a question on there.

PARTICIPANT C
I think people don't... Yeah, I think, I think for many reasons. I think some people I think some people are very negative on themselves here anyway, so probably don't necessarily consider 'Oh, well, I'm you know, doing my best', though, let necessarily actively think about it. But I think I see, I don't know, it's a good question, actually. Is it? Because what is it? What is your best? Is it actually having? What done something specific for a child that day?

O Ward
Self-Doubt

- 261 -

Or is it having to close things off your to do list? And I guess each day is going to look different? contextual? Yeah, I think so. And that would have been on like job roles and stuff as well, like, you know, what Helen considers to be a good, you know, her best on the front desk will be different from what I consider to be

O Ward
Experience

Interviewer
And I guess there's that element of sustainability, isn't it? Because actually, we know that actually our best. We're not at our best all the time, because that's not sustainable.

O Ward
Sustainability

PARTICIPANT C
And actually, it comes back to what those stuff Adele was saying? Because what you could say, it's the best that you consider, like against your values. But actually, if your values make you an arsehole then actually doing the best against your values isn't actually a good thing. Yeah. So I guess there's an interesting thing there, isn't it? I think you can, you know, you can if you're intuitive enough, you can pick up on, you know, people's responses to you, and as other adults as well. And that gives you an indication of, you know, I can know from a situation if someone looks at me a certain way, I think, oh, maybe I went a bit too far that time, or, you know, I think, okay, so it's just habit, I guess it comes into knowing what it is that you want to get out of the 'data'? Yes. Well, you have to have that daily aspect. Now, we've all got our overall motivations, but you have to know what you're coming in to do each day. Otherwise, you just get lost. So yes, your best actually might look different on different days. So actually, my best today was that I crossed loads off from my to do list, because I was able to, actually, my best tomorrow is that I helped this case with this, and was able to give them that time. That was my best today. And I see that's used up all my brain capacity. So if you're not, I guess if you're not an overly reflective person, then you can't do that.

O Ward
Problematic Values

O Ward
Humility

O Ward
Success Criteria

Interviewer
And it's that idea that how within that flexibility, and within that kind of reflective practice, how do you measure that idea of being the best? Or do you just literally, are you just sort of flailing in the dark the entire time?

PARTICIPANT C
fumbling?

Interviewer
Potentially, you know, for one of the better description.

Interviewer
So, the third question is, do things ever get in the way of putting these values into practice? So you, you've talked about literal, other things happened? Is there anything else you can think of?

PARTICIPANT C
If I don't know, I think that I think an easy place to go would be to talk about like everybody's own sort of personal situation and external factors. But I also think that part of your flexibility has to be not bringing that into the equation, which is a difficult one, isn't it? But I think, yeah, I'm not sure....the problem is, I think, is that you're, you're talking about human behaviour. So in terms of do things ever get in the way? Well, yeah, because people actually were, you know, as we've seen this week, for certain situations, you're so at the mercy of how somebody else wants to conduct themselves in a situation that that can get in the way and then but then sometimes that barrier isn't an equally that barrier might be there for me, but it isn't always for somebody else. So I think whenever you've got human behaviour involved, there's going to be that level of unpredictability. So in terms of

O Ward
Personal vs Organisational

O Ward
Personal Beliefs and Assumptions

O Ward
Self-Improvement

things getting in the way, like I personally don't think that......I think there are some like clerical tasks which do get in the way of certain things and I know what to expect writing in set A and I think some of the pandemic stuff hasn't helped with that, where we've had to do everything digitally so that has actually I think that has duplicated workload in places I think that naturally gets in the way. But we could all talk about that I'm worried about. And I think we're all aware. That's the thing. I do. I do think I personally think structurally here. I think there is as much as possible to not have things in the way. I think it's as open as it possibly is. Certainly for me, I know that you guys in in SLT, which I will be in September, you know, I know there are plenty of other pressures. And depending on how certain people are behaving that day will depend on that as well. So, but I do genuinely think that we are at this level of protected, I personally do feel like we're protected from that, which is that which is a good thing, like that's a good thing to say. Because that means you are all unfortunately taking the hit sometimes. But you're clearing the path for everybody else. So I think in terms of like structural things getting in the way. Here, I actually don't think that's a problem for people.... And I think most of it is, and I think personally, that it's that that aspect of actually, I think with these values, people think they, you know, they, they, they really like consistency, or flexibility or whatever it might be, but then actually, they'll hold up loads of examples, or you can shine a light on those examples where they're not doing that at all. So it's that it's that classic theory into practice. They don't, it's not what they mean, description is not, it's not at least not there.

And I always mean that with the consistency words. I always think that because I feel people use it as a safe place to start without actually thinking what do I actually mean by that? Because if we, you know, we all we do things, whether we like it or not, we all do things every day that are inconsistent. And if we actually stop to think about that, we would stop crying out for consistency, when we know that we're the worst people for making that happen, either. Certainly, while I never mentioned any more than never say the word consistency, because equally consistency is probably unattainable. When the environment where it Yeah. Because we don't know, we can't go into each day with the same set of values. Because we don't know what's gonna happen that day

Interviewer
It's not even the Holy Grail.

PARTICIPANT C
But people hold out like is this holy Grail? And I don't I don't think it's here. I think that's in any workplace, I think it's hard to get consistency. Yeah, because again, it's human behaviour, I don't know how someone's gonna act today. Because you don't know. Yet, whether that's towards a student or towards me or in general, like, I don't know how that's gonna happen, I don't know if the admin is gonna turn around to you and talk to you like a piece of shit. And then you're gonna be like, actually, I'm having a really bad day here. And then that's why maybe you're, like, unapproachable that day, or actually, you just lock yourself away. I don't know those things. And neither necessarily should

Interviewer
Well, so the next one kind of links into that. So how can you be sure that as a practitioner, your actions are faithful to your values? And I've also put To what extent does this matter?

PARTICIPANT C
I think it does matter. I think it hugely matters. And I think if people value that more, I think we see less of the staff behaviours that we see here. I think it's really important to hold yourself to that. And I think all that work on ethical privacy really highlights that. And I said to myself, I said, You know, I think we're all wondering, there's anything groundbreaking and what Adele came in and told us, but sometimes you need somebody to kind of say it to you,

O Ward
Systemic

O Ward
Personal vs Organisational

O Ward
Difficulty Considering Values

O Ward
Consistency

O Ward
Personal Issues

O Ward
Confidence

- 263 -

8.5.2 Focus Group Discussion Excerpt

Evidence presented is a transcription of the focus group discussion that took place 16.6.21, including relevant coding analysis.

Interviewer
Good afternoon everyone, how did we find supervision today? What themes are topics came out of your discussions?

Focus Group Participant 1
It went really well, my group all said that they felt as if they really needed it this week, they were saying that they had all had a mad few days, so it was good to offload

Focus Group Participant 2
My group the same, I sensed lots of tiredness from the group

Focus Group Participant 3
It was pretty quiet in my group. I mean, not quiet. But they were not as willing to talk by themselves as they usually are, which was interesting. I had to really dig deep and make sure that I asked them questions so that they spoke up

Focus Group Participant 4
Same as (NAME - Focus Group Participant 1) – it was good, lots of discussion, staff seemed happy to be able to stop for a few minutes

Focus Group Participant 5
Yeah, same really. But my group felt really quiet. I mean, as in numbers wise. 3 of them were off today ill

Interviewer
So were there any themes or more consistent discussion topics that came up?

Focus Group Participant 3
My group were talking actually about the CPD session on values – as we did it the other day, I thought that I'd bring it into the conversation deliberately

Focus Group Participant 4
How did you do that? Like, did you ask them how it went?

Focus Group Participant 3
I said that looking back at the CPD session, were there any reflections on the conversations about values. And I asked particularly if they had thought about it previously?

Interviewer
That's interesting, how did it go?

Focus Group Participant 3
We talked about how it was really interesting to be given the time to think about that sort of thing, that normally this place is so fast, the day flies by, so to have a moment to really engage your brain was rare. Some of them said they really liked the challenge, for want of a better word, but some found it a lot. They said that being put on the spot was hard

O Ward
Reflective Process

O Ward
Difficulty Considering Values

Interviewer
Did they mention any particular values at all?

Focus Group Participant 3
Hmmm, they were kind along the same theme, so someone said empathy, care and kindness, consistency. The interesting thing was when I asked them about when they would use the values in their work

Focus Group Participant 5
I was thinking that, that would be interesting

Focus Group Participant 3
The group pretty much agreed that they thought they knew about themselves, but as the discussion went on, they started to talk about how maybe they didn't always…. As in they think they are really clear in what they are doing but sometimes they make mistakes, or do something they regret or something, and that isn't their value or what they think is 'good'. But it still happened. And we were all saying that sometimes that happens, life gets in the way of what we ideally want y'now?

Focus Group Participant 2
My group were tired, like I said, and we did talk about how the fact that it is toward the end of what has been a really unusual year, with COVID & lockdowns, so we were recognising that these things will of course have had a bad influence over how we feel and our decision making, with each other and with the pupils

Focus Group Participant 3
Our mantra for supervision in general, but particularly today, was about being kind. Being kind to others. But also not forgetting to be kind to yourself.

Focus Group Participant 5
My group talked about this, I think probably because there were so few of us, we really got into a deep conversation about not feeling bad about being off and also not burning ourselves out, 'cos at the end of the day it's going to mean that you won't be able to be the best teacher / LSA / whatever you can be

Focus Group Participant 2
We had talked about this last week actually, the idea that we work at a place like this because we care about these pupils, we could have chosen somewhere 'easier' but we wouldn't want that. And we want the best for them. But you can't always give your best, so it's about y'know, picking your battles and focusing what energy & time you do have on what is going to get the greatest reward

Interviewer
That's a really interesting thread, the idea of what is our best. That's very reflective, quite meta-reflective in fact

Focus Group Participant 4
My group mentioned targets we set ourselves a bit today, like we always do a little 'what have we learnt this week' kind of thing. We said that we often just get carried away in the moment, doing our jobs to step back and think about how all the pieces fit together, if that makes sense, and how forcing ourselves to reflect can be really useful.

O Ward
Empathy

O Ward
Consistency

O Ward
Self-Doubt

O Ward
Measure of Success

O Ward
Recognising Factors Beyond Our Control

O Ward
Recognising Factors Beyond Our Control

O Ward
Sustainability

O Ward
Wellbeing

O Ward
Passion

O Ward
Making a Difference

O Ward
Sustainability

O Ward
Desire for Self-Improvement

O Ward
Recognising Need for Different Approach

Focus Group Participant 2
One of my group said that this focus on reflection is really interesting and really useful, but what if you don't know what you don't know. What then? How can you reflect without knowing what to reflect on? You can be as keen as mustard by if you don't know what direction to take, then is it worth the energy and time you might spend on it

> **O Ward** — Unaware of Own Behaviour
> **O Ward** — Success Criteria

Interviewer
That is why I'm doing the CPD sessions, to try and offer particular focus-es for reflection, with prompts, so that staff can start to hone in on things that would be worth reflecting about

Focus Group Participant 1
It's good that we have that, that CPD is something that is more tangible, not just a tick box exercise, that it will hopefully be something we can use every day. And we can use it in supervision, prompts, as like we've said before a few times, sometimes, staff just want to have a chit-chat and it's really superficial rather than more 'deep' conversations or topics which would be better for them in their roles I guess

> **O Ward** — Enacting Values
> **O Ward** — Wellbeing
> **O Ward** — Guidance
> **O Ward** — Personal vs Organisational

Focus Group Participant 4
There are a few in my group that are pushing back a little bit, from the focus on reflecting about themselves

Interviewer
In what way?

Focus Group Participant 4
Well, it's just my opinion, but my gut feeling is that some people like turning up to CPD as kind of a passive experience, to be given information that they may or may not choose to take in or register. For some, even a space to rest, for want of a better word. So when we are talking about things that are personal and require proper thinking to a deeper level, some people are I guess uneasy. Why they are I don't know…

> **O Ward** — Systemic
> **O Ward** — Self-Doubt

Focus Group Participant 3
Reckon they deliberately don't want to engage or share? As in they don't see the value of improving reflection?

Focus Group Participant 3
I would guess it's an insecurity, a confidence issue. Worries what other people might think of them

> **O Ward** — Confidence

Focus Group Participant 2
And even maybe that it's like a bit of a shock. I mean, if they've never had to think about this sort of thing before, it might be quite a change in their thinking. Especially if they are older, if they've gone through life in a little bubble, then it's gonna be trickier to suddenly wrap your head around the possibility of a different perspective

> **O Ward** — Experience

Focus Group Participant 1
I wonder if they would even pick up during this type of session to reflect. Like, without directly, explicitly telling them that x is an issue, or y wasn't ideal etc. I guess that could be true of all of us at some point though I guess maybe

> **O Ward** — Guidance

8.5.3 Personal Journal Excerpt: Cycle One Format

For the purposes of evidence presentation, my personal journal has been transcribed on computer to make it easier to read.

The table below is a transcription of my journal, dated 19.11.2020 following an unsuccessful attempt to have an online Focus Group discussion regarding the progress of the reflective practice within the wider staff team.

What I Did	Why I Did It	What I Learned from It	The Significance of my Learning
The IT issues have continued to prove problematic across the two sites and the most recent Focus Group has again not proven fruitful at gaining useful data. The group managed to speak for about 10 minutes, but this was largely interrupted by seemingly long periods of audio loss and no visuals. After the discussion proved unsatisfactory, I sent a group email asking them to consider the following question: To what degree were staff willing and able to utilise reflective language within supervisory session?	As the poor / inconsistent IT connection prevailed, I wanted to be able to still glean data from their experience of the supervision session, while it was still fresh in their mind While an email of course lacks the dialogic opportunities afforded by a conversation, it was felt that such a method would still enable the collection of useful insights with which to take forward	The supervisors reported that the overwhelming focus of the discussion related to ongoing COVID distancing issues still and more general staff wellbeing. They overwhelmingly described that staff were not able to consistently utilise reflective language at this stage, especially more critical reflection, to discuss or offer opinions on their experiences The prevailing narrative related to ongoing COVID concerns, such as bubbles, who was ill, familial issues. It felt as if at this time, supervision has become a space for wellbeing focus and peer support, rather than a useful opportunity to focus on improving or evaluating practice Supervisors did acknowledge that there were clear examples of reflective practice observed, but that these were not consistent across colleagues still and highly individualised	At this stage of the research, it remained very challenging to re-focus staff around reflective and critical thinking when so much of their cognitive 'space' is taken up with much wider, holistic concerns around 'bubbles' and social distancing It was frustrating that my research is taking place during such a global emergency, but entirely understandable that colleagues would not be able to, at least consistently, attend to reflective professional practice I acknowledged to the focus group / supervisors that there would need to be a reframing & renewing of reflective language, as it was proving ever more apparent that the language introduced at the CPD session has not stuck as hoped

8.5.4 Personal Journal Excerpt: Cycle Two Format

For the purposes of evidence presentation, my personal journal has been transcribed on computer to make it easier to read.

The table below is a transcription of my journal, dated 3.7.2021, following the completion of the fourth intervention task.

Factual Account	Thoughts & Feelings
I had taken great care in making sure that staff were very deliberately split up from their usual peer groups and favoured colleagues and paired with others that they would not usually seek to share with; I had learned over the past few weeks of CPD which pairs had worked well together and who had already been paired up	I felt that not only would this help with the holistic development of staff belonging and team-building, it would permit and develop positive new relationships and most importantly start to 'push' colleagues out of their comfort zones and appreciate values, beliefs and opinions that may differ from their own. I was really pleased how this went and felt it was really successful. There were a minority of colleagues that complained, at least superficially, regarding their discomfort regarding having to work with colleagues that they usually don't have to. I was clear in my explanation that this was done deliberately, to force people to see different assumptions etc – I think that it's important that discomfort and change and integral partners, so as an organisation we need to do anything we can within the system to support such opportunities.
The focus of this week's intervention related to influencing factors. After the session, a few staff voiced concerns that by offering a rationale or being explicit regarding the possible influence of such factors, they would act as an 'excuse' of sorts and provide a reason for the colleague to behave in a certain manner	I had a constructive argument with colleague regarding this particular point; I made my point that it was a necessary step in being honest that such factors do exist and part of reflection is acknowledging the presence of one, but is also important to then be clear that it does not excuse any unproductive behaviour or ignore the opportunity to be reflective because of it - in fact, being transparent, it is by offering a very clear and explicit vocabulary that it becomes more effective and simple to reflective against and amend behavaiour moving forward – adding to the lexicon of actions means that staff can be in

I think that the session progressed really positively – staff by this session knew the structure and roughly what to expect. I think that again, some of the pairings would have liked more time together, but this is of course compared to examples of the opposite	effect coached in a productive manner, much like we would look to do with pupils I felt that by offering the table of influencing factors, we will become more fluent in discussing our own behaviours, as well as those of our pupils – it will support the quest to be eternally curious, looking beyond the surface

8.5.5 Cycle One Coding Weighting

The diagram below is a readout from NVIVO showing the weighting from the Cycle One evidence and coding, indicating the 'weighting' afforded to each code and how they were subsequently grouped together at the final stage of analysis
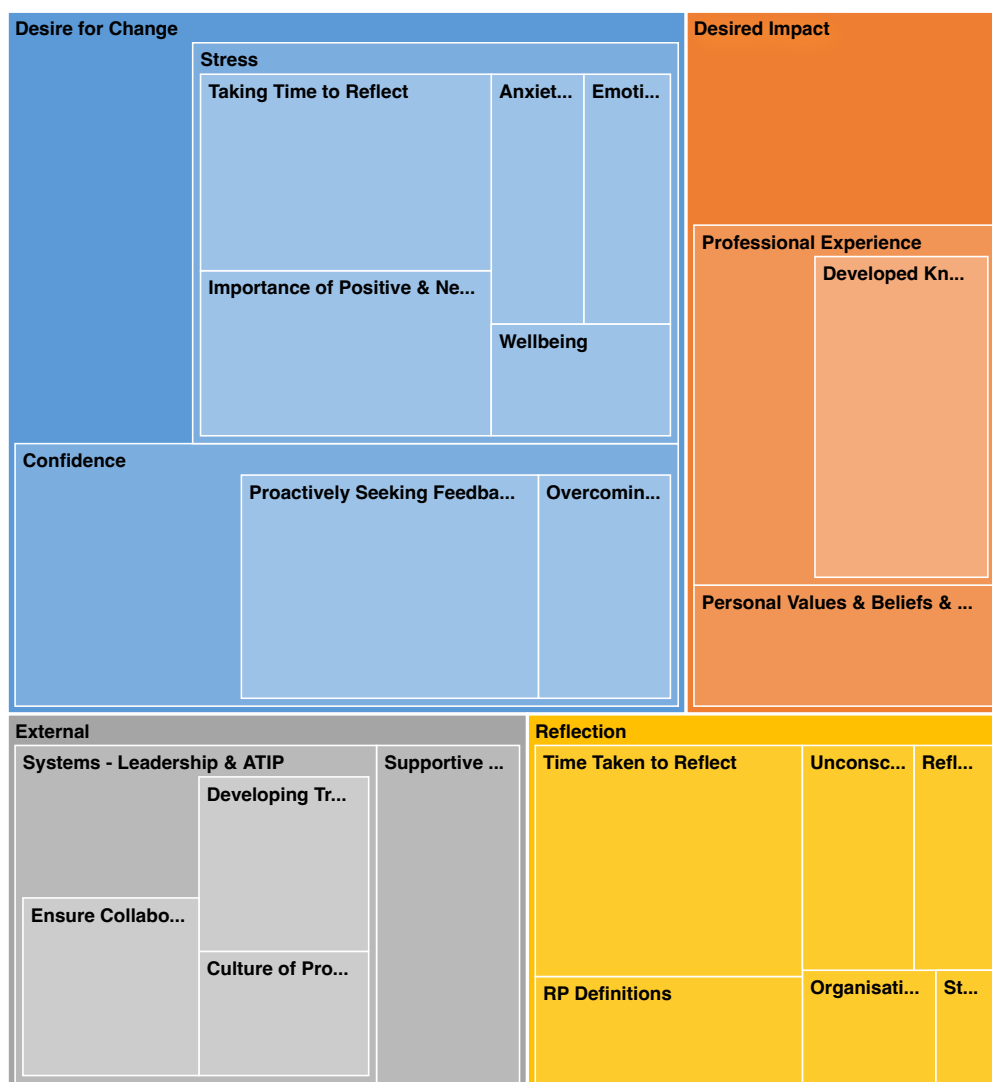
8.5.6 Cycle Two Coding Analysis: Weighting

The diagram below is a readout from NVIVO showing the weighting from the Cycle Two evidence and coding, indicating the 'weighting' afforded to each code and how they were subsequently grouped together at the final stage of analysis