DECP Trainee Education Psychologist (TEP) Conference 2016

Labels of SEN: Perceptions and Experiences of Young People with a classification of BESD

Emma Sheffield
Labels of SEN: The Perceptions and Experiences of Young People with a Statement of SEN for BESD (Behavioural, Emotional, and Social Difficulty)

Emma Sheffield
E VOLUTION OF THE LABEL/ CATEGORY

- ‘Maladjustment’ (1944 Education Act)
- Emotional or behavioural disorders (Warnock Report, 1978)
- Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) (DES, 1989)
- Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) (DfES, 2001)
- Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) (DfE & DoH, 2015)
BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- Personal and professional rationale

- New legislation highlights the need for pupil voice/views to be heard

- Lack of research addressing pupil voice in relation to the label of BESD/ SEMH

- Drive in LA to move away from the BESD label towards ‘wellbeing’
Research Questions

Originally...

What awareness do pupils with a statement of SEN for BESD have of their label and what impact does this have on their self-concepts?

Changed to...

Are young people with a statement of SEN for BESD aware of this and other labels? How do they evaluate these labels? How do young people with a label of BESD describe themselves and their experiences at school?
DESIGN OVERVIEW

- Qualitative Grounded Approach

1. Purposive sampling – students with a statement of SEN for BESD
2. Semi-structured interviews with sample investigating awareness of labels, self-concepts, school experiences and attributions
3. Transcription and analysis of interviews
4. Adaptation of interview schedule
5. Saturation of themes
6. Checking back with participants
# Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Age at Interview</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>NC Year statement received</th>
<th>Range of needs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13:10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BCRB/ AIND Dual Heritage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BESD, Language and Communication, Cognition and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WTUK</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BESD, Cognition and Learning (literacy specific)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13:09</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BNGN</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15:09</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WENG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>BESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14:3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BCRB</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13:5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BCRB</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>BESD, Cognition and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13:2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BCRB/ WENG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15:3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>BCRB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>14:6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WENG</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BESD</td>
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</table>
MEASURES

- Semi-structured interviews using a common framework for interview adapted from Kelly and Norwich (2004).

- Questions on attributions of behaviour (adapted from Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000)

- Life-grids of educational journey (adapted from O’Connor et al., 2011)

- Additional questions following open coding.

- Revisiting of participants to check key themes after data analysis
Awareness of Labels

- Open question about support at school.
- List of labels read and participants asked:
  1. Heard of/ aware of label
  2. Describes self to others in terms of label
  3. Others (parents, teachers, peers) describe them in terms of label
  4. Evaluation of label (positive, negative or neutral)

Labels: learning difficulty, gifted, learning disability, talented, special educational needs, ADHD, dyslexia, Autism, Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty
# Life Grids

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Nursery Reception
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of Process</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 1: Familiarisation with data | - Study interview audiotapes carefully  
- Transcribe data and note initial thoughts | - Allows the researcher to closely attend to participants’ views          |
| Phase 2: Initial Coding  | - Atlas Ti Software used to complete line-by-line coding  
- Stay close to the data  
- Name each line with a code that reflects action of the participant  
- Move quickly through the data and review frequently | - Detailed process  
- Enables the researcher to conceptualise participants’ words and phrases  
- Generates direction; new ideas emerge |
| Phase 3: Focused Coding  | - Atlas Ti Software used to group codes according to emergent categories or ‘code families’  
- Axial coding undertaken using Conditional Relationship Guide (Scott & Howell, 2008)  
- Categorical map created | - Allows the researcher to categorise large amounts of data              |
| Phase 4: Theoretical Coding | - Reflective Coding Matrix (Scott & Howell, 2008) utilised to identify core category  
- Grounded Theory Model developed  
- Categorical map presented to participants for verification | - Helps to clarify and extend analytic concepts                           |

Memo Writing, Member Checking and Constant Comparison of Data
# Responses to Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Heard of</th>
<th>Apply to self</th>
<th>Others would apply</th>
<th>Positive/ Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Label</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heard of</strong></td>
<td><strong>Apply to self</strong></td>
<td><strong>Others would apply</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Difficulty</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gifted</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Disability</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Educational Need</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talented</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADHD</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dyslexia</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autism</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BESD</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Grounded Theory Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences at School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Struggles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/ Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distancing self from misbehaviour (External attribution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions arising from misbehaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/ Interpersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External motivators for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a ‘Different Person’ (Internal attribution of positive change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* TPR = Teacher-Pupil Relationship
STRUGGLES...

P6: ‘And I was bullied my entire, bullied my entire life...from when I was little until year 3.’

R: ‘That must have been really difficult for you.’

P6: ‘Yeah that was in primary school until year 3 and then I started getting, then I started being very, I got along with all the other kids at my old school eventually but I grew up to be a mischievous child, then I got in trouble a lot.’
EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTIONS...

P4: ‘It’s just I was in a lot of classes with people who distracted the class a lot, so the teachers weren’t like as good in ways because they couldn’t control the class so yeah... Like you would try not to talk, you’ll try and do you work, ‘cause I tried like, but... you just get like tugged into it and you just start talking.’

P9: ‘Like when we’re sitting in class when there’s nothing to do like we just like do random stuff to make people laugh.’
EXAMS AS A MOTIVATOR...

- **P3:** ‘Yeah, in primary school a lot ‘cause I just didn’t, I did work at times, but I only did work, like I worked a lot in year 6 ‘cause in year 6 you have to do your SATs for secondary school.’

- **P4:** ‘I just saw sense. I just saw GCSEs and think I need to knuckle down.’

- **P8:** ‘It’s just that in year 7 and year 8 it’s your mess around years... But year 9 you need to get some kind of good grades for you to come to year 10 and be in the higher classes.’
BECOMING A DIFFERENT PERSON

- **P2:** ‘Erm well after year 10, well at the start of year 10, everything changed for me anyway. I just became a different person.’

- **P8:** ‘Yeah in between that time, but during the, when was I in year 8, 2012, half way through that summer, yeah, I just kept saying I’m going to change, I’m going to care less and see how that works, so when I came into year 9 I started to care a lot less about stupid things and then I got less detentions, no exclusions.’
Positive TPRs

P3: ‘Err he’s just a good teacher to be honest I don’t know, I don’t know, we just have a good relationship, like the whole class like our geography teacher, like every time I’m actually willing to learn something in geography rather than like maths or English.’

P5: ‘Like it’s something we have in common, we both like telling jokes, like he’s a teacher who understands how most students feel, ‘cause I show him a lot of respect, say for example we all are supposed to stand up when a woman enters a room as respect but if a man comes in we don’t really have to but I just stand up for him anyway because I have that type of respect for him.’
**Support**

- **P6:** ‘I think I do need that [support] in some ways but I really am trying to be better and be the best that I can be but it can be hard, it can be hard for me because, yesterday when I found out what’s happening to me I’ll be going into a foundation learning class I’ll be doing mainstream foundation learning I think they said the best way for you to learn is special help and learn how to cope in class but I thought this is this is gonna affect me because people are going to keep bothering me for not being like them.’
DEBRIEF

- Categorical map shared with pupils and comments elicited

- Pupils told why they were chosen for study; opportunity to discuss/ask questions and supporting adult identified

- Pupils asked to evaluate new SEMH label
COMMENTS AT DEBRIEF

- **P8:** ‘Well I don’t think I have that any more, any behavioural [difficulties]. I’m emotionally stable I know that. Socially, I have to think when I’m social, to be social, what to do and what the right thing to say would be.’

- **P6:** ‘I’m mental?’ (response to SEMH label)

- **P9:** ‘I think my behaviour, that one needs to be improved but not my social and emotional’
CONCLUSIONS

- YP may be protecting their self-esteem by externally attributing negative behaviour and internally attributing positive behavioural change.

- Positive TPRs are essential for supporting young people with a classification of BESD/ SEMH.

- Family, exams and aspirations for the future can help YP reflect on their behaviour.

- YP should be consulted about the types of support they want and this should be frequently monitored and modified as necessary.
CONCLUSIONS...

- YP have the right to know about their Statement/EHCP and the labels given to their needs
- Do EPs have a role here?
- YP are able to discuss and actively contribute to the conceptualisation of their needs
- Implications for the SEMH label in the Code of Practice – YP should be consulted before such changes are made
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