Trainee Thesis Symposia

Health and Wellbeing

“Applying mindfulness approaches to promote positive wellbeing in adolescents”

Siobhan Wilson

Abstract

This thesis outlines the work of a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) in applying a critical realist stance to determine the impact of mindfulness on adolescents. A mixed methods approach was employed. The TEP utilised the Internal Control Index (Duttweiler, 1984) pre and post intervention and then explored the views and experiences of pupils, parents and staff to develop her own understanding of applying mindfulness in an educational context. The TEP worked with staff within the school who then delivered a programme based on the Learning to Breathe curriculum. The staff carried out a 12 week intervention with 26 pupils across three groups. Following the intervention the TEP analysed the pre and post data from the Internal Control Index using the Statistical Programme for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicated a statistically significant result for improving pupil’s internal locus of control. Furthermore, five of the items on the scale were identified as having statistically significant improvements. The TEP then carried out focus groups with pupils, parents and staff. Braun and Clark’s (2006) six phased thematic analysis framework was used to identify three broad themes: Impact; Limitations and Future. Themes emerging from ‘impact’ were; ethos (normalising emotions, calmer and exams); ability to cope (control, improved relationships and relaxed) and practice. Themes emerging from ‘limitations’ were practicalities (class environment and pupils being taken out of class); time (for practice and staffing) and embarrassing. Finally, themes emerging from ‘future’ were continued practice (autonomy); format (follow up sessions and drop-ins) and starting earlier. These themes are discussed and future implications for research and practice are considered.

Exploring, through the young person’s perspective, the impact of nurture groups in Scottish secondary schools, as well as the factors that act to support and hinder them.

Robyn Grantham

Abstract

Nurture Groups (NG) have been increasingly ‘established in Scottish secondary schools [however] research in this context is limited’ (Kourmoulaki, 2013, p.60). The present study aims to add to existing literature by exploring the immediate and longer-term impact of NGs in this context, as well as the factors that support and hinder them, in one Local Authority in Scotland. Phase 1 of the study involved Nurture Coordinators (NC) from six schools participating in semi-structured interviews, to establish their views. NC were additionally asked to provide pre and post Boxall Profile data for all young people (YP) who
participated in a NG in 2014/15, for analysis using paired samples t-tests. From the six schools sampled in Phase 1, one school was randomly selected for Phase 2, where the views of five YP who had recently participated in a NG were gathered using semi-structured interviews and an arts-based activity. An additional three YP, who had taken part in a NG in their first year of secondary school and who were now in their third year, also, took part in the study. Their views were collected in the same way, although questions changed slightly to take into account time since the intervention. All qualitative data was thematic analysed. Themes generated suggested the intervention had a positive effect on young people with regard to confidence, self-esteem, social-skills and attendance. In addition, all strands of the Boxall Profile demonstrated positive outcomes, although not all were significant. Factors supporting successful intervention included the importance of a consistent and safe environment and reliable NG teachers. While, barriers were associated with a poor whole-school nurturing ethos and lack of support from the senior management team. Limitations, areas for future research, and implications for Educational Psychology practice are discussed in accordance with the findings.

A Case Study Approach Investigating Peer Support for Secondary Pupils with Experience of Self-Harm

Victoria Helen Shepherd

Abstract

This presentation outlines an investigation around peer support for secondary pupils with experience of self-harm. Previous literature highlights friends as a main source of support for young people who self-harm, yet limited research explores what specific supports are being offered by friends, or what help might be required by friends in order to provide successful support. This investigation aimed to determine what friends currently do to support young people with experience of self-harm; what friends could further do to support young people; and what additional help friends need to be a supportive friend. The research took a constructionist approach by gathering the views of three young people with experience of self-harm and three supportive friends via individual semi-structured interviews, and qualitative data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Research findings indicate that supportive friends are providing several types of support to young people who self-harm, including being directly there, providing distractions and taking responsibility for young people. To provide further support to young people, friends could consider young peoples’ perspectives more, initiate conversations about self-harm more and spend more time with young people. Supportive friends speak to either teachers or other friends to receive reassurance or advice, and they would like additional people to provide support to young people who self-harm. Limitations to the current study relate to the creation and wording of interview guides and following up solution focused interventions. Future directions for research are discussed in order to address these limitations, which include carrying out further consultation, piloting interview guides and offering further follow-up sessions. The researcher identifies implications for educational psychology practice, including consultation with school staff to raise awareness of supports being offered to young people by friends, working with pupils to normalise the term ‘self-harm’ and providing peer support model training for supportive friends.
An investigation into the relationship between body image and self-efficacy in preadolescent and adolescent children

Kaylee MacPhee

Abstract

The thesis paper outlines an investigation, adopting a post-positivist approach into the relationship between body image perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs in preadolescent and adolescent children. Research into body image perceptions of children has highlighted that more and more boys and girls are experiencing body dissatisfaction and can have associated impacts such as decreased global self-esteem, increased levels of depression and engagement in weight-loss behaviours. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect motivation, peer relationships, management of negative emotions and academic achievement. As the relationship between these two concepts has never been investigated, to the researcher’s knowledge, the current study looked at gathering self-reported perceptions from children in primary four and primary seven in ten schools in one local authority on their body image as well as particular self-efficacy beliefs about their social, emotional and academic abilities, through the use of questionnaires. The research used a correlational and independent group design and data were analysed using parametric statistics. The results suggested that there was a positive correlation between body image perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs, with a stronger relationship with emotional and social self-efficacy than academic self-efficacy. Further results suggested that between 11.9% and 32.9% of children in primary four and 16.2% and 42.5% in primary seven were either unhappy or wished that something about their physical appearance could be changed. The results also suggested that neither age or gender had a significant effect on self-efficacy beliefs, but that on average males scored higher on social and emotional self-efficacy beliefs and females higher on academic. The research had limitations, mainly associated with its correlational nature, however the results do have implications for educational psychology practice. There needs to be further investigation into what is reinforcing body image perceptions between primary four and seven, as well as potential ways in which the development of self-efficacy beliefs could be supported as possible protective factors for body image perceptions.

LAAC

An Evaluation of the use of the mobile application Mind of My Own to gather the views of Looked After and Accommodated Children before school reviews

Iain Walker

Abstract

The mobile application Mind of My Own (MOMO) has been developed to gather the views of looked after and accommodated children (LAAC) before meetings in order that they have easy access to a method of communication to those professionals working with them. To date, the research on MOMO has centred on the social services sector, and most of the research into the use of technology in gathering young people’s views has focused on those young people with severe and complex difficulties. This study therefore aims to fill this gap in knowledge in the current literature in this topic area. The purpose of this study was to explore how new technology can be used to help further engage Looked After and Accommodated Children with their school based reviews, through adopting a qualitative paradigm. Ten LAAC in one Secondary School were interviewed on the methods used to gather their views for a school review, with five using the MOMO app and five using a comparative paper-based method. The pupil’s pastoral care teacher who completes this with them was also asked to complete questionnaires. This information was then collated and analysed using a thematic analysis. The young people indicated a preference for the MOMO app due to it being faster, easier to use, and immediate in sending information to key staff. Staff showed a similar
preference for the app as it was seen to be attractive to young people and as they can send
information at any point. These findings are then discussed alongside the limitations of
the study, suggestions for future research in the topic area, implications of the current
research, and next steps for the local authority involved, namely focusing on the future
implementation of the app alongside implementation science.

‘I’m half water, half blood and a quarter chocolate cookie’: Using arts-based visual
research methods to explore care-experienced young peoples’ perceptions of
childhood

Annie Paterson

Abstract
The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which young people’s experiences of ‘being
cared for’ influence and shape their conceptualisation of ‘childhood’, specifically from the
perspective of those who are care-experienced. While there is a growing body of literature
regarding the views of young people in terms of their experience of being in care, there
appears to be no such research regarding their perception of childhood in the wider sense.
As ‘co-researchers’, three care-experienced young people work with the researcher in
producing qualitative data and knowledge pertaining to the research aims. A participatory
approach is adopted using arts-based visual research methods as a means to facilitate
young people in telling their stories. Phenomenological analysis shows there are common
themes across young people’s stories, such as relational aspects, temporality, experiences
of play and resilience in the face of adversity. However, the ways in which such themes are
experienced are inherently different. The use of Poetic Inquiry illuminates that the essence
of childhood means different things to different care-experienced young people - there is not
one lived experience. Thus, young people’s experience of ‘being cared for’ appears to shape
their conceptualisation of childhood. Findings also highlight the importance of providing
opportunities for care-experienced young people to have their voice heard, however also
warns of the inevitable consequences of cognitive biases, such as selective perception, in
the interpretation and re-representation of young people’s stories when employing such
participatory approaches. It is hoped that in considering the conceptualisation of childhood
for three care-experienced young people ecologically, this study will challenge negative
social representations and traditional rhetoric that demonises these youngsters by
highlighting their adaptability and responsiveness to complex and adverse environments.

An exploration of the use and implementation of Family Group Conferencing to
support kinship carers in Scotland.

Alison Fotheringham

Abstract
The numbers of children in kinship care (KSC) in Scotland have been steadily rising over the
previous decade (Kidner, 2012) and literature has shown that these kinship carers do not feel
adequately supported in their role (Howitt, 2014). This study aims to explore an additional
means to support kinship carers through the use of Family Group Conferencing (FGC). FGC
is a restorative process that works with families to support them to make safe decisions for
the care of their child (Wachtel, 2013). Educational Psychologists (EP) in Scotland also have
a key role in supporting kinship carers and KSC placements (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of
Education (HMLe), 2011). This is the first study to explore how EPs can contribute to the FGC
process in a distinctive way.
In order to investigate these phenomena, focus groups and semi-structured interviews are
carried out with 18 professionals who are currently involved with FGC across three local
analysis is used to scrutinise the data. Four themes are identified from the thematic analysis:
professionals and families, organisation and culture, impact on KSC and link to EP role. Despite results highlighting many examples of good practice and key implementation factors in relation to FGC, it is apparent that LAs must ensure that the approach fits with the needs, resources available and processes in their local context. A number of implications for practice and research are suggested including more investigation of how EPs can support the FGC process.

Whole School Approaches

Evaluating the Effectiveness of ‘Working On What Works’ Programmes Facilitated by Internal School Practitioners

Catriona May

Abstract

Working On What Works (WOWW) is a solution-oriented class intervention with the aim of improving classroom environments, behaviour, and relationships. Solution-oriented approaches have previously been evidenced as a means of creating change and empowering individuals. The effectiveness of WOWW with children aged between five and thirteen years has been shown in previous studies (e.g. Fernie & Cubeddu, 2016; Lloyd, Bruce, & Mackintosh, 2012) using models of delivery where professionals external to the school facilitate the sessions. The demand placed upon professionals, including Educational Psychologists, is now such that this model is no longer feasible in some authorities. This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of WOWW, as perceived by teachers and pupils, when using a training model to support internal school practitioners to deliver WOWW. This drew on principles from adult learning theory in order to provide an effective learning environment. Five classes in primary schools across one local authority participated; two classes were facilitated by depute head teachers, three classes were facilitated by class teachers. Facilitators attended four support sessions which provided information regarding the phases of WOWW and an opportunity for peer discussion. Quantitative data was gathered through pre- and post-surveys completed by pupils and teachers; qualitative data was gathered throughout the support sessions and in focus groups post-WOWW involving pupils, teachers, and facilitators. These were analysed using statistical methods and thematic analysis respectively. Teachers perceived relationships, collaborative working, and teacher confidence to have significantly improved. Pupils perceived ownership of their learning to have significantly improved. The Primary 4 class was found by both groups to have significantly improved. Thoughts about WOWW, the implementation, changes in the classroom, and next steps also emerged. Limitations of the research methodology were identified and implications for future research and practice suggested, including how Educational Psychologists can take this model forward.
An evaluation and implementation analysis of the approach ‘Five to Thrive’

Fiona Elizabeth Anne Primrose

Abstract

The current report aims to explore the implementation and effectiveness of an approach, Five to Thrive (FTT), in early years establishments through the perceptions of those involved. Outlined is the national and local context for which the participating early years establishments are based in Local Authority X. Due to the theory and topics underpinning FTT, a literature review of attachment theory and its connections to relationships, emotional regulation and brain development is included. Furthermore and due to the aims of the research, a review of literature regarding Implementation Science is also included. In line with the framework of core components of implementation consideration for participants’ perceptions, the current research is designed, gathered and analysed within an epistemological stance of critical realism. Thus a multi-method design informs data gathering from parents/carers and members of staff from four early years establishments to provide qualitative data, strengthened by quantitative data. The design of the research facilitates analysis of participants’ perceptions under six broad themes informed by the aims of the research: ‘How FTT has been implemented’, ‘why FTT has been implemented this way’, ‘what the next steps are for implementation of FTT’, ‘what has supported implementation of FTT’, ‘what have been the barriers to implementation of FTT’, and ‘the impact of implementation of FTT’. Sub-themes emerging from analysis of the data within the six overarching themes are then discussed with regards to the key documents underpinning the national and local context, as well as the theory and topics outlined in the literature review. Whilst exploring implementation and effectiveness of FTT through perceptions fits well within the current epistemological stance, it would have been beneficial to use pre-post-implementation measures to strengthen the data. The information presented in this paper can be used to enlighten next steps in terms of implementation of FTT.

An Exploration of the Application and Implementation of Growth Mindset Principles in a Scottish Primary School

Diana Margaret Fraser

Abstract

This report explores the application and implementation of growth mindset approaches to teaching and learning within a Scottish Primary School, aiming to identify the strengths of the application and implementation of the growth mindset principles as well as areas for development. It begins with a literature review exploring the factors that can impact on and be impacted by growth mindset teaching and learning. Additionally, aspects of implementing interventions are also considered. A social constructivist approach was taken in order to gather data that was based on the experiences of the participants. The research was undertaken by way of six staff interviews and four pupil focus groups and was supplemented by observations within three classes. The data was thematically analysed using an inductive approach. The analysis of the data produced four overarching themes: embarking on the process; classroom culture and teaching; outside the classroom; and pupil approach to learning. These themes are discussed in relation to the literature in order to identify areas of strength and areas for development. The collaboration between staff within the school and the understanding that staff had of the evidence base of the approach that they took were identified as particular strengths. Areas for development identified related to the planning for implementation such as the lack of a readiness assessment being undertaken prior to embarking on aspects of implementation. Limitations are acknowledged, particularly in terms of a weakness of the research methods employed being a lack of understanding of the impact of the implementation of growth mindset principles in Primary School A. Implications for educational psychology practice are identified specifically the unique relationship that
educational psychologists have with schools, ideally positions the profession to provide support to schools through the initial planning, delivery and maintenance of implementing growth mindset approaches to teaching and learning.

Pupil Voice

Closing the attainment gap using pupils' voices.

Lynne Fernie

Abstract

This study focused on pupils' views of the attainment gap, which emerged as an interesting an overlooked aspect of previous research. This study utilised a qualitative design to investigate the attainment gap in two secondary schools within X Authority. The current study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore pupil's understanding of attainment and their learning experiences. Focus groups supported by visual methods were used to investigate the views of twenty-four pupils (aged between eleven and eighteen). The aim was to explore how pupils were affected by the attainment gap and ways to bring about possible changes to help pupils learn better and raise attainment for all. Findings revealed that pupils have strongly held and informative views regarding attainment and the factors that support and hinder learning. These include: the importance of the educational, self, background and family, and social and emotional factors. Findings provided a deeper understanding of experiences of the attainment gap for pupils' learning, which can be used to contextualise existing qualitative research. This is hoped to encourage reappraisal of what is known about the attainment gap whilst stressing the importance of seeking the views of pupils and incorporating these perceptions into future research.

‘Out of the mouths of babes’: An exploration of the issues affecting children and young people living with a chronic illness and their learning

Sarah Patience

Abstract

The term ‘chronic illness’ encompasses many, heterogeneous medical conditions. However, common features of chronic illnesses relate to the long-term duration and frequent, sometimes extended, absences from school experienced by children and young people. According to the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and Education Scotland (2013), prolonged ill-health is considered to constitute a barrier to learning, resulting in additional support needs. Physical and psychological effects such as tiredness, pain and impaired concentration are often experienced by children and young people (Shaw & McCabe, 2008).

Following a humanistic, person-centred approach, children and young people aged between eight and fifteen with a chronic illness were interviewed using a semi-structured format. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach to data analysis, the research sought to identify what children and young people experienced to be barriers and supports in relation to their continued engagement with learning. Findings suggested that participants felt their engagement with learning was affected due to both the physical and psychological effects of illness. This is examined using Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. Regarding identity, participants reported a sense of loss regarding previous abilities, prior to the onset of illness. Participants also reported challenges regarding identity and control within their lives and this is examined in relation to Rotter’s (1971) theory regarding locus of control. Challenges regarding catching up and keeping up with school work emerged. These are discussed in relation to support within school and out-of-school education.
Participants highlighted supportive factors such as maintaining communication between home and school, using information technology and being provided with interactive, differentiated learning tasks. Findings suggest implications for the types of support provided by schools and possible roles for educational psychologists. These include: using frameworks to facilitate multi-agency meetings, sharing knowledge and applications of psychological theory and advocating for children and young people.

Exploring young people's awareness, consideration and attitudes towards the consequences of sexting.

David Walsh

Abstract

The pervasiveness of social media increasingly facilitating human interactions presents society with both opportunities and challenges. Interactions previously achieved in person can now be realized using virtual platforms. One evolution of an interaction of this kind is sexting which involves the creation and transfer of sexual images between people. Prevalence estimates of sexting amongst young people range between 2.5 – 40% with complex individual, interpersonal and cultural motivational factors influencing participation. There are diverse legal and psychosocial implications which typically arise when an image travels beyond the intended recipient. The young people subsequently affected can experience social isolation, bullying and harassment, with worst cases leading to suicide. Sexting is under-researched, particularly from a qualitative perspective and this study seeks to contribute to the emergent knowledge base. To explore young people’s awareness, consideration and attitudes towards the consequences of sexting five specifically designed vignettes were created. These acted as stimulus materials alongside semi-structured questions across four secondary pupil focus groups. This data was thematically analysed in line with the areas of investigation. Participants demonstrated a thorough awareness of largely negative, potential consequences and expressed that these would generally not be considered when participating in sexting. Their attitudes towards the consequences of sexting were also largely negative however there were some positive and more neutral sentiments articulated. Mapping the results onto previous literature facilitated an insight into the motivations for participation with trust being a significant factor. The impact sexting is increasingly having on young people requires those supporting and working with children and young people to research and respond appropriately. Acknowledging these needs this thesis aims to inform the development of educational and training resources for young people in relation to sexting.

An exploration of pupil mindsets towards Maths and experiences of ability grouping

Aisling Campion

Abstract

Maths is important in everyday life as it equips us with the skills we need to analyse information, solve problems, assess risk and make informed decisions. However, for many pupils Maths is a subject which can make them feel both helpless and unmotivated. Some researchers argue that ability grouping, or ‘setting’, is negatively impacting on the experience of learning Maths and contributes to the development of fixed mindsets and poor academic self-concepts. The current study took place in one high school in a Scottish local authority. It aimed to gather the views of secondary school pupils on their experiences of being ‘set’ for Maths and to explore their mindsets towards Maths. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were utilised to gather data. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to enable an in-depth, meaningful exploration of individual experiences. The analysis
led to the construction of five themes: View of Maths, Mindset, Classroom Environment, View of Sets, and Progression. The researcher’s interpretations of the findings suggest that pupils view setting as being required for meeting individual learning needs. However, they also desire more interactive and collaborative learning during Maths lessons. The findings suggest that participants who experience being in top sets for Maths demonstrate growth mindsets, positive academic self-concepts and have a desire to remain in their Maths set. Individuals who have experienced being in lower sets show more of a fixed mindset, negative academic self-concept and desire to move up sets. However, the data shows that those with fixed mindsets also desire to be challenged in their learning. The difficulties associated with assessing mindsets are discussed as well as implications for school ability grouping practices. The role of Educational Psychologists in supporting schools in raising attainment in numeracy and Maths is also considered. Limitations of the study are acknowledged and suggestions for future research are provided.

**Participation and Inclusion**

An evaluation of the use of growth mindset workshops to promote self-esteem and positive approaches to learning within primary school pupils

*Tracey Ross*

**Abstract**

The current study evaluated the impact of a series of Growth mindset workshops as an intervention for promoting self-esteem and positive approaches to learning in 19 primary school pupils (aged 9-11 years). A critical realist stance enabled the use of mixed methods to gather pupil’s views using Dweck’s theories of intelligence scale, Myself as a learner scale (MALS) and the Stirling Children’s wellbeing scale (SCWBS), in addition to workshop activities and a pupil focus group (n=8). Class teacher and parents’ perceptions were captured using a questionnaire and a children’s learning power rating scale. Quantitative data were analysed using paired Student’s t-tests. Qualitative data from the workshop activities were categorised and coded using content analysis. The results of the pupil rating scales revealed only a few pupils with significant increases in their approaches to learning and self-esteem, however the majority of pupils considered themselves as having a growth mindset before the workshops began and the baseline MALS and SCWBS scores were quite high. However, the qualitative data from the workshop tasks and the focus group, as well as the teacher’s perceptions of the pupils, suggested that there were marked positive changes in the pupils’ approaches and motivation towards learning following the workshop intervention. Some positive changes were also noted by parents at home however the small sample size prevented analysis of data. These results show that educating pupils about growth mindsets through the use of interactive workshops has the potential to shift the beliefs and attitudes of primary school pupils towards a more intrinsically motivated approach to learning. By effectively supporting practitioners to foster growth mindsets in pupils, through the use of workshop interventions, psychological services can make an important contribution to supporting teaching and learning, and subsequently raising attainment. Further research is required to determine if and how these changes can be sustained.

**Supporting numeracy at home: A phenomenological exploration of female caregivers’ experiences and perceptions following attendance at numeracy workshop intervention designed to support children’s numeracy learning at home**

*Kathryn Cochrane*

**Abstract**

Many children experience difficulties with mathematics, which can often cause major practical, educational and functional difficulties later in life (Holmes & Dowker, 2013). Despite
a strong body of research linking parental involvement to the educational achievement of children (Hattie, 2008), the nature of effective parent intervention to maximise children’s numeracy learning at home has received limited attention. This study aims to address this research gap. Three numeracy workshops were designed by the researcher using an up to date account of evidence based practice and theory. These workshops aimed to equip individuals with relevant skills and information to maximise children’s numeracy learning at home. Particular attention was given to the cognitive and affective components of children’s learning. The intervention was evaluated using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how five female caregivers perceived and conceptualised their experience following attendance at the workshops; this was completed through a detailed analysis of personal change. The findings illustrate that the content, delivery and facilitation of this intervention played a crucial role in supporting enhanced parental self-efficacy, as well as promoting a greater sense of parental ownership over children’s learning and in the acquisition of home numeracy skills and activities. This research has important implications for EP practice. It highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach to parental numeracy interventions that consider the cognitive and affective components of children’s learning. Furthermore, that close attention should be paid to building confidence in the parental capabilities as well as reducing common pressures to maintain idealistic parenting roles.

**Increasing engagement in pupils with complex additional support needs through video consultation**

*Katherine Vezza*

**Abstract**

Pupils with complex additional support needs can challenge highly skilled education professionals with unique profiles of need and inconsistent attainment. Literature highlights the unmet development needs of staff working in the specialist sector and the limitations of curricular frameworks to engage these pupils in meaningful learning (Carpenter, Egerton, Cockbill, Bloom, Fotheringham, Rawson & Thistlethwaite, 2015; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). The Engagement Profile and Scale was developed as an intervention to facilitate greater engagement in learning for pupils with complex additional support needs by de-constructing engagement and transferring the learning from high engagement activities to low engagement activities and recording progress. This research adapts the Engagement Profile and Scale for use as a video consultation tool to reflect the evidence base of video analysis as a teacher development tool and the consultative work of Educational Psychologists working in the specialist sector. The effectiveness of this adapted tool is explored as well as the impact on teacher practice and the potential for systemic uptake. Action research methodology was employed to deliver this intervention with 4 pupils over a 5 week period. Data was gathered from engagement scores as well as from a post intervention teacher focus group. Engagement increased for all pupils over the intervention. Teachers identified an impact on their attunment, assessment and reflective skills as well as an increased awareness of pupil engagement and suggested wider uptake of the EPaS could facilitate intervention, assessment and development work. Results are discussed with reference to the literature. Implications for specialist education, EP practice and limitations were discussed.
Teacher Development

Empowering teachers to implement growth mindset

Fiona S Seaton

Abstract

Teachers are the bedrock of education. Within the literature there is growing evidence which emphasises the impact of teacher practice on outcomes of students, such as wellbeing and academic achievement (Hattie, 2014). The aims of this research were two-fold; firstly it sought to design, implement and evaluate, a training programme aimed at supporting growth mindset and attempting to investigate a model to effect systemic change, secondly it sought to contribute to implicit theory research (Dweck, 2000; 2006) by investigating the immediate and short term impact of implicit theory training on teachers. Adopting a pragmatic epistemological stance a mixed methods research design was employed. Six training sessions were conducted across two phases. The first phase consisted of an initial training session where 37 participants attended. Phase two consisted of five sessions attended by 17 participants who were identified as mindset champions. A paired t test, repeated measures ANOVA and wilcoxon signed rank test were used to analyse quantitative measures and a thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative measures. Results found a statistically significant shift between pre and post measures of mindset, which was maintained three months after training concluded. Participants indicated strengths of the approach included the drive for improvement, leadership and peer support; worries included resistance to change, impact and knowledge. Evaluation of the training programme indicated changes in participant’s practice. The researcher argues that key themes identified provided evidence to support the impact of a bespoke six session training programme on systemic change and on the immediate and short term follow up of participants’ mindsets. The research discussed limitations, such as, the small sample size and the use of self-reported measures. Reflections on the implications for future EP practice were also considered i.e. the role of the EP in supporting systemic change through training.

Building collective teacher efficacy in schools: A case study investigation in authority

Gillian Allan

Abstract

An area of interest emerging within educational research focuses on understanding how those within a school contribute towards achieving outcomes and raising attainment. Collective efficacy - the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole can have a positive effect on students - is underpinned by Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. Within the literature reviewed, the concept of collective teacher efficacy was found to be a powerful construct in the development of effective schools, and has been positively associated with student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Whilst much of the research conducted in this field has taken a quantitative approach, the current study has used a qualitative method in order to build a richer picture of the varying perceptions of collective ability. Assuming a social constructivist stance informed the researcher’s perceptions in outlining the focus and aims of this study, and in designing the most appropriate method to capture the views of staff effectively. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants, comprising of eight class teachers, one principal teacher and a head teacher from school X. The intention was to explore the views and experiences of staff to develop an understanding of the method of teacher collaboration that had been developed in school X, and consider how this impacted on classroom practice, as well as considering the contributing factors that have supported the enhancement of efficacy beliefs in this school.
Results were analysed and interpreted using Braun & Clarke's thematic analysis (2006), with three broad themes identified: Opportunities for professional learning and development, faculty relationships, and shared vision. The results of this study are discussed and limitations, implications for practice and suggestions for further research are considered.

How do teachers ‘Get it Right for Every Child’? An exploration of how a school meets the wellbeing needs of its pupils using a staff self-evaluation tool.

Sommer Cheyne

Abstract

The focus of this research project is pupil wellbeing with the main aim to explore how a school meets the wellbeing needs of its pupils using a self-evaluative tool developed by the Scottish Government (2014). A subsidiary aim was to evaluate how useful staff found the self-evaluative tool for reflecting on professional practice. This topic merited exploration due to the national and local emphasis placed on improving child, and therefore pupil, wellbeing through the national approach Getting it Right for Every Child, and is one of the key priorities of the National Improvement Framework (2016). The included literature review highlights some of the factors which influence wellbeing in schools and the theoretical underpinnings of wellbeing are explored. Literature on reflective practice is also included.

A critical realist epistemology was adopted initially, developing to that of social constructivism as the project progressed. Information was gathered from teaching staff within one primary school. World cafés and focus groups collected qualitative data from staff. Data was triangulated with pupil focus group qualitative data. The subsidiary aim was investigated through a feedback form on the effectiveness of the tool using mixed methods. Data was analysed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step framework and descriptive statistics.

The findings are presented and discussed with regards to the existing evidence base of pupil wellbeing and reflective practice. The results indicated that pupil wellbeing reaches beyond the Scottish Government’s wellbeing indicators. On evaluation of the tool, staff found it a worthwhile exercise highlighting that it allowed them to reflect upon their practices to meet wellbeing whilst undertaking the exercise, and to a lesser extent after using the tool indicating issues with sustainability for this one-off exercise. The study concludes with the limitations of the study, implications for future research as well as future implications for EP practice.

An evaluation of blended learning as a flexible approach to delivering continual professional development: better relationships, better learning, better behaviour in X Council Educational Psychology Service

Kathryn Iddon

Abstract

Government legislation and policy underpin all aspects of X Council EPS in meeting the needs of children and young people. Key national drivers in the areas of ‘Closing the gap’ and supporting learners with social and emotional needs are underpinned by the Scottish Government’s guidance: Better Relationships, Better Learning Better Behaviour (BRBLBB). X Council’s commitment to meeting its obligations to all learners has led to a multi-agency strategic plan of the same name. Part of the strategy is to deliver effective Continual Professional Development (CPD) to those who work with children and young people. X Council EPS identified the course as being a possibility for a blended learning approach. This would reduce the 8hour commitment required to deliver or receive the course. This study is a formative evaluation of the blended learning model of Better Relationship, Better Learning,
Better Behaviour to ascertain the efficacy and equity of the approach. The study adopts a mixed methods approach to gather information relating to participants experiences of the course and possible impact on their practice. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation data was gathered from X Council pro forma. Teachers and other professionals complete pro forma on a voluntary basis immediately after CPD courses to inform improvements in CPD experiences. A focus group of participants from each model of delivery was carried out. Participants were volunteers who had participated as part of a whole school cohort in X Council's BRBLBB course. A thematic analysis was carried out on the rich qualitative data. It was found that the two models provided an equitable experience and outcomes for education staff and that a blended learning approach could be a viable model of CPD delivery in the service. Criticisms of the two approaches were very different and warrant further investigation to remove barriers. Limitations include: only one pilot school and no data for other sectors. Future research is considered. Implications for EP practice include ensuring the readiness of the EPS to embrace technology in EP practice.