Critical Agency and SEBD Pupils: Narratives from a Specialist Provision Classroom in England

Student Dissertation

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Abstract [Word Count: 94]

This research utilises Critical Theory to offer a way of conceptualising the school exclusion of pupils who are diagnosed with 'SEBD' (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties), currently known as 'SEMH' (social, emotional and mental health needs). An emergent narrative approach will be applied to allow SEBD pupils and teachers from a specialist school in Northern England to share their stories using a narrative timeline. The proposal recommends the concepts of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Agency, to explore the value they could have in improving the educational experiences of SEBD pupils.
Introduction [Word Count: 977]

The focus of this research proposal is the exclusion of pupils with a diagnosis of Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). Pupils diagnosed with SEBD are the most likely group of pupils in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) category to be excluded because of their challenging behaviour (DFE, 2021). Whilst the DFE (2014a) uses the term SEMH (social, emotional and mental health needs) to refer to this group of pupils, this proposal will use the SEBD term to explore the relevance of behaviour to the exclusion rates of pupils. It is acknowledged, though, that labelling can be seen as problematic, and this will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this proposal.

The problematisation of school exclusion originated from semi-structured interviews conducted in the first Inclusive Pathway module of this study in which participants (mainstream teachers) disclosed that they held negative perceptions of SEBD pupils. They stated that they often feared pupils with this label as they had not acquired sufficient training in meeting pupils’ needs. This was a relevant feature in the literature as Caslin (2019) and James and Fox (2016) presented SEBD pupils as the most feared group of pupils and recognised that perspectives towards them are often negative. These perspectives shapes how the teachers respond to pupils and holds the individual pupils responsible for their behaviour. Such perceptions can lead to the reinforcement of their challenging behaviour.

To explore the research problem of school exclusion rates of SEBD pupils, this dissertation will draw on a Critical Theory Paradigm, in which reality and knowledge are shaped by social, cultural and political influences. To investigate the impact of this label on the educational experiences of SEBD pupils, this proposal intends to look beyond the individual to understand the wider influences on their behaviour and subsequent exclusion. As such, the concept of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Agency will be explored in Chapter 3 to highlight this research problem as not only an issue related to inclusive practice but also social justice. The work of Freire (1972;1974) has been influential in understanding the relevance of social justice issues in this proposal as it highlighted how school exclusion can be a causal factor in the reproduction of social inequalities.
The concept of Critical Agency was deemed relevant to this proposal as literature from McCluskey et al., (2016) presented pupils with SEBD as having a fixed future life trajectory because of their exclusion from school. The conceptualising of Critical Agency in Chapter 3 led to the recognition that increasing an individual's sense of agency could support them in overcoming social and cultural inequalities, such as school exclusion. Defined by McLaren (1995), Critical Agency is seen as the ability of an individual to decide on their own goals based on their social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, they must be able to act in a manner that aligns with their values to meet these goals. Critical Agency is relevant to SEBD pupils, as their goals are often decided for them based on the needs of the dominant group in society. These goals are often irrelevant to the contextual needs of the pupils and can lead to pupils disengaging from their education.

To ensure pupils are given agency in this research, they will be asked to participate and share their experiences of education over time. Pupils will be asked to share their narratives in the form of a timeline to elicit insights in relation to the main research question of this proposal: ‘To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom?’

The literature explored in Chapter 2 of this proposal, and in previous modules, led to the recognition that there is a gap in research that incorporates the perspectives of both pupils with SEBD and their teachers. A limitation of current research is that it often does not question the political systems and societal power relations that have led to the taken-for-granted assumptions many teachers hold around SEBD pupils. By adapting the research to include teachers as participants, the research intends to elicit their narratives to gain insights related to the second research question: ‘What are the influences that have impacted the perceptions teachers in specialist schools have of pupils with SEBD?’

The proposed research setting is a specialist school in Northern England where the researcher is employed. Twelve pupils with a diagnosis of SEBD attend the setting and have been excluded from their mainstream school because of their persistent challenging behaviour. The research setting employs four female teachers and is part of an Academy Trust which implements its policies and curriculum based on The National Curriculum (DFE, 2014b).
To gain the insights from both pupils and teachers, the emergent narrative methodology of this proposal will utilise the Critical Theory Paradigm to let individuals share their candid stories. Valid knowledge and truth will be determined by the individual to give them agency over their own experiences and the way they share this with the researcher. Narrative timelines will be co-constructed to allow for potentially deeper insights into the lived experiences of the participants to increase the validity of this research. The narratives will be analysed using a Critical Theory analysis method (outlined in Chapter 5) and participants will be involved in the process to ensure their truth is portrayed. Giving participants this sense of agency is intended to empower them to share their stories.

The subsequent chapters will explore topic related literature that has been synthesised in addition to literature related to the conceptual framing of this proposal. Literature will be presented that justifies the methodological approach of the proposed research. The proposal will then outline the key decisions in choosing a narrative methodology and how the research has been informed by the previous extended reviews of literature in the field of inclusive practice linked to SEBD pupils.
**Part A: Extended Review of the Literature**

**Chapter 2: The Literature Review** [Word Count: 3496]

The following chapter will provide a synthesis of literature and research relevant to the research problem: ‘the exclusion of pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)’. The literature has been synthesised to identify themes related to teacher perceptions of pupils and the impact of such perspectives on the agency of pupils. Furthermore, this chapter will explore how Critical Pedagogy could be used to increase the Critical Agency of SEBD pupils.

**2.1 The Literature Review Process**

Drawing on the Critical Theory Paradigm of this research proposal, literature and research studies have been selected as they are relevant to exploring themes of social justice, inclusion and teacher perspectives that impact SEBD pupils. Before discussing the key findings from the literature synthesis, it is beneficial to first define the key terms used in the Boolean search process which were 'agency', 'inclusive practice' and 'SEBD'.

In terms of inclusive practice, this research proposal recognises inclusion as a process for all pupils to actively participate in their education. This draws on the definition used by Booth and Ainscow:

> The processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.

(2002, p.3).

Utilising this view of inclusion allows for an individual’s social and cultural contexts to be taken into account.

The term agency refers to the definition used by McLaren (1995) that perceives Critical Agency as an individual’s awareness of societal influences over their taken-
for-granted assumptions in order to challenge inequalities in society. To do this, Freire (1974) suggests a Critical Pedagogy where individuals can construct meaningful knowledge in education and gain the skills to improve their life circumstances outside of their education. This links to the above definition of inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002) as it recognises the need to include an individual's cultural and social contexts in their educational experiences.

To define the SEBD label, it is worth exploring the many forms the label has taken and these include 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' (EBD). This has since been adapted to include the social element of behaviour difficulties with the term 'SEBD'. More recently, the Department for Education has changed the label to exclude the use of behaviour and include mental health difficulties with 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' (SEMH) being used as the label currently (DFE, 2014a).

The SEMH diagnosis was seen as a recognition that policies and practices were moving away from behavioural discourses toward policies and practices that recognised mental health needs. However, for this group of pupils, emphasis is still often placed on their challenging behaviour. Norwich and Eaton (2015) recognised that teachers continue to place individual blame on the pupil for their behaviour rather than recognise the wider influences that can cause pupils to display such behaviours. Furthermore, The DFE (2021) found that the main reason for the exclusion of SEMH pupils was the persistent challenging behaviour they displayed. This suggests that although the label may have changed, the perspectives toward those with SEBD might not have altered in the same way. The literature search results also highlighted the continued emphasis on behaviour as the term SEBD yielded significantly more results in comparison to SEMH. It is for this reason that the term SEMH was discounted from the literature search process and SEBD was chosen instead.

Using the terms defined above, searches were conducted in multiple academic databases to ensure an adequate level of coverage of both quantitative and qualitative studies. The literature chosen was set in a timeframe of the past ten years as recommended by Costley et al., (2010). In some instances, studies will be
supported by background literature outside of the ten-year timeframe to ensure in-depth coverage of issues over time. A additional filter was added so that all articles were peer-reviewed to ensure valid articles were selected that had been deemed ethical by peers in the field. The literature search and the findings below are based on selected literature that intends to provide a critical lens on the agency of those with SEBD.

2.2 The Labelling Debate

It is useful to explore the labelling of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to investigate the potential impact this has on teacher perceptions. Often in relation to SEND pupils, labelling is criticised because of the negative connotations and stigmatisation it can lead to. Using semi-structured interviews Kelly and Norwich (2004) sought the perspectives of pupils with regard to their SEND label. They found that pupils had mixed views on the use of labelling and often believed that labelling led to stereotyping and negative preconceptions of individuals. This potentially limits the expectations society has of these individuals. Although, the pupils did also recognise that on some occasions labelling can grant them extra support and help towards their learning goals.

The tensions on the use of labelling are also present in more recent literature. Stanforth and Rose (2020) and Armstrong and Hallet (2012) argue against the use of labelling as it can lead to negative perceptions, particularly of teachers toward pupils with SEBD. Both studies highlighted how labels are often permanent in nature and cause pupils to believe they cannot overcome their inequalities. They suggest labelling pupils often takes away the need to consider the social, cultural and political factors that influence both learning and behaviour.

There are some instances where the use of labelling can be perceived as beneficial in providing extra support and resources for those with SEBD. Snowling (2013) identified that the labelling of pupils, specifically in this study as dyslexic, can allow for individualised tailored support and interventions in school. Such interventions are often seen to support the children in accessing the expected standard of learning and behaviour. The intention is to reintegrate pupils into their mainstream class once
they have overcome their barriers to learning. Snowing’s (2013) study does not offer an insight into the benefits of such resources on pupils with SEBD. Furthermore, the study draws on the deficit model of inclusion, which views some groups as lacking the skills required to function in the dominant group in society.

Labelling pupils often leads to pupils being educated separately from their peers as a means to maintain the status quo in the mainstream classroom. This has the potential to socially isolate pupils and can reinforce the stigma attached to their SEND label. Mowat (2015) and a recent case study from Ofsted (2021) highlight this potential negative implication in terms of the reproduction of social inequalities. Mowat's (2015) qualitative study found that educating pupils away from their peers often highlights the difference between pupils and positions them as having a condition that needs to be fixed and removed. Ofsted's (2021), research indicated that pupils with a SEND label often spend significant amounts of time away from their peers in interventions which can cause social difficulties for SEND pupils. This indicates that policies are often based on a deficit model that reinforces the social isolation of SEND pupils.

2.3 Perceptions of the SEBD Label

Such critiques of the use of labelling are also pertinent to the SEBD label as pupils are potentially facing inequalities because of the preconceived opinions linked to their label. Narratives of pupils from a study conducted by Nind et al., (2012) recognised that pupils often felt pre-judged for their SEBD label. This led to them being treated negatively before their teacher had developed a relationship with them. Consequently, the participants felt victimised and often silenced in their setting, and blamed their teachers for their behaviour. It should be noted that the participants were reflecting on their previous mainstream setting rather than their current specialist provision.

Research which aimed to seek the perspectives of teachers did not challenge the views the pupil participants of the Nind et al., (2012) study held. Armstrong and Hallet (2012) conducted an exploratory analysis of teachers based on their perceptions of pupils with SEBD. The findings revealed that teachers had
preconceived ideas about pupils' social and cultural backgrounds as they felt that pupils with SEBD often came from low-income households where they had little parental input. This frequently led to teachers holding pupils responsible for their behaviour.

A literature review conducted by Poulou (2015) draws parallels with Armstrong and Hallet (2012) as it highlighted that teachers of preschool age pupils felt that the social and emotional needs of pupils were because of a lack of parental support. This view led to teachers abandoning their responsibility to support pupils in this area and frequently prejudging pupils rather than understanding their needs. The preconceived ideas teachers had, meant they found it difficult to create and maintain trusting relationships with pupils (Poulou, 2015). Armstrong and Hallet (2012) and Poulou (2015) found that this often led to pupils displaying further challenging behaviour, which in some cases led to pupils being excluded from their setting. This suggests that teacher perceptions are potentially negatively impacting pupil behaviour. Yet placing the responsibility on individual teachers for this does not take into consideration the social, cultural and political systems that influence their perspectives.

Parsons and Howlett's (1996) study led to the initial problematisation of the wider influences that impact teacher perceptions of pupils with SEBD. The study identified that often pupils with SEBD were seen as problematic by their teachers because of the deficit model in society. They argued that excluding pupils with SEBD was a device used by those in power to maintain a status quo in school and encourage conformity to society's expectations. Despite the research being older, Parsons and Howlett's (1996) work is still relevant today as shown by the DFE (2021) exclusion rates. Currently, pupils labelled as SEBD are fifteen percent more likely to be excluded than their non-SEND peers (DFE, 2021). This reveals the longstanding nature of this problem and the need to understand the influences on teachers perspectives that are potentially causing inequalities for SEBD pupils.

Current research in the field demonstrates that little has changed since the work of Parson and Howlett (1996) as research from Mowat (2015) indicates that the SEBD label is often used to marginalise those whose behaviour poses a threat to the
education of the dominant group. Mowat (2015) draws on two qualitative case studies to argue that the label of SEBD could be socially constructed as a means to signify that those who show challenging behaviour are different. Once diagnosed, most teachers do not challenge this label and instead accept the associated stigma of the label as the definition of who pupils are.

Armstrong et al., (2015) recognised the apparent lack of training teachers have in understanding the social, cultural and political influences over the process of labelling pupils. The authors indicated that training was often linked to removing any deficiencies from the individual rather than specific knowledge to understand the complex needs of the SEBD label. The study also recognised that training was not readily available, especially for those in initial teacher training. The researchers claimed that this may be because pupils with SEBD are seen to challenge the dominant culture and training was, therefore, based on eliminating challenging behaviour rather than understanding it.

A similar account is provided by the quantitative research of Gibbs and Powell (2012) who explored the perspectives of teachers in supporting those with behavioural needs. The study does not offer any qualitative data in relation to this research topic; however, it calls for training that gives teachers an awareness of the influences that have led to the perspectives teachers have of SEBD pupils. The similarities of Gibbs and Powell (2012) to the study conducted by Armstrong et al., (2015) suggest that increased training could encourage teachers to challenge their assumed beliefs about those with SEBD to better support them with their social and emotional needs.

Hajdukova et al., (2014) used the narratives of SEBD pupils in New Zealand to highlight the benefits of training teachers to increase pupil agency. Whilst the study is set in a different geographical location, it has been included to identify the benefits other countries have found in training teachers to support those diagnosed with SEBD. The study revealed how the staff who had questioned their taken-for-granted assumptions felt that they were able to relate to pupils more effectively. Consequently, pupils felt that they could trust the staff and were able to form
meaningful relationships with them. This led to pupils having opportunities to challenge how they had previously been perceived in mainstream education.

The research related to the perspectives of teachers demonstrated that they often hold negative assumptions about pupils and it has been argued that often these assumptions are influenced by the social deficit model. As previously discussed, there is a lack of training for teachers that would encourage them to challenge preconceived assumptions behind their perspectives. Such training could inspire teachers to move from inclusive practices based on the deficit model toward practices that recognise the social and cultural needs of SEBD pupils.

2.4 Pupil Agency

Pupils with SEBD are often perceived as having reduced life choices because of their increased likelihood of school exclusion (DFE, 2021). This perception stipulates that the SEBD label is fixed and pupils have limited abilities in overcoming their barriers and challenging their label. This could lead to pupils having a limited sense of agency, as they are unable to influence their knowledge construction and have input in their life choices. This is potentially reinforcing the behaviour of pupils with SEBD. Studies also suggest that SEBD pupils have limited agency over their social and economic opportunities in later life. A mixed method research study from McCluskey et al., (2016) highlighted how SEBD pupils believe their future trajectory is fixed and that they have limited agency in overcoming any inequalities. This study, alongside a recent study (Caslin, 2019) recognised the potential impact this has on pupil behaviour as it can cause them to disengage from school as they believe that their trajectory cannot be altered.

Studies have found that when pupils are given input into their educational experiences, they have the potential to develop a sense of agency over decisions related to their education and future life. Caslin (2019) has demonstrated the value of pupil agency in making decisions about their educational setting. The study drew on case studies to offer insights from pupils outside of mainstream schooling and found that giving pupils agency over their knowledge acquisition led to them being more engaged; this resulted in fewer instances of extreme behaviour. Both Caslin's study
and another (older) study (Sellman, 2009) used grounded theory to give participants agency over the methodological approach. The participants of both studies stated that they used behaviours to communicate that the curriculum was irrelevant to their social and cultural contexts. By listening to the participants, the researchers were able to suggest changes to practice that stemmed from the pupils, and potentially increased pupils' agency in their setting.

Using an interpretive approach, James and Fox (2016) explored the positive narratives SEBD pupils might present. They do not offer an opinion on changes needed to the curriculum but their study showed how pupils have positive resources, which could be drawn on to improve their setting. Like Caslin (2019) and Sellman (2009), James and Fox (2016) highlight the value of giving pupils agency to enable them to shape the curriculum to be relevant to their contexts. This is advocated for by Booth and Ainscow (2002) in their definition of inclusive practice.

Using a longitudinal qualitative study, O'Riordan (2015) explored the impact pupil agency had on the post-school experiences of those labelled as SEBD. The study revealed how learners who had been given a voice in key decisions about their transition of leaving school felt a sense of agency over their life trajectory. This in turn encouraged them to make decisions which led to increased social and economic opportunities. The study is small scale and caution should be taken when transferring these findings to other settings, but the findings highlight that pupils should be given opportunities to engage in problem-solving activities to equip them with skills to actively participate in society. The sense of agency pupils gained from being involved in this type of curriculum allowed the participants to find employment in professions they valued (O'Riordan, 2015). This indicates the value of engaging SEBD pupils in problem-solving activities that are relevant to their social and cultural contexts to ensure they have agency over key decisions in their future life.

2.5 Critical Pedagogy and Critical Agency

This section intends to explore whether the application of Critical Pedagogy, as advocated for by Freire (1972), can allow SEBD pupils to gain a sense of Critical Agency in their education. According to McLaren (1995), Critical Agency moves
beyond individuals having the agency to act in a manner that society expects towards one where they can act in line with their values and goals. This aligns with the definition of inclusion stated by Booth and Ainscow (2002), as it recognises the need to develop a contextually relevant curriculum.

Critical Pedagogy is a type of emancipatory education that requires individuals to become aware of social inequalities in order to challenge them. Freire (1972;1974) suggests that Critical Pedagogy can give individuals a sense of agency in their education as they are provided with opportunities to critique the socially constructed nature of labelling and the deficit model that led to such labelling. Critical Pedagogy can be difficult to implement in mainstream settings as schools in England are required to follow the National Curriculum (DFE, 2014b). The work of Fobes and Kaufman (2008) showed that many teachers resisted Critical Pedagogy as they did not want to oppose the dominant discourse. Despite the research being older, it could explain why there are limited examples of pupils with SEBD having access to Critical Pedagogy.

Engaging in Critical Pedagogy has proven to be beneficial in allowing SEBD pupils to make transformations to their educational and social experiences. McCloskey’s (2011) case study approach has demonstrated how Critical Pedagogy has been used in Literacy education to support pupils to critique the current systems that marginalise them. The author focuses specifically on reading difficulties and so cannot offer an opinion on the use of Critical Pedagogy with SEBD pupils. The study does, however, offer insights into the benefits of pupils critiquing their label through Critical Literacy which allowed the participants to challenge the stigma associated with their label.

McCloskey’s (2011) findings draw parallels with an (older) study (Yowenza et al., 2009), as both studies advocate for pupils and teacher collaboration to challenge social inequalities. Both studies are conducted outside of England; however, they exemplify how transformations to the educational and social experiences of pupils are possible when they are educated through Critical Pedagogy. This has the potential for pupils to develop a sense of Critical Agency to bring about changes that reflect their values and goals. An implication for practice would be for teachers to
facilitate a curriculum that is relevant to pupils' social and cultural contexts and embeds problem-solving skills. This could provide pupils with a sense of Critical Agency to bring about transformations in their educational experiences and future life opportunities.

2.6 Discussion

The literature review has explored factors that influence the perspectives of teachers in relation to the label of SEBD. The literature identified the socially constructed nature of labelling and the influence the deficit model has on the perspectives of teachers toward pupils with SEBD. Furthermore, the literature acknowledged the advantages of additional teacher training to improve understanding of the SEBD label and how teachers could support pupils with SEBD. It was, however, evident that such training is not readily available.

Research in the field highlighted the positive effects of listening to those with SEBD. It suggested that pupils have positive contributions towards improving inclusive practice when given the opportunity to shape the curriculum. This aligns with the key concepts of this research project as pupils have a sense of Critical Agency over their knowledge construction in a culturally relevant curriculum. The literature presented the use of Critical Pedagogy as beneficial to giving SEBD pupils Critical Agency over their education and future life choices. By providing pupils with opportunities to critique their social circumstances, pupils could challenge the perceptions linked to their SEBD label. This could lead to changes in practice where pupils are given the skills to participate as active members of society.

The proposed research study has evolved out of the synthesis of literature associated with the topic of this dissertation. The problematisation of the impact of teacher perspectives on behaviour has led to the conclusion that further exploration is needed to uncover the origins of the taken-for-granted assumptions some teachers hold. To explore this the research design will draw on the Critical Theory Paradigm and explore the narratives of both teachers and pupils to understand the impact teacher perceptions have on a pupil's Critical Agency. The following chapter
intends to explore the concepts of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Agency to provide a conceptual framework for this research proposal.

In the field of social justice research, the work of Freire (1972;1974) has been influential in understanding the relevance of an individual’s sense of agency to their educational opportunities. Poveda and Roberts (2018) highlight how Freire’s Critical Pedagogy (1972) supports educators in exploring social justice issues with their pupils to bring an awareness of social inequalities. The concept of Critical Agency will provide a framework in this proposal to explore how SEBD pupils can use their self-awareness to make changes to both their education and position in society.

3.1 Critical Pedagogy and Paulo Freire

This section will outline the concepts of Critical Pedagogy that could be applied to the educational experiences of pupils with SEBD. It is beneficial to explore the concept of Banking Education, in the first instance, to recognise how this may align with current educational policies. Freire (1972) identifies Banking Education to be a style of education in which knowledge is decided on by dominant discourses in society. It positions the teacher as having power over the pupil, as they are bestowing knowledge upon them. Pupils’ own knowledge is deemed irrelevant. This type of education favours the dominant group and discounts the social and cultural needs of those outside of this. For those with SEBD, it could be argued that their behaviour is outside of the expected norms of the dominant group. This potentially leads to an increased risk of exclusion for this group of pupils, as their behaviour is seen as a challenge to the current educational system.

Banking Education can be perceived as a means to limit the ability of individuals to overcome oppressive systems. Freire, (1972) highlights that this approach takes away the need for pupils to collaborate and problem solve which leaves them lacking in the skills needed to challenge society. This indicates that those in power could be using marginalisation as a way to ensure non-dominant groups are given limited opportunities to critique and challenge inequalities in society. In the context of pupils with SEBD, they are often excluded because of their behaviour, which is potentially limiting the opportunities they have to develop the skills needed to function in society. Such practices could limit pupils’ sense of agency at school and in their future life trajectory.
Banking Education could also limit the sense of agency teachers have over their pedagogical practices. Lasky (2005) has examined the limitations teachers feel they have in gaining agency in their classroom. The research highlighted that teachers using a standardised curriculum felt they had little control over the pedagogy they applied and this caused them to deposit information in pupils rather than collaborating with them. This indicates that teachers lack the agency to implement a curriculum that is relevant and engaging to pupils with SEBD and this is potentially reinforcing their challenging behaviour. When considering a pedagogic response to meet the needs of pupils with SEBD, teachers should aim to involve pupils in the construction of knowledge and decisions about their educational experiences to ensure they are active participants.

Having defined the concept of Banking Education, it is worth exploring the concept of Critical Pedagogy as an emancipatory education that opposes many elements of Banking Education. Freire (1972) suggests Critical Pedagogy as an approach where learners can engage in problem-posing pedagogy and epistemological curiosity with their teachers. The pedagogical approach encourages individuals to engage in problem-solving activities to raise their self-awareness and awareness of the world. Once individuals have this awareness, they could critique society in relation to their social and cultural contexts to transform oppressive systems (Freire, 1972).

Critical Pedagogy should give teachers the freedom to implement their own pedagogical approach and work with their pupils to develop a relevant curriculum. According to Freire (1972), when a teacher becomes the facilitator they can collaborate with pupils to determine which knowledge is delivered and how this would be of relevance to social action. Teachers and their pupils can then develop the skills needed to collaborate in social action against inequalities in society.

Research in the field has demonstrated how Critical Pedagogy can be applied to a range of educational practices to facilitate learning where pupils can critique society. Fobes and Kauffman (2008) identified how they applied Critical Pedagogy to their Sociology lessons, using problem-posing activities to develop learner curiosity and prompt pupils to be active participants in knowledge construction. The researchers recognised the benefits of the pedagogy in increasing pupils' sense of agency and permitting them to critique the inequalities in society.
Fobes and Kauffman (2008) recognise a potential issue when implementing Critical Pedagogy as it encourages teachers to collaborate with pupils without considering the existing power dynamics in education. Often pupils are conditioned to see teachers as authoritative figures and may resist the notion that their teachers are co-constructors of knowledge. Pupils may perceive them as being part of the institutional system that has power over them. This could cause tension when involving pupils in curriculum decisions and can limit the sense of agency pupils feel that they have. To overcome this, Fobes and Kauffman (2008) recommend that teachers use democratic pedagogical practices such as debates and voting to give pupils agency over their classroom experiences. By implementing such practices, they found pupils developed more trusting and mutually respectful relationships with their educators.

As SEBD pupils often struggle to form relationships with their educators, Critical Pedagogy may aid the development of more trusting relationships. Armstrong and Hallet (2012) suggest that a lack of trusting relationships increases school exclusion for SEBD pupils. If teachers were to alter their role in the classroom from having power over pupils to collaborating with them, they may be able to develop meaningful relationships with pupils. Assuming that a change to power dynamics is simple could pose tensions for this group of pupils, as they are unlikely to have experienced this before. Instead, caution should be applied when shifting power relations to pupils with SEBD. Democratic strategies such as the ones applied by Fobes and Kauffman (2008) could be used as a starting point to increase pupils’ agency.

3.2 Perceptions of Agency

The previous section has highlighted the potential Critical Pedagogy has in improving the educational experiences and reducing exclusion rates for those with SEBD. When exploring Freire’s work (1974), the concept of Critical Agency became a recurring theme alongside the concept of Critical Consciousness. Both were requirements of Critical Pedagogy to ensure individuals were given the skills to act in line with their values and beliefs. It is worth exploring the relevance of these concepts in relation to SEBD pupils to recognise if Critical Agency can allow them to overcome their social and educational marginalisation.
To determine the relevance of Critical Agency to this research proposal, it would be beneficial to first explore the theoretical interpretation of agency to recognise how it has evolved. Bandura (2001) has been influential in defining agency as the ability of an individual to influence their functioning and achievements in society. Bandura’s (2001) Social Learning Theory outlines three modes of human agency: ‘Personal Agency’ based on an individual achieving their goals and ‘Collective Agency’ the ability of a group to collaborate in achieving a mutually meaningful goal. The third mode of agency, defined as ‘Proxy Agency’ is of particular relevance as individuals can influence others who have the resources to act on their behalf. This could be applied to the pupils with SEBD who may lack the resources to achieve their goals on an individual level. They could instead potentially use their relationships with teachers to influence them to act on their behalf.

Whilst Bandura’s (2001) work considers human agency, it presumes that this agency is developed without the influence of social and political discourses. Vygotsky (1978) acknowledged these influences in The Sociocultural Theory. The theory explores the dominant narratives that lead to the conditioning of an individual’s beliefs and values (Vygotsky, 1978). Whilst an individual may appear to have achieved a sense of agency, they may be unaware of the narratives that have influenced their initial beliefs and values.

Agency cannot always be deemed as positive, as narratives that shape an individual’s goals can be biased or prejudiced towards certain groups. This is of particular relevance to those who teach pupils with SEBD as their perspectives may be influenced by dominant narratives in society. Recent research from Priestley et al., (2015) found that teachers were often unaware of the discourses that influenced their perspectives. Despite the research being carried out in Scotland, its findings are deemed relevant to the English context of this proposal as it recognises that teachers’ perceptions often align with the dominant narrative (Priestley et al., 2015). Rather than questioning their own or society’s taken-for-granted assumptions, teachers may find it easier to place responsibility on the individual for their behaviour. This could be reinforcing pupil behaviour and could cause their exclusion from their mainstream education. Therefore, research should aim to uncover any
influences on teacher perspectives of SEBD pupils to explore if they are impacting a pupil's sense of agency and their school exclusions.

Critical Agency is recognised as a concept which considers the societal and political narratives that influence an individual's values and beliefs. McLaren (1995) describes Critical Agency as the combination of Critical Consciousness (an individual's awareness of the world) and agency. Freire (1974) demonstrates how applying Critical Pedagogy encourages individuals to participate in an education that raises awareness of hidden agendas and taken-for-granted assumptions in society, which lets them become critically conscious to societal inequalities. When individuals have developed a consciousness, they should critique the dominant narratives to understand the influence they have had on their values (Freire, 1974). This can allow individuals to decide on their own meaningful goals and achievements that are relevant to their social and cultural contexts; thus developing a sense of Critical Agency over key decisions in their life.

Applying the concept of Critical Agency to pupils with SEBD could be beneficial in giving a greater sense of agency to this group of pupils. If pupils are involved in the construction of knowledge, they could develop a culture that challenges taken-for-granted assumptions. The narratives that led to negative perceptions of these pupils could then be critiqued to identify the action needed to change these views. This could encourage pupils to then develop their own value-based goals and demonstrate the positive resources they have in meeting such goals.

Teachers should also be given opportunities to explore their sense of Critical Agency to understand the influences on their perceptions of pupils. Shor (1992) suggests that once teachers are aware of the wider influences over their own beliefs, they can collaborate with pupils to challenge these narratives. This could lead to more trusting relationships between teachers and their pupils, which may allow pupils to develop their sense of Critical Agency in their education.

The pedagogical response to increasing pupils’ sense of Critical Agency would require pupils to engage in Critical Literacy, to explore bias and dominant narratives in literary mediums. This was of benefit to the participants in McCloskey's (2011) research, as participants were able to analyse literary mediums to understand the
way they were portrayed. Critical Literacy would not be sufficient to give pupils a sense of Critical Agency, as pupils would only be aware of social inequalities they face because of their SEBD label. A problem-solving pedagogy would also be required to support pupils in analysing systems which benefit from pupils being diagnosed as having SEBD. Only then would pupils have a sense of Critical Agency that permits them to make changes to their educational setting based on their values and social contexts.

### 3.3 A Critical Paradigm Methodological Approach

This chapter has argued for a definition of agency linked to that of Critical Agency. For SEBD pupils to gain a sense of Critical Agency, they should become aware of the dominant narratives in society that have potentially led to the negative perceptions associated with their label. A Critical Pedagogy approach has been suggested to give SEBD pupils the opportunities to problematise and challenge taken-for-granted perceptions.

It has been suggested that teachers of SEBD pupils hold perceptions of pupils that often lead to their exclusion. The exploration of the concept of Critical Agency has highlighted how teachers often hold these negative perspectives because they are influenced by dominant narratives in society. Further exploration is required to better understand the influence of the perspectives of teachers on SEBD pupils as these narratives could be reinforcing some of the inequalities pupils face.

The concepts of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Agency have similarities to the research paradigm of Critical Theory as they are grounded in the belief that an individual's values are influenced by dominant narratives in society. Costley et al., (2010) recommend a Critical Theory Paradigm for research that intends to draw attention to inequalities to bring about social change and action. This draws parallels with this research, which seeks to uncover the influences that lead to the negative perceptions of teachers that are potentially impacting the Critical Agency of pupils with SEBD.

Drawing on a Critical Theory paradigm, this research acknowledges the political, cultural and social influences on the exclusion of pupils with SEBD. To uncover if
such influences exist, Freire (1972) suggests that research should explore an individual's lived experience. This proposed qualitative research intends to use an emergent narrative methodology to let participants share their stories. Valued knowledge will be determined by the participants in the form of a narrative timeline which participants will co-construct with the researcher. Participants will be included in all elements of the methodology, including the Critical Theory data analysis method and publication of the research. Involving participants throughout the process should develop their sense of Critical Agency over the research and identify the resources they have in contributing to change in their educational setting.
Part B: The Research Proposal

Chapter 4: The Research Proposal [Word Count: 619]

The title of this research project is:

**Critical Agency and SEBD Pupils: Narratives from a Specialist Provision Classroom in England.**

The title incorporates the concept of Critical Agency, (explored in Chapter 3) and the narrative research design (detailed in Chapter 5) that has been chosen to explore the research problem of increased exclusion rates for SEBD pupils.

The critical review of the literature (Chapter 2) examined the influence teacher perspectives have on the behaviour and Critical Agency of pupils with SEBD. The literature highlighted that pupils often displayed challenging behaviour because of the negative perspectives teachers held. These perspectives could be reinforcing the behaviour of pupils with SEBD and could lead to their increased exclusion rates. Nind et al., (2012) identified negative teacher perceptions as the cause of SEBD pupils’ challenging behaviour, which led to the initial problematisation of the impact of teacher perspectives on the agency and exclusion of SEBD pupils.

Research has highlighted that teacher perspectives are often influenced by dominant narratives in society and this can cause teachers to view SEBD pupils negatively. Caslin (2019) and Mowat (2015) indicated that teacher perceptions are influenced by the deficit model of inclusion that positions pupils with SEBD as challenging. The studies suggested that these perspectives could limit the agency of SEBD pupils in overcoming their inequalities because they lack support from their teachers.

The Conceptual Framework of the proposal (Chapter 3) aimed to explore the concept of Critical Agency and its relevance to the research problem. Critical Agency is perceived by McLaren (1995) as being an individual’s ability to develop a self-awareness that leads to meaningful social action. This was deemed relevant to the research problem, as SEBD pupils in the research setting often lack the agency to create their own meaningful goals and are instead encouraged to achieve the predetermined goals of the National Curriculum (DFE, 2014b). This led to the
problematisation that pupils could be demonstrating challenging behaviour as a means to communicate their disengagement with the curriculum. To overcome the issue of pupil disengagement, Critical Pedagogy was recommended to involve pupils in decisions on knowledge construction and increase the sense of Critical Agency they have in their setting.

The final section of the research proposal will outline how an emergent narrative methodology has been shaped to explore the issues of Critical Agency and teacher perceptions in an SEBD specialist school in Northern England. The methodology utilises the Critical Theory paradigm to explore an individual's lived experience. Both teachers and pupils will be asked to contribute to the research by creating a narrative timeline method, used by others in SEBD research (James and Fox, 2016). Using this approach, the research seeks to answer the following research questions:

Question 1: To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom?

Question 2: What are the influences that have impacted the perceptions teachers in specialist schools have of pupils with SEBD?

A Critical Theory approach to data analysis will be utilised to ensure the key themes and findings stem from the participants' experiences and are linked to current theory. Truth in this research will be defined by the individual. Validity and reliability will be achieved if participants are given opportunities to share their own stories in their narrative timeline. To ensure this is possible, The British Educational Research Association (BERA) Guidelines (2018) will be followed to safeguard participants from harm and encourage them to feel comfortable in sharing their stories. The aims of the research will remain transparent throughout to allow participants to judge whether this research would be an appropriate space to share their narratives.
Chapter 5: The Research Design [Word Count: 3225]

This project will draw on the Critical Theory paradigm and will use an emergent narrative methodology to collect co-constructed qualitative data from both SEBD pupils and their teachers. The proposed setting for this research is a specialist school in Northern England where I am employed as a teacher. To explore the reasons behind the exclusion rates of pupils diagnosed with SEBD (DFE, 2021), the research will aim to answer the following questions:

Question 1: To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom?

Question 2: What are the influences that have impacted the perceptions teachers in specialist schools have of pupils with SEBD?

5.1 A Narrative Approach

An emergent narrative methodology has been chosen for this research project as it allows participants to have agency over the knowledge they share. This aligns with my own belief that reality and knowledge should be constructed by individuals to empower them to define their truth. Garvis (2015) highlights how emergent narratives let participants make sense of their own experiences by co-constructing stories with the researcher. This could enable participants to bring about changes to their future narratives.

When developing this project, the theme of political discourses emerged which led to the consideration of using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology to assess policies in the setting. Rahal and Vadeboncoeur (2013) recommend that CDA is beneficial to explore the use of language in policies that are potentially reproducing inequalities. This may be of benefit as it could lead to any political discourses that are influencing the perspectives of teachers to be uncovered. This was deemed to be a separate project based on an interpretive methodology as it may limit the ability of participants to give their truth to the researcher. Whilst CDA may not be relevant to this current project, a suggestion for future research in this
field would be to use CDA to explore whether the political discourse is impacting on the exclusion of pupils with SEBD.

Emergent narrative research has proven to be a more valid and reliable methodology choice when seeking the voice of marginalised groups. By co-constructing data with participants, they may give a greater insight into their lived experiences. Caslin (2019) and an older study by Sellman (2009) used emergent narratives with SEBD pupils so that the data reflected the voices of the participants. This approach enabled participants to develop their own stories over time. As the findings were co-constructed, participants felt comfortable in sharing their stories which allowed them to share their truth candidly.

Co-constructing data with participants may increase the validity of the research as sharing my own experiences could allow for trusting relationships to form between the participant and the researcher, enabling them to share a truthful narrative. Costley et al., (2010) suggest caution when using this approach as data could be influenced by the researcher. To overcome this issue, Garvis (2015) recommends that an audit trail of notes is collated, this will also be carried out as part of this research project. The notes should demonstrate the co-constructed nature of the conversation, which can then be analysed and incorporated into the research findings to allow for transparency (Garvis, 2015). This reflexive approach should make clear the influence of the researcher so that others can judge the validity of the research.

The selected method for this project will be a narrative timeline, a decision which stemmed from discussions with colleagues who suggested the need for a more visual approach because of the needs of the participants. Initially, semi-structured interviews were considered as Burton and Bartlett (2005) recommended the method for qualitative studies so that participants can construct the meaning of their situation. A narrative timeline was instead chosen so that those who struggle to communicate verbally have the option of drawing their story.

James and Fox (2016) used narrative timelines in a similar study to this proposal to elicit the experiences of SEBD pupils, which led to pupils suggesting changes to practice. The study chose an interpretive narrative methodology as the researchers
interpreted the findings to fit their predetermined research themes. This approach does not align with the Critical Theory paradigm as the researcher could impose their taken-for-granted assumptions on the findings, which is a factor that could limit the validity of the research.

Timeline instruments were added to this research method to ensure participants would understand the concept of a timeline. Guenette and Marshall (2009) conducted a study using narrative timelines and used example timeline instruments to provide a starting point for participants. Participants felt they had agency over how they shared their stories by choosing the most appropriate example. In this project, participants will be shown three example timeline instruments and also have the option to create their own (See Appendix 5). This should allow for participants to maintain agency over their narrative.

The timeline instruments will be tested in a pilot study to ensure they are fit for purpose and are a reliable means for participants to share their stories. A pilot study is advised by Guest et al., (2012) to increase the validity of the research. The pilot will take place at a school similar to the research setting, at which I work as a teacher one day per week. It is deemed relevant to trial the process in this setting and make any adaptations to the research project following this.

5.2 To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom?

To explain how this research project intends to answer research question 1 (stated in the above sub-heading) it is beneficial to discuss the participants who will be providing data. Concerning research question 1, participants will be White British pupils who have a diagnosis of SEBD and who attend the research setting. Both male and female pupils will be included if they consent, but if for any reason only one gender participates, this will be made clear in the research findings.

Using a narrative timeline, pupils will respond to the question: ‘What do you think about your SEBD label?’ This should support pupils in creating a timeline in which they share narratives of their school experiences that draw on the interpretation of their label. The data collected here could also give insights into the pupils’ ability to
set and achieve goals related to their own social and cultural values, which could uncover any influences on their sense of Critical Agency.

Pupils were chosen as participants as research has recognised the benefits of their voice in changing practice in school settings. Caslin (2019) and James and Fox (2016) recognised pupils as social actors in their research as pupils had the ability to bring about change. This project intends to elicit the voice of children in a similar manner to collect relevant data. As the research findings are unlikely to be of direct benefit to the pupils who participate, it has been deemed feasible to provide them with refreshments during the interview as a reward for their time. This will be made clear in the information leaflet (Appendix 3).

To ensure an adequate sample level in this research, all twelve pupils will be asked to participate. Initially, a purposive sampling method was chosen as Schreier (2018) claims that it is relevant to qualitative data collection as all consenting participants would be chosen at random. After consulting with colleagues, it was recommended that the project include all consenting pupils to ensure none were made to feel excluded.

The narrative timeline interview will take place in a setting that is decided on by the participant so they feel comfortable in sharing their story. Costley et al., (2010) recommend that the length of the process should also be decided by the participant to ensure they can choose how much time to give to the research. The dates and times will be pre-planned with the participants to ensure a mutually convenient time and participants can reschedule their interviews if they are unable to participate for any reason, including where a contextual influence may have caused them to become distressed. They can also decline to participate at the rescheduled time. Any contextual influences impacting the data will be noted in the field notes of the research, as recommended by Garvis (2015).

Pupils may refer to the researcher as an insider because of the relationships they have developed over time. These pre-existing relationships could allow for more in-depth narratives from the participants as they have already developed a sense of trust with the researcher. These responses may give the researcher a deeper insight into the experiences of the participants and increase the validity of the findings.
The researcher could also be seen as an outsider to this group of participants because their role as a teacher could well position them as a figure of authority. This could raise issues of power and pose ethical issues as participants and their parents may see my role as a teacher rather than a researcher and believe they are unable to decline participation. Kim’s (2012) study highlighted that pupils felt compelled to participate in the research when their teacher was the researcher because they believed there would be consequences if they declined. To ensure that the research was valid and reliable, Kim (2012) made this explicit throughout the study, something I plan to do when presenting the findings of this project. Furthermore, I will ensure that in line with The British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) guidelines, participants are aware that their participation is voluntary and that there will be no consequences in declining to participate or withdrawing consent at a later date.

5.3 What are the influences that have impacted the perceptions teachers in specialist schools have of pupils with SEBD?

To obtain data to answer research question 2 (stated in the above sub-heading), teachers from the research setting will be asked to participate. It is worth noting that all teachers in the setting are female and White British, caution should, therefore, be exercised when interpreting the findings of this research. All three teachers will be asked to participate to eliminate any bias when selecting participants in the small setting. Participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw consent at any point. Furthermore, they will be informed that if for any contextual reason they need to reschedule the interview, they can do so. This will be noted in the field notes of the research.

Teachers in the setting will be asked to participate using a narrative timeline method. The adult participants will be asked to draw a timeline in response to the question: ‘What are your perspectives of pupils with SEBD and how does this shape your practice?’. Responses to this should let data emerge based on the influences on the perceptions teachers have of SEBD pupils over time.
Teachers were chosen as participants to compare the perspectives of both teachers and pupils. This comparison was deemed a gap in the literature and has been included in this study to potentially address this gap. Armstrong et al., (2015) and Caslin (2019) indicate that further investigation into the influence of teacher perceptions was needed to understand the impact this has on pupils. Gaining the voice of two different groups has the potential to increase the validity of the findings as a range of perspectives will be considered.

As the teacher participants hold the same professional position as the researcher, my positionality may be interpreted as an insider researcher for this group. Mercer (2007) recognises that having familiarity with participants allows for greater rapport that leads to participants being more candid in their responses; thus increasing the validity of this research. An increased sense of familiarity with participants could, however, reduce the reliability of the research as it could potentially be influenced by the taken-for-granted assumptions of the researcher. Costley et al., (2010) recommend the need for reflexivity to overcome this issue. The research schedule (see Appendix 6) will include time to be reflexive of my role and to develop a subjectivity statement that outlines any influences of the researcher.

Conducting research in a small setting may also cause ethical issues and issues of power dynamics. Costley et al., (2010) state that researchers who work with participants are often viewed to be figures of authority who report their findings back to seniors in the organisation. This could limits the narrative participants share because they see the researcher as an outsider. There could also be limited participation as participants may believe they will be criticised for taking part. To overcome such concerns, an open and transparent culture will be fostered to ensure all participants have a clear understanding of the proposed research and can ask questions and raise concerns throughout the process. Participants will be made aware that findings will be presented in the form of a summary report with the purpose of making changes to policies and practices. To protect participants' anonymity and maintain confidentiality the report will not link to any specific narratives. Additionally, participants will be asked to review the summary report and approve it before it is presented to management. This will not only support
confidentiality but should also increase the validity of the study as participants may feel more comfortable in sharing their truth.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the project can take place, the school's Gatekeeper (the school's principal) will need to consent. Before giving consent, the Gatekeeper will need to be convinced that the project is of benefit to the organisation and that the participants from the organisation will be kept from harm. It could be assumed that an insider researcher would be granted access to research their setting. Instead, it could be declined because of the power dynamics in the research setting positioning the researcher as someone unlikely to have authority in suggesting changes to practice. To overcome this issue, Costley et al., (2010) recommend engaging with the Gatekeeper during the early stages of the project to ensure they are aware of the expertise the researcher has in their chosen field and the benefits they may have to the organisation. A presentation will be prepared to share the knowledge I have in this area of research. To ensure transparency, the Gatekeeper will be given access to a detailed outline of the research aims and proposed methodology to make them aware of the thorough planning and ethical considerations of the project.

Once the Gatekeeper has approved the project, the consent of participants will need to be gained. BERA (2018), advises that all participants give informed consent on the basis that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw consent at any time without any consequences. Working with pupil participants poses ethical considerations linked to informed consent as parents may agree to children participating in the research despite their child declining to partake, or vice versa. As BERA (2018) recommends that all participants should give consent regardless of age, this research will ask both pupils as well as their legal guardians or caregivers to consent. Parents and pupils will be given an information leaflet to ensure that all stakeholders understand the research project's aims and purpose, which should give them the opportunity to ask any questions before accepting or declining participation.

Potential participants will be given an information letter and consent form to ensure transparency about the aims and objectives of the research project. Participants will not be of direct benefit of the research, but they will be given refreshments during
and after the process as a show of gratitude for their time. BERA (2018) advises using the same consent forms in the pilot study to ensure consistency and to test the effectiveness of the forms. The pilot study consent forms will contain an additional section that details the difference between a pilot study, to be transparent about the differences between the research project and the pilot study (See Appendix 3 and 4).

BERA (2018) identifies that a researcher must make every effort to minimise risks of harm to participants. This is of particular relevance to this research project because of the small size of the research setting. Whilst every effort will be made to keep the participants anonymous in the research, the small setting could mean that they are easily identifiable, especially if all pupils and teachers decide to participate. Being unable to maintain anonymity and confidentiality could harm participants as they could be criticised by those in power for their responses. To overcome this issue, Costley et al., (2010) recommend that those in authority do not receive a full report of findings from small-scale projects. Consequently, findings will be presented in a summary report linked specifically to improving practice in the school setting. Oates (2019) recommends that participants review this summary before it is shared elsewhere: an opportunity which will be provided in this research project. Participants will have the right to withdraw their consent following the completion of the research until it is presented.

Additional ethical considerations are identified in the E822 Ethical Appraisal Form, (Appendix 1).

5.5 Data Analysis

A challenge in conducting this research proposal has been finding the appropriate data analysis method because of the limited literature on Critical Theory data analysis. Grounded Theory analysis was considered as both Caslin (2019) and Sellman (2009) use a Grounded Theory approach to data analysis when working with SEBD pupils. This data analysis method fits with the emergent narrative methodology as it allows themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing predetermined themes on the findings.

Fletcher's (2017) Critical Feminism study advises that Grounded Theory is not entirely appropriate to Critical Theory research as it relies solely on the theories that
emerge from the data. Instead, Critical Theory data analysis using 'Theme Analysis', 'Theoretical Redescription' and 'Retroduction' was recommended so that participant's narratives can be linked to existing theory (Fletcher, 2017). This data analysis method aligns with the Critical Theory paradigm as it enables findings to be shaped by both the voice of participants and existing theory. An adaptation to this method has been made so that participants are involved in each stage of data analysis to ensure their truth has been represented accurately.

As recommended by Fletcher (2017), the process of Theory Redescription will take place in which the coded themes that have emerged from the data will be linked to existing theory. Critical Retroduction will then be used to examine social structures and political discourses in the data to recognise how this aligns with current theory. Once analysed, participants will review and assess how their voice has been linked to a particular theory. Visual modes will be used with pupils to support their understanding.

A summary of the findings will be disseminated to the school Leadership Team and Academy Trust. This will aim to suggest changes to practice based on the combined narratives of both teachers and pupils. The report will advise caution when applying the findings to other settings in the Trust because of the small-scale nature of this project, as recommended by Costley et al., (2010). The findings will also detail recommendations for future research projects that aim to improve the educational experiences of pupils with SEBD, to ensure they have a sense of Critical Agency in their education and future life trajectory.

The final section of the proposal will reflect on my learning and development throughout the study of the Inclusive Practice Modules. The focus of this proposal has evolved from module materials related to social justice issues. Freire (1972) highlighted that education is influenced by power structures and dominant narratives which are potentially causing social inequalities. This recognition has developed my positionality as a researcher toward a Critical Theory stance and I have shaped this dissertation around the Critical Theory paradigm (see Appendix 2, Part 4).

Initially, this dissertation was planned to be a small-scale investigation where pupils had an opportunity to discuss their school experiences. Feedback from TMA1 advised that I should undertake an extended proposal, as the research problem needed to be more specific. This was challenging as I had envisaged undertaking an investigation throughout my studies with the intention of improving practice in the research setting. Consulting with my tutor supported the adaptation of the research design to focus on the perspectives of teachers towards pupils with SEBD and the impact they have on a pupil’s sense of agency (see Appendix 2, Part 1).

Having the opportunity to write an extended proposal has led to the questioning of my taken-for-granted assumptions. Previously I had placed responsibility on individuals for their behaviour, which led to a personal development goal of mine being to challenge these beliefs (see Appendix 2, Part 2 & 4). The extended review of the literature (Part A) allowed for the problematisation of social and political influences on the behaviour and exclusion rates of pupils with SEBD. This has guided my practice to enable collaboration with pupils in challenging taken-for-granted assumptions in society, using problem-posing activities. This should grant pupils a greater sense of Critical Agency in their knowledge construction and could strengthen relationships between pupils and their teachers (see Appendix 2, Part 4).

A key theme in the literature was the influence of political discourse, which I planned to include in my research design using a Critical Discourse Analysis. Receiving the previous feedback from TMA 1 facilitated the early recognition that I was again making the research project too broad and this methodology was, therefore,
discounted (see Appendix 2, Part 1). Instead, I chose to recommend this methodology for a future project (see section 5.1).

Conducting an extended review of the literature has supported the development of my critical analysis skills. I am now able to evaluate pedagogical and theoretical claims in research based on their limitations. Paragraphs are now shaped around my academic arguments and utilise literature to support my claims, something I had previously found difficult and had set as a personal development target (see Appendix 2, Part 2 & 3).

On a personal note, this dissertation has developed my beliefs and values in terms of inclusive practice and social justice. I have moved away from my career as a mainstream primary school teacher, where I felt unable to act on the knowledge I had gained during my studies. I now have a role where I facilitate a curriculum that empowers learners to have agency over their future life experiences. Research into Critical Theory has also increased my desire to engage in activism in the field of Women’s Rights. This dissertation has allowed me to accept that often I am someone who is recognised as ‘different’ or ‘other’. I now hope to use the skills I have developed over the past three years to empower myself and others to celebrate their differences.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Appraisal Form

E822 Ethical Appraisal Form
Masters: Education, Childhood and Youth

NB: it should be noted that The Open University is unable to offer liability insurance to cover any negative consequences students might encounter when undertaking ‘in-person’ data collection. It is therefore very important that you follow appropriate research protocols which should include seeking Gatekeeper permissions to undertake any data collection within your setting and adhering to ethical principles for the safety of yourself and your participants.

Because ethical appraisal should precede data collection, a completed version of this form should be included with TMA02 for those developing a Small-Scale Investigation (SSI) and as part of the EMA submission for those completing an Extended Literature Review and Research Proposal (EP) form of the Dissertation.

Fill in section 1 of this document with your personal details and brief information about your research.
For section 2, please assess your research using the following questions and click yes or no as appropriate. If there is any possibility of significant risk please tick yes. Even if your list contains all “no” you should still return your completed checklist so your tutor/supervisor can assess the proposed research.

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<th>Section 1: Project details</th>
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<td>d. Supervisor/tutor</td>
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<td>f. MA pathway (where applicable)</td>
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<td>g. Intended start date for fieldwork</td>
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### Section 2: Ethics Assessment

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<th>Question</th>
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<th>No</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a ‘gatekeeper’ (e.g. Local Authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Have you checked whether the organisation requires you to undertake a ‘police check’ or appropriate level of ‘disclosure’ before carrying out your research?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Have you indicated how informed consent will be obtained from your participants (including children less than 16 years old, school pupils and immediate family members)? Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Will your proposed research design mean that it will be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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1 You must agree to comply with any ethical codes of practice or legal requirements that maybe in place within the organisation or country (e.g. educational institution, social care setting or other workplace) in which your research will take place. If required an appropriate level of disclosure (‘police check’) can obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland, AccessNI (Northern Ireland), Criminal Records Office (Republic of Ireland), etc.

2 This should normally involve the use of an information sheet about the research and what participation will involve, and a signed consent form. You must allow sufficient time for potential participants to consider their decision between the giving of the information sheet and the gaining of consent. No research should be conducted without the opt-in informed consent of participants or their caregivers. In the case of children (individuals under 16 years of age) no research should be conducted without a specified means of gaining their informed consent (or, in the case of young children, their assent) and the consent of their parents, caregivers, or guardians. This is particularly important if your project involves participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under 16 years, people with learning disabilities, or emotional problems, people with difficulty in understanding or communication, people with identified health problems). There is additional guidance on informed consent on the Masters: Education and Childhood and Youth website under Project Resources.
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<th>Question</th>
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<td>Does your proposed design involve repetitive observation of participants, (i.e. more than twice over a period of more than 2-3 weeks)? Is this necessary? If it is, have you made appropriate provision for participants to renew consent or withdraw from the study half-way through? 4</td>
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<td>Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data? If so have you indicated how you will protect participants’ anonymity and confidentiality and how you will store the data?</td>
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<td>Does your proposal indicate how you will give your participants the opportunity to access the outcomes of your research (including audio/visual materials) after they have provided data?</td>
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<td>Have you built in time for a pilot study to make sure that any task materials you propose to use are age appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?</td>
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<td>Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)? What safeguards have you put in place to protect participants’ confidentiality?</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project? Do you need to carry out a ‘risk analysis’ and/or discuss this with teachers, parents and other adults involved in the research?</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data?</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered ‘yes’ to questions 12, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/).

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3 Where an essential element of the research design would be compromised by full disclosure to participants, the withholding of information should be specified in the project proposal and explicit procedures stated to obviate any potential harm arising from such withholding. Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it has been agreed with a named responsible person in the organisation and it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy.

4 Where participants are involved in longer-term data collection, the use of procedures for the renewal of consent at appropriate times should be considered.
**Appendix 2: Reflective Evidence Grid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Feedback and Targets</th>
<th>How did this shape my dissertation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>Feedback from TMA1, highlighted the need to change my dissertation to an extended proposal to explore a specific area of inclusive practice. Peers on the forum agreed with this stating, “Is there a particular area of SEBD that you could focus on as it is a broad spectrum to cover?” This was challenging and led to me seeking advice from my tutor and peers in the Tutor Group forum. Their support allowed me to transfer my thinking from a small scale research project to this extended proposal dissertation. The extensive reading of literature (required for Part A) enabled me to be more specific in the research design to allow for the exploration of teacher perceptions and pupil Critical Agency. An additional theme of political discourse emerged when conducting the extended literature review. Initially, I was keen to add this to my research design. However, feedback from my tutor and peers in the forum highlighted how this would be too broad of a project for a small scale investigation.</td>
<td>The research proposal has been developed to explore the perspectives of teachers and the impact of this on the Critical Agency of pupils. These themes emerged from the reading required from TMA2 and Part A of the dissertation and I was then able to structure Chapter 2 and 3 around them. Seeking support from peers in the tutor group forum lead to the development of more specific research questions linked to the research problem. The final versions of these questions are included in this research proposal. Conducting an extended proposal enabled the exploration of the influences that are potentially shaping the perspectives of teachers. I was able to then consider how Critical Discourse Analysis could be used in future projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Critical Analysis and Evaluation

An academic PDP goal that I created was to challenge my own taken for granted assumptions related to the behaviour of pupils with SEBD. I had previously blamed the individual or their teacher for the behaviour pupils displayed.

Conducting an extended review of literature allowed for themes of social justice to emerge, such as human agency and equitable access to the resource of education. When reading literature, I noted thoughts in my electronic literature database on how education and inclusive practice issues are linked to social justice. Literature suggested that there were wider influences that led to both the behaviour of SEBD pupils and the perceptions of their teachers. This encouraged me to question my own assumptions about SEBD pupils and find literature that challenged my previous thinking. I was then able to use these themes to form my own academic argument.

The research design has been shaped to allow teachers and pupils to participate. By challenging my own taken for granted beliefs, I realised that teachers and pupils are influenced by the dominant narrative in society and both groups of participants should be given a voice in the research to explore this.

The electronic database made it easier to link literature together based on social justice themes of agency and educational inclusion. The database enabled the comparison and contrasting of the validity of the articles in terms of the impact they would have on practice and any limitations they had. Having literature structured this way allowed me to write paragraphs that draw on literature to support my academic arguments in the dissertation.
3. Structure, communication and presentation

Feedback from TMA1 and TMA2 suggested that I needed to work on structuring paragraphs appropriately. This then became a PDP target.
“You have a tendency to end a paragraph with a main idea. Could you form a stronger discussion by starting the paragraph with it.”
Feedback from draft chapters also highlighted how I need to be more confident in putting my own argument at the forefront of each section.
Feedback from draft chapters enabled me to develop an understanding of how to plan chapters more thoroughly by including the theme of each paragraph as a subheading. This enabled me to communicate my ideas and arguments clearly and supported writing to the word count.

For this dissertation, I was able to use previous feedback and support to develop a clear and useful planning tool. This allowed for paragraphs to be structured around a theme or certain pieces of literature which led to my arguments being articulated clearly at the beginning of each section.

Each draft of the dissertation was then edited after consultation with my tutor to ensure that each paragraph was based around one theme. This facilitated my own academic arguments being stated at the start of each section, something which I had previously lacked the confidence to do.
4. Links to professional Practice

A professional PDP target I set was to gain an awareness of how to increase pupil agency in the research setting. My learning journals from year one and two led to the development of this PDP target as they highlighted how decisions were often made for pupils rather than with them. This often caused them to display challenging behaviour.

Conducting extended reviews of the literature led to this problematisation and I recognise that agency is often influenced by the dominant narratives in society. This was relevant to the research setting as when pupils were involved in key decisions about their learning tasks they often continued to disengage with their learning and display challenging behaviour. Reflecting on this, I now realise that pupils did not have a sense of Critical Agency over these decisions as they were still influenced by the school curriculum and not the pupils’ own social and cultural values.

This has led to the recognition that future practices should aim to give pupils a sense of Critical Agency to challenge any taken for granted assumptions in society. Engaging pupils and their teachers in problem posing activities and Critical Literacy could increase their self-awareness. This could enable pupils to create meaningful goals linked to their social and cultural contexts and support them in becoming more engaged in their education.

Challenging my own beliefs in my academic PDP target (see Appendix 2, Part 1) shaped my ontological and epistemological position towards that of the Critical Theory paradigm. The conceptual framework and research design of this proposal utilises this paradigm. This has led to the exploration of Critical Agency and how Critical Pedagogy could be used to support SEBD pupils in gaining a sense of Critical Agency.

The concepts of Critical Agency and Critical Pedagogy were explored in Chapter 3 of the dissertation to investigate the wider influences that impact on pupils’ sense of agency. This permitted modifications to practice to be suggested which support pupils and teachers in critiquing taken for granted assumptions. This should then allow for collaboration in social action that lead to potential changes in school for this group of pupils.
Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheets

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’
SEBD and Critical Agency Research
Pupil Information Sheet

What is the aim of this Narrative interview? **Pilot Study**?
The aim of this interview is to gain your view on what you think of your school experiences. The pilot study also aims to test the resources for another study at a different school.

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?
The interview was designed during my Master’s course. This research is for the school governors, leadership team and Academy Trust. I will be carrying out a small scale investigation with pupils and teachers in our setting to gain information to answer the following question: To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact upon their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom? This aims to help me better understand the school exclusion rates of pupils diagnosed with SEBD. The pilot study will help improve the research project at another school.

Why am I being invited to participate?
You have been chosen because your views would be valuable in answering the questions for this research study. I hoped you might be prepared to talk about your experiences and opinions.

What will we be talking about?
In the Narrative interview I will ask you a question about what you think of your school experiences. I will ask you to create a timeline about this. I will show you examples of a timeline before we begin and I can share these with you before if you would like.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?
The Narrative interview should take no more than 15 minutes each time. I will make sure that I have checked with your teachers that when and where we talk is the most convenient for you and them. Our conversation will be recorded and I will make notes about what you say. Permission has been given from the school principal for me to invite you to this interview.

I would like to ask your consent to make an audio recording of our discussion so that I can refer back to what was said more accurately than would be possible just from my notes. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, I will accept your wish, and rely only on my written notes. Only I will have access to the audio recording. I do not need to share this with those in our setting. During any written representation, you will be referred to by a false name (pseudonym) and you will be asked if you would like to suggest what name I use. Please see diagram on next page to show you how the process will work.

Will what I say be kept private?
Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information about you, such as that contained in your consent forms, will be shared more widely. In the case of the audio recording and notes of the interview, these will be kept private and typewritten as soon as possible. However, if you let me know anything during your interview which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this information immediately to the organisation’s Designated Safeguarding Officer. When making anonymised records of the interview, as outlined above, these will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I can confirm that neither you as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in any presentations I make of my findings to interested audiences.

What happens now?
After reading this information sheet with your parent/carer, please read and complete the consent form. This means that you and your parent/carer sign your and their names and the date to say you are all happy for me to set up a time and place for the interview. Whether you agree or not is entirely up to you and your parent/carer, as the invitation is for you to take part voluntarily. You can change your mind later and withdraw from the study by letting me know and I will destroy the information (consent forms and interview files) I have created. This will be possible up until the time I am using your information as part of my finding report at the end of the school year in 2023. If you are taking part in the pilot study, the information you share will not be reported anywhere and your data will be destroyed following the pilot study completion.

What if I have other questions?
If you have any questions about the study, I would be very happy to answer them.

You will be provided with refreshments during and after each interview.

The flow chart on the next page will explain more.
Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’
SEBD and Critical Agency Research
Pupil Information Sheet (simplified version if required for younger participants)

The Project
This project is a research project (pilot research project).
Research is used to find out answers to questions.
Pilot studies are used to test the project before it is carried out at another school.
I want to find out about your experiences of your time in school.
The project will take place between January and April 2023. (November for the pilot study).
You will be asked to draw a timeline of your school experiences and I will show you examples before you begin.

Participation
You have been asked to take part as you attend our school and we want to hear all about your experiences.
You do not have to take part in this research. It is voluntary.
Even if you say yes now, you can change your mind later and say no at any time.

Safety
• This project has been approved by the School Principal.
• If you feel unsafe or unhappy at any time, you can ask not to take part in the research any more.
• I will do everything I can to make you feel comfortable.
• What you say to me won’t be shared with your name to anyone else, unless it involves your safety and then I will need to tell our Safeguarding Officer.
• I will be conducting the narrative timeline process and my role during this will involve me observing your timeline drawings and asking questions to deepen my understanding of your experiences.
• During this process, I will act as a researcher.
• I cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get might help other young people’s future education.

If you take part, the diagram on the next page will show you what will happen.
Once you have looked at the diagram, you can ask me any questions you might have about taking part.
You do not have to say yes and if you do, you can say no at a later time.
You will be provided with refreshments during and after each interview.

The flow chart on the next page will explain more.
What is the aim of this Narrative Interview?

The aim of the interview is to gain an individual's perspective on an aspect of education, childhood and youth studies as part of a small-scale investigation designed to contribute to knowledge and practice in my chosen area of specialization. This particular interview is designed to help answer the research questions below:

- What are the influences that have impacted on the perceptions teachers have of pupils with SEBD?
- To what extent do pupils feel teacher perceptions impact upon their sense of Critical Agency within their specialist school classroom? (children).

This part of the research project is the pilot study. The pilot study will be used to improve the research design only and the information you share will not be shared anywhere else.

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?

This narrative interview was designed as part of my studies on the Open University Masters module E822 'Multidisciplinary dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth'. I had an opportunity to design a small-scale investigation which will generate findings relevant to and of value to our setting. The narrative interview has been agreed with the school principal to be an important part of this design to allow me to include the perspectives of selected participants in addressing the above research questions. I will be analysing the data collected and reporting my findings to the school leadership team, governors and academy trust in the form of a summary report.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been chosen as your experiences and opinions would be highly valuable in helping to address a question which is considered one which will have value for your setting and others like it.

(Your child has been chosen as their experiences and opinions would be highly valuable in helping to address the question.)

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?

The interview is intended to last no longer than 15 minutes at a place which I will negotiate with you (your child) and others in the setting to be mutually convenient. If there is anyone also affected by the interview, such as a member of staff, they will also have been consulted about when would be a convenient time and permission has been granted from the school principal.

I would like to ask your consent to make an audio recording of the discussion so that I can refer back to what was said more accurately than would be possible just from my notes. If you do not wish for this to happen, I will accept your wish, and rely only on my written notes. Only I will have access to the audio recording. I do not need to share this with at all our setting. Your contribution will be recognised by a pseudonym and you will be asked if you would like to suggest which name should be used. Any other real names referred to during the interview will be removed and renamed. The interviews will not be quoted directly or shared with anyone from the organisation.

What will we be talking about?

The focus of the interview will be to find perspectives on the experiences of pupils with SEBD. You (or your child) will be asked to draw a timeline in response to this. I will show an example of this before the interview.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information will be passed from me to anyone else. Your consent forms will be stored safely in our professional setting as agreed with the principal who is overseeing the safe conduct of this research. In the case of the audio recording and my notes of the interview, these will be kept confidential and typed up as soon as possible. However, if you disclose anything during your interview which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this immediately to the organizational Designated Safeguarding Officer. The anonymised records of the interview will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I plan to present a summary of my findings to the school leadership team, governors and academy trust. I can confirm that neither you (or your child) as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in any of these reports and presentations. If you (or your child) are taking part in the pilot study, the information you share will not be reported anywhere and their data will be destroyed following the pilot study completion.

What happens now?

After reading this information sheet, please review and complete the consent form. Your (or your child's) participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any point by letting me know, until the time I present my findings. As soon as you let me know you wish to withdraw, your consent forms and any data collected will be destroyed.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any other questions about the study I or my tutor would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me by email.
Appendix 4: Participant Consent Forms

Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

SEBD and Critical Agency Research

Narrative Timeline Interview Consent form for Post-18 participants (Teacher/Parents and Carers).

Please put a circle around your answer to each of the questions and return the completed form by 1st December 2022 (30th October for the pilot study) to the locked post box in reception, of which only I have the key to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this interview?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has someone explained this Narrative interview/ pilot study to you?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand what this Narrative interview is about?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you asked all the questions you want to ask?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will you have an adult present with you?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy for the interview to be audio recorded?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy with how your data will be stored?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the interview?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that the data from the pilot study will not be used in the final research product and is a test of the interview instruments only.</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you happy to take part?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If any answers are ‘no’ you can ask more questions. But if you don’t want to take part, please let me know and don’t sign your name. Thank you for your help. Blue text refers to pilot study adaptations.

If you do want to take part, please write your name and today’s date

Your name___________________________ Date ________________________

If the person to be interviewed is a child or young person under 18 and you are happy for the child or young person you are responsible for (as their parent, carer or guardian) to participate, please could you also sign and date below.

Sign ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Study related to Masters module ‘E822 Multidisciplinary Dissertation: Education, Childhood and Youth’

SEBD and Critical Agency Research

Narrative Timeline Interview Consent form for Pre-18 Participants

Please put a circle around the face to answer each of the questions and return the completed form by 1st December 2022 (30th October for the pilot study) to the locked post box in reception, of which only I have the key to. Please could a parent, carer or guardian read these questions with your child and, if necessary, complete the replies for them.

Questions:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this study (pilot study)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has someone explained this Narrative interview to you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you understand what this interview is about?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you asked all the questions you want?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know that you can stop taking part at any time?</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you understand that your and any other real names will be removed from what will be shared after the interview? (not applicable to the pilot study)</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you happy to take part?</td>
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</table>

If any answers are ‘no’, you can ask any more questions or you do not have to complete this form and take part in the research. If you would like to take part, please write your name below and today’s date.

Your name: _________________________ Date: __________________________

Please return this form to the locked post box in school reception. Thank you for your help. Blue text refers to pilot study adaptations.
Appendix 5: Interview Instruments

Interview Instrument example 1 (ICT App).

My Life
Child A

Birth

Started School

Moved house

Moved School

Items
- Birth: 12th April Hospital Grandma present
- Started School: Nice teacher Lots of friends


All images used are clipart and are created commons free (CC0)
Interview Instrument example 2:

My Life

- Birth 1993
- Moved house 1999
- Teacher 2014
- Started School
- University
Interview Instrument example 3:
## Appendix 6: Proposed Project Schedule

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<td>Submit Dissertation and Await Feedback</td>
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<td>Conduct Pilot School stakeholders to gain permission</td>
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<td>Send out and collect consent forms to the pilot school</td>
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<td>Conduct pilot interviews (1 teacher / 2 pupils)</td>
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<td>Change interview instruments based upon pilot</td>
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<td>Transcribe notes and share with participants</td>
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