

Perspective taking in individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama education

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it in the interactive context of drama education.

Studies have consistently shown that individuals with autism encounter difficulty with perspective taking. This manifests in qualitative differences in social interaction and communication, as outlined in standard diagnostic criteria. Findings from the research in this thesis demonstrate that the difficulty in perspective taking can be mitigated through particular types of interaction with others.

Using case study methodology within an interpretative paradigm, data were gathered about ten students aged 16 to 19 in one school for individuals with autism through observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. Data were coded and multimodal semiotic analysis was used to examine interactions in detail.

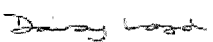
Findings from the research indicate that individuals with autism show perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education, and suggest that it maintains and develops over time and generalises to other contexts. A comparison with perspective taking in other curricular areas reveals that it is shown more often and in qualitatively different ways in drama. This suggests that social context influences perspective taking.

An interrogation of the social context locates factors associated with perspective taking in interactions with teachers and peers and draws out general approaches and detailed strategies within these interactions. A comparison with other curricular areas highlights particular opportunities presented by drama. These approaches and strategies are explained socioculturally enabling the research to illustrate both the relevance of sociocultural theory for individuals with autism and its practical application.

The research context, approach, findings and explanation contribute uniquely to research about and practice involving individuals with autism. Implications of this contribution are discussed with reference to avenues for future research.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signature: 

Name: DAISY ANNE LOYD

Date: 5 APRIL 2011

The thesis, not including references and appendices, is 104,880 words.

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1. Introduction

“Is this show going to be funny?”

Claire

In the research presented in this thesis, I demonstrate that individuals with autism show perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education and uncover factors associated with it. I explain these factors in terms of sociocultural theory illustrating the relevance and applicability of this theory for individuals with autism. The findings challenge studies which have consistently shown that individuals with autism encounter difficulty with perspective taking. Furthermore, they broaden understanding about perspective taking in individuals with autism by identifying contexts and interrogating circumstances under which this difficulty in perspective taking can be mitigated and by providing a theoretical explanation for why this is the case. The research approach I use to reach my findings about how and why perspective taking can manifest is interpretative and draws on multimodal semiotic analysis to examine interactions in detail. The research context, approach, findings and explanation introduce and cover new ground in autism research making this thesis a unique contribution to research about and practice involving individuals with autism.

My interest in researching individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama stemmed from my own work as a drama practitioner. These experiences influenced how the research presented in this thesis evolved and in the following section I explain how seeds of interest became my doctoral research.

1.1 A personal perspective on the genesis of the research reported in this thesis

I first became interested in autism when I was working as a drama practitioner at a London-based project for children and young people with special needs run by UK charity Barnardo's. At that stage, as an aspiring actress, I was energised and passionate about the power of drama and the ways in which I could learn so much about myself and other people by working with it, in it and through it. I believed very strongly that the same could apply to other people. When working with children and young people of all ages and abilities, I became particularly interested in how those children and young people with autism participated in my drama workshops. They seemed to be able to engage better with me, others and the activities we were doing in drama workshops than elsewhere. This engagement was remarked upon by parents and carers who knew the children and young people well. As my knowledge of autism grew, I also became aware that many of our activities centred on or related to perspective taking and that this was core to many of the

difficulties in autism. In the drama workshops, for example, the warm up activities involved following others and taking turns; the games incorporated sharing aspects of specific interest, recognising and appreciating everyone's contribution, or pretending to do something or be someone; the short performances entailed working with others to show prepared pieces of work to others and responding to work shown by others. The drama work also prompted comments from the children and young people involved about themselves or their work. The question which heads this chapter is taken from data reported in this thesis and illustrates how Claire's involvement in performance work prompted her to consider the type of performance she was working towards and how it could be interpreted by an audience.

I followed up my interest as part of a Master of Arts in Text and Performance Studies where I explored various facets of drama with children and young people with autism (Loyd, 2004). This included dramatherapy; integrated theatre groups involving those with autism; theatre groups that had created productions for young people with autism and drama created by, or inspired by, those with autism. My findings from this research highlighted the prevalence of drama activities with those with autism and identified a number of positive outcomes attributed to it by co-ordinators of the activities (Appendix 1: 303). Corresponding with my observations, these co-ordinators observed children and young people with autism engaging with drama and interacting with adults and peers in a more fluent way in drama than in other contexts. Some even argued that this fluency maintained and developed over time and generalised to other contexts. Jo Chainey of Barnardo's Indigo Project Theatre Workshop remarked of one of the group's members:

When he arrived, he preferred to stay on the fringes of activities because he found group work difficult. He would do his own thing and it would be hard to bring him into the group. It is lovely because he has built up confidence and he is now teaching things to new members in the group. In the last performance, he had even built up the confidence to contribute with his own story of bullying at his school. (Chainey, 2004)

When I looked for published research to substantiate these findings, I had little joy. There were good narrative case studies recounting positive experiences of participation in drama and linking drama work to theories about autism (Clethero, 2001; Peach, 2003; Sherratt & Peter, 2002). However, there were no published studies that closely examined the process of individuals with autism participating in drama, determined outcomes for individuals from participation or compared processes and outcomes in drama with those in other contexts. Filled with enthusiasm by the drama work I was leading and comments by drama practitioners I had met, I chose to extend my research by investigating a core aspect of autism – perspective taking – in drama education and other areas of the curriculum. I wanted to observe individuals with autism across contexts so that I could identify whether there were differences in the perspective taking they showed between contexts and, if there were, interrogate why this was the case.

At this stage, I had already encountered a school that had introduced a dedicated expressive arts programme involving drama in September 2003 for students at its further education unit. A survey of Autism Accredited schools and units that I conducted as part of this research (see p83) confirmed this to be the only school in the UK to run such an intensive curriculum for students with autism. As such it presented a unique opportunity to look in detail at the participation of students in drama alongside their participation in other curricular areas. My research proposal was endorsed by the National Autistic Society and Research Autism, and secured funding from the Economic and Social Research Council. For me, this endorsement was vital in giving credibility to the research and ensuring its relevance and importance for individuals with autism and people working with them. However, the endorsements did not impact on the independence of the research and this thesis which was initiated, designed, conducted and constructed by me.

1.2 Research questions

The line of enquiry that I took for this research was step-by-step so that I could gradually build up a picture of perspective taking in individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama education. The initial step I took was to focus on perspective taking in individuals with autism and examine it first in the interactive context of drama education and then in other curricular areas before drawing comparisons between the two. These steps formed questions one and two.

1. Do students with autism show perspective taking in drama?
2. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, do they also show it in other curricular areas and does it manifest in the same way?

I moved on to investigate the circumstances under which individuals with autism show perspective taking separating out what was happening in other curricular areas from drama so that I could compare the two. These steps formed questions three and four.

3. If students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do they show it?
4. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it and are these circumstances the same as in other curricular areas?

On finding differences in both perspective taking shown and factors associated with it between the interactive context of drama education and other curricular areas, I sought to investigate why this was the case and also look at the nature of perspective taking shown in drama over time and across contexts. These steps formed questions five and six.

5. If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, why are there differences?
6. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, does it maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts?

1.3 Outline of the thesis

My thesis takes the following course.

1.3.1 Literature review

In chapter two, I position the research in relation to three areas of literature concerning individuals with autism: perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education.

First, I clarify why I focus on perspective taking by defining what it is and how it is relevant to the study of autism. I explain that I research autism within the frame of an interactive model of disability which allows for dialogue between different perspectives. I use theories about autism and empirical research to illustrate why perspective taking is regarded as a core difficulty for individuals with autism. As autism is diagnosed using a set of behavioural criteria, I use relevant items from this criteria as a basis for looking at how perspective taking can manifest in individuals with autism in everyday life. I highlight the limited number of studies about perspective taking in individuals with autism conducted in **real world social contexts**¹ compared with studies conducted under experimental conditions. By real world social contexts, I mean everyday settings where there are people interacting with each other. These contrast with settings that are controlled or manipulated by a researcher. In the research reported in this thesis, the real world social contexts are educational contexts and include drama education and other areas of the curriculum at a further education unit for students with autism. I explain that through the research I aim to inform understanding about perspective taking in individuals with autism by examining how it manifests across different real world social contexts and uncovering factors associated with it.

Secondly, placing drama education within a broader set of interactive approaches for individuals with autism, I review interactive approaches. I highlight in this review that interactive approaches adopt a theoretical stance in relation to human development which is sociocultural. Within this stance, social interaction stimulates development whether development is typical or atypical and the importance of play in development is also valued.

¹ I put the first occurrence of a technical term in bold to indicate that a full definition of how I use the term in this thesis is in the glossary (Appendix 14 see p438).

I discuss the extent to which interactive approaches can elicit and/or enable² perspective taking and consider factors that appear to be associated with it. I identify seven successful factors common to these approaches. These include allowing for flexibility within structure; teaching through action; employing multiple modes of communication; engaging with participant interests and competencies; basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers/carers and participants; challenging participants and supporting them in their learning; and building a trusting relationship with participants. I note that through the research I endeavour to add to knowledge about interactive approaches by focusing more closely on specific factors associated with perspective taking in different contexts, including the role of peers with autism.

Thirdly, I define drama and drama education and raise questions in relation to individuals with autism before considering ways in which drama education reflects sociocultural theory. I examine extant research about drama and individuals with autism, focusing on findings relevant to perspective taking and conclude that research about drama education with individuals with autism needs further exploration in order to understand more clearly the processes of and outcomes from participation in drama. I highlight that through the research I seek to demonstrate whether and how individuals with autism show perspective taking in drama; whether this differs from perspective taking shown in other curricular areas; and, if it does, interrogate why this is the case and ascertain whether there are factors distinctive to drama.

1.3.2 Methodological approach and data collection methods

In chapter three, I set out the methodological approach and data collection methods.

First, I discuss the paradigm highlighting that an interpretative paradigm is most suitable for the research at hand in which I seek to capture the complexity of perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it in real world social contexts. I note that interpretative research about autism is rare in comparison with positivist research but critical for gaining a better understanding of how individuals with autism interact and communicate in real world social contexts and for uncovering approaches that may be able to support them. I move on to discuss implications an interpretative paradigm can have for methodology and data collection methods and outline the rationale for choosing case study as the methodology for this research.

Secondly, I explain that the setting of the research was confirmed following a survey that I conducted of Autism Accredited schools and units. This survey also provided a clearer

² Given the difficulties in establishing whether manifestations of perspective taking are elicited and/or enabled, I have chosen to use both words together when referring to perspective taking shown in drama.

picture of the prevalence of drama in schools for individuals with autism and teacher perceptions about it. I describe the research setting including the students involved and the educational contexts under investigation.

Thirdly, I delineate the place of ethics in the research. In particular, I emphasise the approach devised for the students with autism and this extends debate concerning how to involve individuals with autism in research.

Fourthly, I describe data collection methods which include observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. I discuss each method in terms of rationale, process and steps taken to enhance trustworthiness. I explain that observation is my primary data collection method and that the approach to observation draws on multimodality which is an under-explored approach in relation to research about individuals with autism. I close the section with an overview of the steps I took to pilot the methodological approach and data collection methods and lessons learnt.

1.3.3 Analysis and findings

In chapter four, I focus on analysis and findings.

In the first section, I identify and analyse perspective taking and build into it the process of data analysis. This process draws on inductive and deductive approaches to coding to break down data and provide an overview of perspective taking across students and contexts. I incorporate multimodal semiotic analysis to examine in detail how perspective taking manifests in individual students. My findings demonstrate that all the students involved show perspective taking in drama. Perspective taking is visible in how students reciprocate socially; initiate interaction; spontaneously seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others; engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe; reciprocate emotionally and form peer relationships. With analysis indicating that the students show perspective taking in drama, I investigate perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama. I find that the students do show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama but when I compare these with findings about perspective taking in drama there are clear quantitative and qualitative differences.

In the second section, I uncover and examine factors associated with perspective taking and incorporate within it the approach to data analysis which is similar to that adopted for perspective taking. I examine factors associated with perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama and findings reveal that perspective taking manifests when students respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context. When I compare factors in

curricular areas apart from drama with findings about factors associated with perspective taking in drama there are notable quantitative and qualitative differences.

In the third section, I seek to explain these differences by bringing the factors together and analysing them in relation to successful factors identified in interactive approaches for individuals with autism. My analysis reveals that differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas can be explained by the interactive nature of drama as well as distinctive elements pertaining to drama sessions in the research.

In the fourth section, I scrutinise the nature of perspective taking shown in drama over time and across contexts. The analysis suggests maintenance and development over time; internalisation and generalisation across contexts for all students involved, although to different degrees and in different ways.

1.3.4 Discussion

In chapter five, I discuss research findings in terms of their theoretical, empirical, methodological and practical implications. I follow this discussion with a reflection on the credibility of the findings reviewing my subjective positioning; the consistency of my methods; the extent to which I captured what happened; the applicability of my findings beyond the frame of reference; and the extent to which my findings can be verified. I close the chapter with a summary of the research findings in terms of how they elucidate and extend knowledge about individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education.

The picture of perspective taking that I present extends current knowledge about perspective taking in individuals with autism by clarifying how it manifests in young adults in real world social contexts. It shows that perspective taking manifests in multimodal ways and in different ways across contexts, resulting from different social factors in these contexts.

By uncovering more detail about factors associated with perspective taking and providing an explanation for them in terms of sociocultural theory, I broaden understanding about interactive approaches.

Demonstrating that students with autism show more perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas and illustrating how this perspective taking is qualitatively different enhances knowledge about drama education with individuals with autism. These quantitative and qualitative differences are most notable in relation to spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others; engaging in varied, spontaneous

make-believe; forming peer relationships and considering how other people think and feel. The analysis reveals that they are associated with the interactive nature of drama as well as distinctive elements in the drama investigated in this research. The analysis also suggests that perspective taking shown in drama maintains and develops over time; internalises and generalises to other contexts for all the students involved.

1.3.5 Conclusion

I conclude the thesis with a short reflection which is followed by summarising key findings; outlining avenues for future research and setting out practical implications. Avenues for future research include:

- corroborating and extending these findings about drama and individuals with autism;
- extending analysis of the multimodal nature of teacher and student interactions; the role of peers with autism in the classroom; and factors associated with perspective taking in other contexts;
- using an interpretative paradigm; and expanding the role of individuals with autism in research.

Practical implications include recommending general principles to teachers that encourage perspective taking in individuals with autism; providing guidance on specific ways in which teachers can engage individuals with autism in drama and in other curricular areas; and recommending an ethical procedure in consent and interview approaches that can be used by schools and researchers alike when working to gain the viewpoints of individuals with autism.

2. Literature review

"We're autism."

Fran

In this chapter, I situate the research within three areas of literature concerning individuals with autism: perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education.

First, I define perspective taking and autism. I explain that I research autism within the frame of an interactive model of disability which allows for dialogue between different perspectives. With reference to two theories about autism – autism as a deficit in theory of mind and autism as a limited concept of persons – and empirical research in relation to them, I illustrate why perspective taking is regarded as a core difficulty for individuals with autism and examine the implications of these difficulties on everyday life. I highlight the dearth of research about perspective taking in individuals with autism in real world social contexts and close the section by clarifying how research in real world social contexts will extend knowledge about perspective taking in individuals with autism.

Secondly, placing drama education within a broader set of interactive approaches for individuals with autism, I define interactive approaches and review their sociocultural basis. I scrutinise research that exists about interactive approaches and perspective taking and identify general factors associated with perspective taking. From this review, I outline how the research will build on knowledge about interactive approaches for individuals with autism.

Thirdly, I define what I mean by drama and drama education in this thesis highlighting pertinent issues in relation to individuals with autism. I position drama education as an interactive approach with sociocultural underpinnings and evaluate research about drama with individuals with autism, focusing on findings relevant to perspective taking. I conclude the section with a summary of how the research will provide a clearer understanding of processes and outcomes relevant to perspective taking in individuals with autism from participation in drama.

2.1 Perspective taking and individuals with autism

2.1.1 What is perspective taking?

I focus on perspective taking in this research because it is considered to be a core difficulty in autism and yet experiences from my own drama workshops suggested that this difficulty could be mitigated in certain contexts. But what is perspective taking and how am I using the term in this thesis?

I use the term '**perspective taking**' to encapsulate both the understanding of and relations between the self and other people. I choose the term deliberately because it holds within it the unified yet particular nature of the understanding of and relations between the self and other people. Understanding oneself and other people involves being able to decentre, take different points of view and see oneself as both similar to and different from other people. This is sometimes referred to as '**self-other equivalence**' and '**self-other difference**' (Moore, 2007). Indeed, an understanding of self-other difference in the form of 'false belief' has become a litmus test in evaluating whether individuals understand that different people can hold different mental states (Wimmer & Perner, 1983). Using false belief as an index of perspective taking ability, associations have been made with a variety of socially relevant domains including joint attention, communication and shared pretence (see Hughes & Leekam, 2004 for a review).

My interest in perspective taking is not how it can be measured through particular tests but in the inferences that can be made about it by observing how it manifests in everyday life. This is through the way an individual interacts and communicates with others as well as how s/he³ engages in make-believe (Hughes & Leekam, 2004: 592-596; Moore, 2007: 43 ; Winner, 2007: 16). Self-other equivalence, for example, can be presumed through joint attention, imitation or sharing enjoyment, interests or achievements with others. In contrast, self-other difference can be revealed through turn taking or expressing one's own opinion and appreciating that one's own opinion may differ from that of others. Perspective taking can also manifest in the way an individual engages in pretence either on her/his own or with others, for example, through deliberately substituting one object for another (real or imaginary) or taking on a role. In these pretend situations, an individual appears to be holding in mind two things about an object or role at one time. If the pretend scenario is shared, the dynamics of perspective taking become even more complex as others share and contribute to the pretence.

³ Where relevant, I place the feminine form before the masculine. I took this decision because there were more female participants in this research than male. I did not find links between gender and perspective taking.

There is debate surrounding the nature of perspective taking and this is particularly visible in three areas:

1. Some align perspective taking with a modular version of **'theory of mind'** where perspective taking stands for the **'cognitive'** ability to attribute mental states to oneself and other people (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Leslie, 1987). Others take a broader view of perspective taking and incorporate **'affective'** and **'conative'** dimensions as well as cognitive. Affective dimensions of perspective taking relate to the emotional interpretation of perceptions, information or knowledge and conative dimensions of perspective taking relate to motivation, will and drive (Hobson, 2008; Moore, 2006).
2. There are those who regard perspective taking as a discrete ability which develops outside of experience although could be triggered by it (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Leslie, 1994; Selman, 1980) and those who consider it to be an ability that evolves through interaction with others (Carpendale & Lewis, 2006; Perner, Ruffman, & Leekam, 1994; Peterson, 2001; Ruffman, Perner, Naito, Parkin, & Clements, 1998).
3. Perspective taking can be viewed as a distinct ability which develops at a certain age although can be linked to prior skills (Baron-Cohen, 1995). Alternatively, it can be viewed as emerging in infancy and developing beyond early childhood with the development of false belief being an important marker but not the encapsulation of it (Astington, 2001; Flavell, 1999; Tager-Flusberg, 2001).

I use this research as an opportunity to shed light on these three areas in relation to perspective taking in individuals with autism.

2.1.2 How does perspective taking relate to understanding autism?

The unified yet particular nature of perspective taking relates to autism in two ways. It:

1. Brings together core aspects of autism including difficulties in social interaction, social communication and social imagination, commonly referred to as the **'triad of impairments'** (Wing & Gould, 1979).
2. Has the potential to explain these predominantly social difficulties as proposed by the theory of mind hypothesis of autism (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985) and an understanding of autism as a limited concept of persons (Hobson, 1993a).

These social difficulties in autism are grave because of the potential impact they can have on everyday life and future independence (Chamberlain, Kasari, & Rotheram-Fuller, 2007;

Howlin & Goode, 1998; Tantam, 2003). Surveys suggest repeatedly that the social difficulties experienced by individuals with autism represent the major concern and source of stress for parents, carers and educators and, in some cases, the individuals themselves (Knott, Dunlop, & Mackay, 2006; Mills, 2005). Educational approaches and interventions which aim to support individuals with autism in understanding and relating to others do exist but, with the breadth and complexity of autism, there continues to be a need to investigate different approaches. My focus on drama education is one way of addressing this need.

In this section I outline how I view autism in this thesis before considering current understandings about perspective taking in autism.

2.1.2.1 *Autism*

Autism is a multifarious condition which manifests in a variety of ways. It refers to a complex range of life-long, neurological and developmental conditions which affect the way an individual interacts with other people and her/his environment. A range of terms describe it including 'Autism Spectrum Disorder', 'Autistic Spectrum Disorder' or 'Autistic Spectrum Condition' in either the singular or plural. The choice in the term that authors and academics use often reflects an underlying understanding of autism as either 'deficit' or 'difference'. In this thesis, I adopt an **interactive model of disability** (Wedell, 1978; Wedell & Lindsay, 1980) which highlights difference over deficit. Within this model, disability is viewed as the result of an interaction between an individual with a disability and society. A biological or behavioural basis of a disability is appreciated within this model but is not seen as a permanent, unchanging deficit. Instead, it is regarded as having potential for mitigation through a change in the interaction between an individual with a disability and society. This emphasis on a 'change in the interaction between an individual with a disability and society' is consistent with the views of some individuals who are able to talk about their experiences of autism (O'Neill, 1998; Sinclair, 1992). As Amanda remarks in Nadesan's book:

To fix autism would first presuppose that I was broken, then that I needed to be made NT (neuro-typical). I don't need to be made NT. I do need to learn how to deal with the world, and to a large extent the world also needs to learn to deal with a much broader range of people than it does. (Amanda) (Nadesan, 2005: 214)

Researching autism within the frame of an interactive model of disability departs from the majority of studies about autism which cast it within a **medical model of disability**, where the focus is on innate deficits which require external interventions to mitigate them. As my interest in the research stemmed from observations which appeared to challenge core characteristics of autism, I wanted to use a model of disability which focused on the interaction between individuals with a disability and social context, and allowed for dialogue between different perspectives. The interactive model of disability enables me to do this. It

also allows me to view individuals with autism as people rather than as a collection of deficits which is in keeping with my own experiences of working with people with autism. This is why I refer to the students involved in this research as 'students with autism' and to autism as a 'condition' rather than a 'disorder' and value their viewpoints. Throughout this thesis and core to the **interpretative paradigm** within which I conduct this research (see p78), I use both comments by students participating in the research and autobiographical accounts by individuals with autism as ways in which to gain an understanding of the reality and experience of autism and learn from it. Indeed, I use the term 'autism' to describe the condition because this is the term familiar to and used by the students, as Fran's quote at the beginning of this chapter illustrates.

What are the core characteristics of autism? Autism is characterised by a 'triad of impairments' in social interaction, social communication and social imagination (Wing & Gould, 1979). These are often accompanied by stereotypic behaviour and a narrow range of interests. In the absence of clear neurological⁴ or genetic markers for autism, the condition is diagnosed behaviourally. The triad of impairments underpins diagnostic criteria for autism which are set out in **DSM IV-TR**, the American Psychiatric Associations Diagnostic Statistical Manual, 4th edition (2000) and **ICD-10**, the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases 10 (1992). Diagnostic criteria are broad. They bring under one umbrella individuals who experience extreme difficulty interacting with other people and their environment and individuals who can interact, but can reveal oddities in how they go about it. The more severe form of autism conforms to a description formulated by Leo Kanner who identified autism in the 1940s. In his paper *Autistic disturbances of affective contact* (1943), Kanner discusses a group of children who were isolated, oblivious to others or treated them as objects, had little speech or used idiosyncratic phrases, preferred sameness to spontaneity and exhibited stereotypic behaviours. This view of autism, often known as '**classical autism**', became the standard view of autism between the 1940s and 1980s. The less severe form of autism embraces individuals with cognitive strengths such as an excellent vocabulary or musical ability but who still exhibit social difficulties in similar domains to those with more severe autism. These individuals are comparable to those described by Hans Asperger, also in the 1940s (Asperger, 1991). He attributed the term 'autism' to a group of individuals with strong language abilities but who used language in strange ways and tended to have a specialist interest in particular subjects. Today, these individuals are often described as having '**high functioning autism**' or '**Asperger syndrome**'. A landmark study by Wing and Gould identifying a 'triad of impairments' captured a larger group of children than those fitting the definition of 'classical autism' (Wing & Gould, 1979). This gave rise to the idea of autism as a spectrum, the range of which I have already described. In the research reported in this thesis, I use items from diagnostic

⁴ Research published in August 2010 suggests that it may be possible in the near future to identify autism through neurological markers (Ecker et al., 2010).

criteria as a basis for considering how perspective taking typically manifests in the everyday behaviour of individuals with autism (see p33). This use also enables dialogue between typical manifestations and findings from the interactive context of drama education. I use the most recent diagnostic criteria, DSM IV-TR, because it is more common in research about autism. I set out DSM IV-TR in Figure I. Features relating to imagination sit within the section concerning qualitative impairments in communication.

Diagnostic Criteria for 299.00 Autistic Disorder from DSM IV-TR	
A: A total of six (or more) items from (1), (2), and (3), with at least two from (1), and one each from (2) and (3):	
1.	qualitative impairment in social interaction, as manifested by at least two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction b) failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level c) a lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g., by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest) d) lack of social or emotional reciprocity
2.	qualitative impairments in communication as manifested by at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gesture or mime) b) in individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others c) stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language d) lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level
3.	restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, as manifested by at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus b) apparently inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals c) stereotyped and repetitive motor manners (e.g., hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements) d) persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

Figure I: Diagnostic criteria for Autism taken from DSM IV-TR

Autism is consistently found to be more common amongst boys than girls at a ratio of four to one (Ehlers & Gillberg, 1993; Kanner, 1943). Although autism occurs across the intelligence quotient (IQ) spectrum, it is estimated that between 50% and 70% of all individuals with autism have an associated learning difficulty (Fombonne, 2003; LaMalfa, Lassi, Bertelli, Salvini, & Placidi, 2004). Overall prevalence studies suggest that one in 100 children in the UK – 116.1 per 10,000 children – hold a diagnosis of autism (Baird et al., 2006). However, a study incorporating undiagnosed children with autism suggests prevalence in the general population to be closer to one in 64 children – 157 per 10,000 (Baron-Cohen et al., 2009). This figure is startling when compared with prevalence rates in the 1960s of five people per 10,000 (Lotter, 1966). The widening of the definition of autism, improvements in tools for diagnosis and greater awareness about it are certainly contributing factors to a perceived growth in prevalence (Bishop, Whitehouse, Watt, & Line, 2008; Lawton, 2005). It remains

unclear, however, whether there is an actual increase in the number of cases which cannot be attributed to these factors.

Despite its identification almost seventy years ago, the cause or causes of autism remain unclear. Although research does indicate that autism has a neurological and genetic basis (AGP 2007; Baron-Cohen et al., 1999; Courchesne et al., 2001; Dapretto et al., 2006), the precise nature of these and their interaction with environmental factors is still to be determined. In contrast, compelling explanations for the behaviour of those with autism have been formulated in the domain of psychology and this is where perspective taking becomes relevant to autism. It has been suggested and demonstrated through experimental research that individuals with autism have a fundamental difficulty in perspective taking and that this difficulty accounts for the challenges in social interaction and communication that characterise the condition. Two theories dominate in relation to perspective taking in autism. In order to set out current thinking about perspective taking in autism, I review these theories and their respective empirical evidence in turn before considering their implications for everyday behaviour. The first theory posits that individuals with autism have a specific cognitive deficit in theory of mind and the second theory hypothesises that individuals with autism have a limited concept of persons. As my thesis concerns predominantly social aspects of autism, I do not consider theories which focus on explaining non-social aspects of the condition.

2.1.2.2 The theory of mind hypothesis of autism

The theory of mind hypothesis of autism explains the social and communication difficulties in terms of a cognitive deficit in perspective taking. This proposal was first put forward by Frith (1982) who suggested that the reason people with autism find it difficult to relate to other people is because they are not able to attribute mental states to themselves and other people. This ability is often referred to as 'theory of mind' and the phrase was first used by Premack and Woodruff (1978) to describe an ability they considered to be uniquely human. The idea of a theory of mind was developed by Dennett who argued that attributing mental states to other people would be the easiest way to explain and predict behaviour (Dennett, 1978). For example, I can predict how my husband's day at work has been by his movement, stance, gaze and speech as he walks through the door. A heavy step with his head and body weighted downwards, indirect gaze and low, flat voice (sometimes accompanied by a heavy sigh) invariably mean that he is frustrated and exhausted by the day. A light step, upright head and body, direct gaze with bright eyes accompanied by a smile and a higher, quicker voice usually mean he is happy and pleased by how his day has gone. Inferring what people are thinking or feeling is something that human beings do all the time and findings from experimental research indicate that, in typical development, theory of

mind develops between the ages of three and five when children are able to attribute beliefs and talk about intentions and desires (Wimmer & Perner, 1983).

Working with Frith and Leslie to demonstrate empirically whether individuals with autism have difficulty in theory of mind, Baron-Cohen designed and conducted a series of experiments. These experiments followed an argument put forward by Dennett that the way to decipher whether someone can understand belief is if they can understand that people hold false beliefs (Dennett, 1978). Adapting a test developed by Wimmer and Perner (1983) for young children, they devised the Sally-Anne test (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985). The study was conducted in the format shown in Figure II but with dolls rather than in the picture format. It was carried out on children with autism and matched peers of typically developing children and those with Down's syndrome⁵. The study found that there was a significant difference in the ability of those with autism to acknowledge false belief compared with matched peers suggesting a specific deficit in theory of mind that is independent from developmental delay.

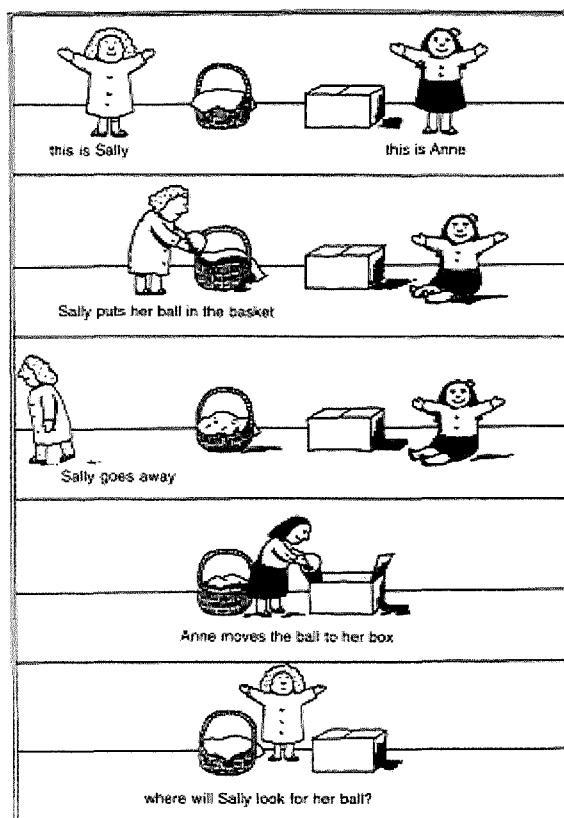


Figure II: A pictorial version of the Sally-Anne test (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1986)

Since this seminal experiment, others have followed using picture stories to take away the human element (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1986), real life scenarios to make the test

⁵ Children with Down's syndrome are considered the most suitable control for developmental delay.

more concrete (Leslie & Frith, 1988), computer animated stories to take away the human element and maximise a common interest in computers (Swettenham, 1990) and non-verbal scenarios to take away language elements (Call & Tomasello, 1999; Colle, Baron-Cohen, & Hill, 2007). These have all produced the same results indicating that, in an experimental context, individuals with autism tend not to shift their perspective to ascertain what someone else may think or consider another point of view; instead they say what they know. It is unclear whether similar findings would be reached through research conducted in real world social contexts and I intend to consider this point in the research presented in this thesis.

The results of the theory of mind studies have been interpreted in terms of an inability to meta-represent or to 'decouple' a primary representation from a secondary representation (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Leslie, 1987). The argument put forward is that individuals with autism fail false belief tests because they lack a cognitive module which enables theory of mind, the ability to attribute mental states to oneself and other people. Baron-Cohen extended this hypothesis to explain non-propositional social impairments in autism such as the perception of social stimuli and co-ordination of attention in joint attention activities. He argued for damage to a specific mechanism within the mind-reading system referred to as a Shared Attention Mechanism (SAM). In Baron-Cohen's view, SAM is pivotal in the functioning of theory of mind and, without it, theory of mind cannot function (Baron-Cohen, 1995). As an innate cognitive deficit, theory of mind ability is considered to be isolated from social experience but potentially triggered by it. The precise meaning of 'triggered by social experience' and whether this refers to a threshold of social experience required in order to trigger theory of mind is unclear and undetermined. However, it is clear that in autism, as in typical development, there is a positive correlation between theory of mind capacity as measured by false belief tests and interactive social abilities (Fombonne, Siddons, Achard, Frith, & Happé, 1994; Frith, Happé, & Siddons, 1994; Hughes, Soares-Boucaud, Hochman, & Frith, 1997; Peterson, Garnett, Kelly, & Attwood, 2009; Tager-Flusberg, 2003).

The investigation into theory of mind capacity in individuals with autism has been expanded beyond false belief to incorporate other mental states including knowledge, pretence and mental aspects of emotions. These studies have all been conducted under experimental conditions.

In relation to knowledge, studies investigating whether individuals with autism understand where knowledge comes from suggest that many do not realise that 'seeing' leads to 'knowing' (Baron-Cohen & Goodhart, 1994; Leslie & Frith, 1988). This is apparent in the random responses given by children with autism to a story where one person sees what is in a box, the other touches what is in a box and the child is then asked who knows what is in the box. This finding has implications for being clear about who knows what and suggests that individuals with autism may not share what they know because they do not recognise

that their knowledge is different from that of other people. Similarly, individuals with autism may repeat what they know to the same person because they do not recognise that once they have told something to someone else, that knowledge has been shared. The finding also has implications for deception which relies on keeping track of who knows what at a certain point in time and on an understanding that beliefs can differ and be manipulated. Indeed, studies focusing on deception indicate that individuals with autism do have difficulty identifying deception (Baron-Cohen, 1992).

Turning to pretence, studies show that individuals with autism seem to have difficulty distinguishing between appearance and reality (Baron-Cohen, 1989b). For example, if a child with autism is given a soap that looks like a teddy bear, s/he is more likely to say that it is one or the other rather than acknowledge its dual status. This suggests that individuals with autism do indeed find it difficult to 'decouple' and shift their perspective on an object. Studies finding difficulties in the spontaneous pretend play of individuals with autism (Baron-Cohen, 1987; Lewis & Boucher, 1988; Ungerer & Sigman, 1981; Wing & Gould, 1979) and their ability to produce novel representations (Craig & Baron-Cohen, 1999; Lewis & Boucher, 1991) bring additional support to this argument. However, these studies do show that individuals with autism can pretend and can produce novel representations. Such findings suggest that social context may influence pretence abilities and they weaken the original explanation of an absolute deficit in theory of mind. The implications of this finding are discussed below (see p30).

In the case of emotions, studies have shown that individuals with autism can understand physical causes of emotion but have difficulty understanding mental causes of emotion. For example, an individual with autism may be able to understand that falling down and cutting oneself can result in being upset or crying but may find it more difficult to understand that happiness can be the result of an achieved aspiration or the unexpected happening (Baron-Cohen, 1991). Experimental studies suggest particular difficulties in understanding complex mental states causing emotions (Baron-Cohen, Spitz, & Cross, 1993). Comparable to studies in relation to pretence, the fact that individuals with autism can understand some mental states in connection with emotions suggests the deficit is not absolute and that there are circumstances when individuals with autism can understand mental states.

More general studies focusing on the difference between mental and physical spheres similarly suggest disconnection in individuals with autism (Baron-Cohen, 1989b). As an example, compared with matched peers, when a group of children with autism were told about a boy who was thinking about a piece of cake and a girl who had been given a piece of cake and were asked who could eat it, they frequently did not discriminate between the one who was thinking about it and the one who actually had it. In the same vein, out of a list of words describing mental and physical states, individuals with autism appeared to pick out

mental state words at random (Baron-Cohen et al., 1994). Indeed, mental state words such as 'think', 'believe', 'hope' and 'pretend' tend not to be used as frequently in the language repertoire of individuals with autism compared with typically developing individuals (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1986; Tager-Flusberg, 1992). In typical development, the use of mental state words emerge after children are able to pass basic theory of mind tests which suggests that their limited use in individuals with autism may provide additional evidence for difficulties in theory of mind.

Connected with mental states is the interpretation of facial expressions and body language by individuals with autism. Within the theory of mind hypothesis of autism, difficulties individuals with autism have in making eye contact are emphasised because reading information from the eyes is considered to be a central part of the process of interpreting mental states (Baron-Cohen, 1995). Indeed, several experimental studies suggest that individuals with autism do not instinctively use either facial expressions, including information from people's eyes (Baron-Cohen, Campbell, Kamiloff-Smith, Grant, & Walker, 1995; Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, & Jolliffe, 1997; Klin et al., 1999), or body language to interpret mental states (Reed et al., 2007). However, there are studies which contradict these findings suggesting that the difficulties are not unanimous across individuals with autism and/or that social context may influence the use of facial expressions and body language (Back, Ropar, & Mitchell, 2007; Kaland, Callesen, Moller-Nielsen, Lykke Mortensen, & Smith, 2008; Roeyers, Buysse, Ponnet, & Pichal, 2001; Spek, Scholte, & Van Berekelaer-Onnes, 2010).

To add to the experimental evidence and explanatory capacity of the theory of mind hypothesis of autism, individuals with autism who can talk about their experience of the condition suggest that the hypothesis makes considerable sense. In her book about growing up with Asperger syndrome, Wendy Lawson explains:

Of course it's important to learn how to consider others, but all I could feel was my need. I still find it very difficult to put myself in 'other people's shoes'. I can only feel my need and my self - everything outside is foreign to me. (Lawson, 1998: 113)

It seems from Lawson that, although she has clarity about how she thinks and feels, she is unable to consider how other people think and feel which certainly suggests a disruption in theory of mind.

The theory of mind hypothesis of autism presents certain challenges.

First, there is a discrepancy between the age at which theory of mind starts to develop and the visible characteristics of autism. This suggests that the difficulties in autism are more fundamental to theory of mind capacity. As explained earlier, however, Baron-Cohen

extended the hypothesis to incorporate non-propositional social impairments in autism. These included pivotal skills connected with theory of mind development where deficits have also been noted in relation to autism such as joint attention (Baron-Cohen, 1989b; Charman, 2003), imitation (Charman et al., 1997; Meltzoff & Gopnik, 1993; Rogers & Pennington 1991), emotional responsiveness (Charman et al., 1997; Hobson, 1993b) and pretend play (Baron-Cohen, 1987; Leslie, 1987; Ungerer & Sigman, 1981; Wing & Gould, 1979). Theory of mind, therefore, could be seen to involve a broad range of interconnected skills.

Secondly, the theory of mind deficit is not pervasive across the autistic spectrum with a small, but notable, proportion passing theory of mind tests, 20% in the case of the first experiment (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985). This does not have to be problematic because it may suggest that individuals with autism use non-social strategies to solve theory of mind tests (Tager-Flusberg, 2007). Autobiographical accounts by people with autism support this suggestion, as Temple Grandin, an individual with high functioning autism, explains:

I was like a visitor from another planet who has to learn the strange ways of the aliens. I make social decisions based on intellect and logic. (Grandin, 1995: 43)

However, consistent with research findings relating to pretend play and mental aspects of emotion, there is an argument that the deficit in theory of mind is not absolute in autism but one within which there are gradations. This argument is strengthened by findings in three areas: those which show that individuals with autism may fail complex theory of mind tests even if they can pass simple theory of mind tests (Baron-Cohen, 1989a; Happé, 1994); those which suggest individuals with autism may be delayed in their acquisition of false belief (Bowler, 1992; Happé, 1995); and those which indicate a link between language competency and theory of mind abilities (Astington & Baird, 2005). Indeed, gradations of theory of mind capacity are also compatible with autism as a spectrum and perspective taking as emerging in infancy and developing beyond false belief.

Thirdly, as a purely cognitive theory, the theory of mind hypothesis of autism does not incorporate affective or conative dimensions of perspective taking and, as such, does not acknowledge the value of a social context in the process of understanding oneself and other people. In reviewing theory of mind studies, I have questioned whether the same findings would be reached from research in real world social contexts and suggested the potential influence of social context. There are a small number of studies which consider theory of mind in real world social contexts. These reveal areas of competence through the analysis of conversations between individuals with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome and members of their family and suggest that social context does have an influence by showing how family members elicited and/or enabled them (Kremner-Sadlik, 2004; Ochs, Kremner-

Sadlik, Sirota, & Solomon, 2004; Solomon, 2004). However, this avenue of research needs further exploration in relation to other areas of competence and other social contexts. My research considers both of these areas. Additionally, whereas there is evidence suggesting a relationship between social-environmental variables and theory of mind in typical development (Hughes et al., 2005), there is no compelling evidence for a modular mentalising capacity that is either genetic or neurological (Apperly, Samson, & Humphreys, 2005). Why, therefore, should there be a difference in individuals with autism? The second hypothesis in relation to perspective taking and autism applies a broader understanding of perspective taking to autism.

2.1.2.3 Autism as a limited concept of persons

A more integrated view of the perspective taking difficulty in individuals with autism is bound within an understanding of autism as a limited concept of persons (Hobson, 1993a). Within this view, perspective taking involves understanding that people have minds which is cognitive, affective and conative. Hobson notes:

to *think* about other human beings' states of mind and to adjust communication in relation to those states implicates *feelings* in relation to those others, and it is also to be *motivated* (or 'moved') to act and communicate accordingly. (Hobson, 2008: 391)

Social context is central to this view of perspective taking. In relation to autism, Hobson elaborates Kanner's proposal that children with autism have "disturbances of affective contact" (Kanner, 1943: 250). He argues that autism is an affective disorder which removes the motivation to engage with others and results in a limited concept of persons. The root of the difficulties in interpersonal understanding and symbolic functioning in autism lies in being less prone to perceiving, responding to, and engaging with bodily-expressed attitudes of other people (Hobson, 1993a). In typical development, infants are first drawn to identify with others and adopt other people's orientations of the world and they subsequently grasp that people hold different perspectives on a shared environment. In autism, however, there are perceived impairments in the ability to identify with other people's attitudes which potentially explains their difficulties in perspective taking and their limited awareness of themselves. As support for his theory, Hobson and his colleagues draw on clinical observations and experimental studies showing a disruption in interpersonal relatedness which hinders the ability to identify with the actions and attitudes of other people. The support, therefore, concerns disturbances in self-other equivalence and self-other difference which integrates cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of perspective taking.

In relation to self-other equivalence, these disturbances in individuals with autism include the frequency with which they make and break contact (Lord, 1984); share experiences and things (Baron-Cohen, 1989b; Curcio, 1978); imitate others (Dawson & Adams, 1984; Hobson

& Lee, 1999; Hobson & Meyer, 2005); and seek and maintain joint attention (Charman, 2003; Loveland & Landry, 1986; Mundy, 1995).

In relation to self-other difference, difficulties have been demonstrated in the ability of individuals with autism to understand, co-ordinate and express emotion (Garcia-Perez, Lee, & Hobson, 2007; Hobson, 1986a, 1986b; Kasari, Sigman, Mundy, & Yirmiya, 1990; Yirmiya, Sigman, Kasari, & Mundy, 1992) and talk about social and emotional aspects of the self (Lee & Hobson, 1998). Experimental studies also suggest that individuals with autism are less self conscious and have less of a propensity to show person-directed expressions of feelings. Findings indicate that, in comparison with matched peers, individuals with autism show less coyness, guilt and pride, even when they are aware of being the focus of attention (Capps, Yirmiya, & Sigman, 1992; Hobson, Chidambi, Lee, & Meyer, 2006; Kasari, Chamberlain, & Bauminger, 2001). These studies seem to suggest that there is dissociation between the awareness individuals with autism have in being observed and their ability to be affected by the attitudes of the people observing them. The studies about self-other equivalence and self-other difference have been extended in recent years to determine the extent to which individuals with autism can "identify with someone else and assume the other person's style of action and self-orientation as their own" (Garcia-Perez, Lee, & Hobson, 2007: 1311). Findings from this research suggested that there is a distinct lack in the ability of individuals with autism to be able to do this. The researchers concluded that these findings represent further evidence of integrated cognitive, affective and conative difficulties in perspective taking in autism.

Indeed, individuals able to talk about experiences of autism do suggest that their abilities to relate to others are broader than cognitive. The following comment by an individual with autism, for example, suggests that the concept of people is constrained in far more ways than the mental.

I really didn't know there were people until I was seven years old. I then suddenly realised there were people. But not like you do. I still have to remind myself that there are people. (Cohen, 1980: 388)

Studies by Hobson and his colleagues are valuable in giving a detailed picture of perspective taking in autism compared with typical development, as manifest in interpersonal relations. They also provide a clearer, more integrated picture of how perspective taking may manifest in real world social contexts. The picture given is consistent with a view of perspective taking as emerging in infancy and developing beyond false belief and of there being gradations of perspective taking in individuals with autism. However, the theory presents challenges. Proponents of those who view autism as a deficit in theory of mind (Leslie & Frith, 1990) criticise the theory because it does not provide mechanisms through which deficits in perspective taking arise and because the experimental evidence supports the

theory but does not directly test it. I suggest, however, that there is a more serious challenge which relates to the way in which the studies relating to the theory are designed. Although the studies within this understanding of autism provide a broader view of perspective taking that is more integrated with real world social contexts, they are still conducted experimentally and there are not comparable studies that analyse closely either perspective taking in real world social contexts or eliciting and/or enabling factors within these contexts⁶. As a result, just as “little is known about the competence of autistic children to participate in everyday narrative discourse with family members, teachers and peers, outside of laboratory environments” (Solomon, 2004: 254), little is known about perspective taking more generally in real world social contexts.

2.1.2.4 Perspective taking in autism in this thesis

My review of the two theories and the experimental evidence in relation to them has illustrated how the perspective taking difficulty in autism can be viewed. My purpose is not to subscribe to either one or other of these theories at this stage but to focus on two important areas for further investigation that the review has revealed: first, the need to look at perspective taking in individuals with autism in real world social contexts to understand more clearly its nature; secondly, the need to ascertain whether and how social context can influence perspective taking. These are two points that I consider as part of this research.

As my interest is with perspective taking in context, I clarify in the next section how perspective taking can manifest in the everyday behaviour of individuals with autism. This is so that I can consider typical manifestations with findings from the interactive context of drama education.

2.1.3 How does perspective taking manifest in the everyday behaviour of individuals with autism?

In the research reported in this thesis, I take the view that inferences about perspective taking can be made by observing how an individual interacts and communicates with other people as well as how s/he engages in make-believe. In order to be clear about how perspective taking difficulties manifest typically in the everyday behaviour of individuals with autism, I review research using diagnostic criteria of DSM IV-TR as a basis. This is so that I can compare these with observations from the interactive context of drama education and such an approach is consistent with working within the framework of an interactive model of disability. Items in the diagnostic criteria with the most relevance to perspective taking include those categorised as qualitative impairments in social interaction and communication. I focus on six items:

⁶ There are indications that this direction is starting to be explored (D. C. Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007).

1. Reciprocating socially
2. Initiating interaction with others
3. Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others
4. Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe
5. Reciprocating emotionally
6. Forming peer relationships

The terminology that I use is broadly the same as in the diagnostic criteria (see p24) with the exception of splitting 'social and emotional reciprocity' into two items and referring to 'initiating interaction' rather than 'conversation' to account for interactions that are initiated which are not based on speech. In this thesis, I refer to each item as an **aspect of perspective taking** because it reflects perspective taking in everyday life. In the following sections, I outline each aspect in turn clarifying its relationship to perspective taking and describing how it can manifest in individuals with autism. This description juxtaposes findings from experimental research with autobiographical accounts from individuals with autism to illustrate how findings can be reflected in the everyday experiences of individuals with autism.

2.1.3.1 Reciprocating socially

Reciprocating socially requires an understanding that other people are separate from the self and may think differently. Understanding that other people are different from the self, and taking this into account when relating to them, allows for effective co-operation.

There are often clear differences in how individuals with autism interact with others compared with typical individuals. Three examples clarify. First, several experimental studies suggest an early lack in elicited and spontaneous imitation compared with typical development and later difficulties in imitation on demand or a requirement to learn through imitation (Hobson & Lee, 1999; Hobson & Meyer, 2005; Rogers, 1999; Rogers & Pennington 1991; Stone & Caro-Martinez, 1990). Secondly, experimental studies indicate that individuals with autism do not take into account their interlocutor's perspective when responding to questions and either ignore questions posed towards them or do not offer new and/or relevant information compared with matched peers (Capps, Kehres, & Sigman, 1998; Frith, 1989). Individuals with autism show particular difficulties responding to questions or instructions with an inferential or abstract component such as those drawing on the past or future, imagination or emotions (Baron-Cohen, 1988; Tager-Flusberg, 1992, 1993, 1994). Thirdly, difficulties in turn taking are manifest in the one-sidedness of interactions (Attwood, 2000: 85-86) and in maintaining reciprocal interactions and conversations (Tager-Flusberg & Anderson, 1991). Autobiographical accounts confirm difficulties in social reciprocity. These

are often in terms of not realising that a response is required, as Therese Jolliffe, a woman with autism, explains:

It was ages before I realised that people speaking might be demanding my attention. (Jolliffe, Lansdown, & Robinson, 1992: 14)

2.1.3.2 Initiating interaction with others

Initiating interaction with others can reflect an understanding that people have access to different information and knowledge which can be shared and it also reveals motivation to connect with other people.

Notable difficulties that individuals with autism experience in initiating interaction with others are illustrated in the following three examples. First, "extreme autistic aloneness" was noted by Kanner as one of the key characteristics of the children he identified with "infantile autism" (Kanner, 1943: 242). Extreme autistic aloneness has been demonstrated experimentally through the reduced frequency of spontaneous verbal and nonverbal communication compared with individuals with developmental delay, language impairment and typically developing individuals (Hauck, Fein, Waterhouse, & Feinstein, 1995; Loveland, Landry, Hughes, Hall, & McEvoy, 1988; Stone, Ousley, Yoder, Hogan, & Hepburn, 1997). Secondly, approximately one third (Bryson, 1996) to one half (Lord & Paul, 1997) of individuals diagnosed with autism never develop functional speech and this lack of functional speech rarely appears to be compensated for in other ways (Howlin, 1999; Mundy, Sigman, & Kasari, 1994). This means individuals with autism often have less mutual **modes of communication** which can hinder both actual and recognised attempts to initiate interaction with others. By mutual modes of communication, I refer to the multitude of ways in which humans communicate including gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech. These different modes of communication are complicated in autism where individuals may use them in idiosyncratic ways and this is one of the reasons why I incorporate multimodal approaches to collecting and analysing data in this research (see p98). Thirdly, individuals with autism who do initiate interactions may not take into account the relevance of what they are saying to the person to whom it is directed, language may be more of a monologue than a dialogue and individuals may appear to fail to respond to attempts to engage or sustain a conversation (Lord & Paul, 1997; Tager-Flusberg & Anderson, 1991). This point links with reciprocating socially discussed earlier. Of initiating interaction, Temple Grandin remarks:

Not being able to speak was an utter frustration ... My mother and teachers wondered why I screamed. Screaming was the only way I could communicate. Often I would logically think to myself, "I am going to scream now because I want to tell somebody I don't want to do something". (Grandin, 1992: 105)

Grandin's difficulty relates to the second point described above. Without speech, she could not tell people what she wanted or did not want to do and those close to her were not able to interpret the ways in which she could communicate.

2.1.3.3 Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people

Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people demonstrates joint attention which is regarded as a pivotal skill in relation to the narrow view of perspective taking as theory of mind and as evidence of perspective taking within a broader view. Joint attention is regarded as a pivotal skill in relation to theory of mind because it provides opportunities to learn about other people's communicative intentions. Gaze alternation, within joint attention, can also be interpreted as an awareness of mental states (Tomasello, 1995, 1999). Sharing enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people suggests both an understanding of self-other difference and self-other equivalence as there is some recognition that one's own knowledge and intentions are different from those of other people and that additional enjoyment can be derived through sharing experiences.

Individuals with autism do seek social attention and can show attachment behaviours (Shapiro, Sherman, Calamari, & Koch, 1987; Sigman, Mundy, & Ungerer, 1989). There are clear difficulties, however, in the ways in which they spontaneously seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements. Two examples illustrate this. First, there is often a lack of normal eye contact with individuals with autism failing to orientate towards other people (Dawson, Meltzoff, Osterling, Rinaldi, & Brown, 1998; Mundy, Sigman, Ungerer, & Sherman, 1986; Willemsen-Swinkles, Buitelaar, Weijen, & van Engeland, 1998), alternate their gaze (Phillips, Baron-Cohen, & Rutter, 1992) and accompany eye contact with facial expressions and body language (Dawson, Hill, Spencer, Galpert, & Watson, 1990). Secondly, there can be a lack of declarative pointing and spontaneous sharing of experiences compared with typical peers (Baron-Cohen, 1989b; Loveland & Landry, 1986; Wimpory, Hobson, Williams, & Nash, 2000).

An autobiographical account by Jasmine Lee O'Neill suggests that the reason individuals with autism may not appear to share is two-fold. First, they may prefer to enjoy experiences on their own:

My bubble keeps me in, and others out, and that is how I like it. I'm not shut out from feeling love, or from enjoying a rainbow or ocean waves, however. I am not shut out from life itself. (O'Neill, 1998: 201)

Secondly, and linked with the point about mutual modes of communication, they may share their experiences but not in a conventional way:

All autistics communicate, whether by speech, sign, typing, writing, singing, moving, dancing, throwing a tantrum, laughing. Our often unconventional modes of expressing feelings need to be recognised so that we are free. (O'Neill, 1998: 201)

2.1.3.4 Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe

Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe represents an ability to 'decouple' reality from pretence, flexibility in shifting between perspectives and motivation and enjoyment in doing so.

In experimental studies of individuals with autism, a lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe has been repeatedly demonstrated in comparison with matched peers of typically developing children and children with Down's syndrome. Early studies revealed a difficulty in spontaneously engaging in both pretend and shared play compared with matched peers (Baron-Cohen, 1987; Lewis & Boucher, 1988; Ungerer & Sigman, 1981; Wing & Gould, 1979). Closer analysis of pretend play in individuals with autism in these studies reveals that these individuals can engage in pretence when it is structured and/or elicited by adults and peers. Nevertheless, even in these cases, the instances of pretence are less frequent, novel and complex compared with matched peers with and without learning difficulties (Charman & Baron-Cohen, 1997; Jarrold, 2003; Jarrold, Boucher, & Smith, 1996; Lewis & Boucher, 1995). Indeed several studies focusing on creativity in autism suggest that creativity is less varied in individuals with autism compared with typical peers (Craig & Baron-Cohen, 1999; Lewis & Boucher, 1991; Turner, 1999).

On his website providing guidelines to other people with autism, Daniel Hawthorne explains challenges he experiences in relation to realism which suggests difficulties in understanding mental states and relating them to reality:

Indeed, I have always had difficulty grasping the concept of realism. For instance, my mind freely accepted as real cartoon characters just because they seemed to talk and move around; nevertheless, it had difficulty accepting that people I had never seen were real, including my first grade teacher, whom I had yet to meet. (Hawthorne, 2009)

In contrast, in a letter to MAAP Services which provides information and advice to people and families with more advanced individuals with autism, Asperger syndrome and pervasive development disorder, Peter Meyers suggests an understanding of pretence but a distinct lack of motivation to engage with it.

I believe I have the right to think the way I do. It is my right. I like to help people, it is my way. I see no need for game playing, pretence, or non-constructive behavior. It wastes my time and energy. (Meyers, 2009)

2.1.3.5 *Reciprocating emotionally*

Reciprocating emotionally reflects an understanding of the mental aspects of emotions as well as the ability to affectively attune with other people.

In individuals with autism there is often a perceived disturbance in emotional reciprocity and two examples clarify this. First, individuals with autism can show difficulties in expressing emotions which is reflected in the idiosyncratic use of facial expressions and body language which often fail to compensate for a lack of verbal ability (Howlin, Baron-Cohen, & Hadwin, 1999; Le Couteur et al., 1989). Secondly, individuals with autism often show difficulties in understanding emotions at a physical and mental level. Compared with matched peers, for example, individuals with autism tend not to interpret correctly facial expressions (Dawson, Webb, & McPartland, 2005; Klin et al., 1999) and body language (Reed et al., 2007).

Autobiographical accounts emphasise that individuals with autism do have emotions but that they cannot always intuitively express or explain how they feel. Jim Sinclair explains:

There's a difference between *being aware of one's feelings* and *knowing what the feelings are called*. There's also a difference between *having feelings* and *having automatic connections between feelings and expressions* ... through all this condescending concern about feelings and emotional issues, no one ever bothered to explain to me what the words meant! No one ever told me that they expected to see feelings on my face, or that it confused them when I used words without showing corresponding expressions. No one explained what the signals were or how to use them. They simply assumed that if *they* could not see my feelings, *I* could not *feel* them. I think this shows a serious lack of perspective-taking! (Sinclair, 1992: 297)

2.1.3.6 *Forming peer relationships*

I deliberately place 'forming peer relationships' at the end of my review of how aspects of perspective taking manifest in everyday life because it involves much of what I have already discussed.

Two examples illustrate specific difficulties individuals with autism show in relation to forming peer relationships. First, individuals with autism interact less with peers compared with adults and this has been demonstrated in experimental studies incorporating matched peers (Brown & Whiten, 2000; Frith, 1989; Lord, 1993; Lord & Magill, 1989). Secondly, individuals with autism often experience difficulties making friends in a conventional sense. Indeed, in one study, 75% of children with autism were described by their parents as never having had a friend (Le Couteur et al., 1989). However, it should be noted that the extent to which the children in this study had been presented with opportunities to make friends is not clear.

In describing her experiences of growing up with Asperger syndrome, Wendy Lawson provides a very personal insight:

As I approached my teenage years, I began to want friends, to share my life with others. I understood friendship was valuable and I did not want to be different any more. However, I lacked the social skills and the 'know-how' of friendship building. (Lawson, 1998: 16)

It is clear here that Lawson understood the notion of friendship and knew that it was important but her difficulty lay in knowing how to go about making and maintaining friends. As I have explained, difficulties in any of the aspects already discussed contribute to the ability to successfully form relationships with peers.

2.1.4 Summary: Perspective taking and individuals with autism

The two theories focusing on perspective taking in individuals with autism and evidence about how perspective taking difficulties can manifest in the everyday life of individuals with autism illustrate the perspective taking difficulty but also highlight a dearth of research about perspective taking in individuals with autism in real world social contexts. Through the research reported in this thesis, I aim to inform understanding of perspective taking in autism in three ways:

- By examining perspective taking as manifested in social interaction and communication in real world social contexts. The majority of studies focusing on perspective taking in individuals with autism take place in an experimental context or link perspective taking abilities in theory of mind tests with social skills in prescribed measures as reported by a parent or carer. The small number of studies that do focus on individuals with autism in real world social contexts concentrate on what can be inferred from their conversations (Kremler-Sadlik, 2004; Ochs, Kremler-Sadlik, Sirota, & Solomon, 2004; Solomon, 2004) and do not analyse either the range of aspects of perspective taking covered in this research or ascertain whether areas of difficulty are fixed or if there can be development over time.
- By exploring the nature of perspective taking in the same individuals with autism across real world social contexts. Reviews of perspective taking in typical development are highlighting the need to investigate both context and ways in which "distinct elements of social interaction act in concert" (Hughes & Leekam, 2004: 608). In typically developing children, for example, they are twice as likely to refer to inner states in pretend play contexts compared with non-pretend play contexts (Hughes & Dunn, 1997) and to engage in deception in emotionally charged situations (Newton, Reddy, & Bull, 2000). In the case of individuals with autism,

there is a need to identify whether certain aspects of perspective taking are observed more in some contexts than in others to ascertain whether there is a link between perspective taking in autism and social context. The research reported in this thesis addresses such a line of enquiry.

- By interrogating factors which may be associated with perspective taking. Following on from the examples relating to typical development, there is a recognised need to understand why individuals may behave in different ways in different contexts. In their review of perspective taking in typical development, Carpendale and Lewis point to the need to understand aspects of interaction which are most valuable in promoting perspective taking (2006). The avenue also points to further research in relation to individuals with autism, particularly in light of a conundrum concerning training individuals with autism in theory of mind skills where success in training does not translate into visible differences in social interaction and communication (Hadwin, Baron-Cohen, Howlin, & Hill, 1997; Ozonoff & Miller, 1995). Similarly, training in social and communication skills does not appear to impact on theory of mind skills (Chen & Bernard-Opitz, 2000). These findings suggest that theory of mind tests and training programmes to teach individuals with autism to pass theory of mind tests do not capture the complexity and flexibility of perspective taking in real world social contexts. Part of the task of this research is to observe manifestations of perspective taking in real world social contexts and ascertain factors in these contexts which appear to elicit and/or enable perspective taking.

The context I focus on in the research reported in this thesis is the interactive context of drama education. Before focusing on drama education per se, I turn first to interactive approaches for individuals with autism.

2.2 Interactive approaches and individuals with autism

2.2.1 What are interactive approaches for individuals with autism?

In this thesis, I place drama education under the umbrella of **interactive** educational approaches and interventions. These approaches focus on developing reciprocal relationships through interaction and are sometimes referred to as '**transactional**' or '**social pragmatic**' approaches. A focus on socio-communicative features of autism in educational approaches and interventions is relatively recent and under researched compared with approaches that attempt to modify behavioural consequences (Charman & Stone, 2006). The interest in such approaches with individuals with autism followed trends in special education and grew out of a desire to move away from behavioural approaches and towards approaches in education that value process and understanding over product and skills (Nind, 2000: 184). Through the research reported in this thesis, I aim to contribute to understanding more clearly processes and outcomes of interactive approaches in general as well as identify what the specific approach of drama education can offer.

A range of approaches under the umbrella of interactive approaches have been applied to or devised specifically for individuals with autism. I refer to four interactive approaches used with individuals with autism as part of the ensuing discussion to enable me to give an overview of whether interactive approaches can elicit and/or enable perspective taking and, if they can, what factors are associated with it:

1. **Intensive Interaction** (Nind & Hewett, 1994) is an approach to teaching the fundamentals of communication to individuals who have severe learning difficulties and/or autism.
2. **DIR Floortime** (Greenspan, 1992; Wieder & Greenspan, 2001) is a form of play therapy that uses interactions and relationships to teach individuals with developmental delay. The approach is called the **Developmental, Individual-difference, Relationship-based model**. DIR Floortime has many similarities with Options, also known as the Son-Rise Program (Kaufman, 1976, 1994).
3. **Music therapy** (Berger, 2002; Wimpory, Chadwick, & Nash, 1995) is an approach to facilitating communication with individuals with autism, through an alternative form of communication.
4. **Integrated Play Groups** (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993) are designed to support individuals with autism in mutually enjoyed play experiences with typical peers and siblings.

Aside from the focus these interactive approaches have on developing reciprocal relationships through interactions, interactive approaches have in common a particular theoretical basis in relation to human development which is either explicit or implicit within the approach. The theoretical basis of interactive approaches forms the focus of the next section. I consider it in a certain amount of detail because it has not previously been given due consideration in relation to autism with only passing references (Sherratt & Peter, 2002: 2-3; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993: 470) and yet has relevance for identifying factors and understanding circumstances under which perspective taking may be shown in individuals with autism in interactive contexts.

2.2.2 What is the theoretical basis of interactive approaches?

The theoretical stance adopted in relation to learning in interactive approaches is **sociocultural** and views development as dependant on an individual's interactions with more capable others. Within this view, perspective taking develops through experience of and interaction with other people. Even though individuals with autism may find it difficult to learn instinctively from interaction (Jordan & Powell, 1995; Trevarthen, Aitken, Papoudi, & Robarts, 1998), the philosophy behind interactive approaches is that with support they can learn through interaction and enjoy the benefits observed in typical development from learning through interaction.

A founding figure of the sociocultural theory of human development is Russian psychologist, Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1896-1934). For the purposes of this thesis, I take three aspects from his writing which have relevance for interactive approaches: first, the role of social interaction in development; secondly, the role of play in development; thirdly, the course of typical and atypical development. I expand upon each of these aspects in turn.

2.2.2.1 The role of social interaction in development

Within Vygotsky's framework, development is dynamic and cannot be explained by one factor which contrasts with behaviourism or biological reductionism. Instead, Vygotsky theorises that mental development has two parts: biological and social. The mental capacities that develop biologically Vygotsky calls the 'lower mental functions' and these include thinking processes that are arguably 'simple' and relatively reactive to the immediate environment such as capacities of perception and attention. Through interaction with others in a social or educational context, using 'psychological tools' or modes of communication such as language, works of art and systems of counting, these can transform into 'higher mental functions'. Higher mental functions are more 'complex' thinking processes which

require individual direction and allow for separation from the immediate environment. They include abstract reasoning, conceptual understanding, logical memory, voluntary attention, planning and decision making. It is through these higher mental functions that a full understanding of the self and other people or the ability to take the perspective of another develops. Social interaction, therefore, plays a critical role in development because it enables the development of higher mental functions which allow independent thinking, reasoning and perspective taking. But can social interaction influence perspective taking in individuals with autism? If it can, how does it?

The transformation through which social processes become embedded in individual thinking is referred to by Vygotsky as '**internalisation**'. This is a complex process which, by Vygotsky's own admission, is little understood. Vygotsky explains it in the following way:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978b: 57)

Problem-solving processes, therefore, are first evidenced through *interpersonal* interactions that occur between an individual and other people. They are later evidenced on an individual or *intrapersonal* level where they become part of an individual's independent repertoire. Internalisation, however, is not simply the imitation of what goes on in a social context but transformation because by learning to use strategies, an individual broadens what s/he can engage with. Internalisation is difficult to capture but, comparable to perspective taking, inferences about it can be made through an individual's speech and action. But can the speech and action of an individual with autism give an insight into her/his understanding of different aspects of perspective taking?

The sociocultural framework set out by Vygotsky is based on an individual being able to engage with the social context and interact with other people. There are a variety of ways through which an individual can engage with other people including language, works of art and music. These are products of social evolution enabling more efficient ways of engaging with others and Vygotsky refers to them as 'psychological tools'. In his framework, language is the most important because it announces a qualitatively new stage in development and has two functions. In its external form as speech, language enables meaningful communication between people. In its internal form as inner speech, language becomes a core tool in self-regulation of one's own behaviour. Does this emphasis on language, however, render Vygotsky's theory irrelevant for individuals with autism who may not develop fluent language? I do not think this is necessarily the case because Vygotsky does temper the emphasis on language to finding mutual modes of communication when discussing individuals with language difficulties (Rieber & Carton, 1993). The key point

appears to be finding psychological tools with which to engage because they enable access to the social context and, as a result, stimulate higher mental functioning through which perspective taking develops. This is a reason why I incorporate multimodality into the approach for data collection and analysis in this research because it enables different modes of communication through which individuals engage with other people to be captured and analysed (see p98).

The way in which Vygotsky explains interaction with others as stimulating development is through a concept he refers to as the **zone of proximal development** or **ZPD**. The ZPD is defined as:

... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978a: 86)

The ZPD operates on the principle that knowledge is constructed socially and that what an individual can do with help today, s/he can do independently tomorrow. The concept has implications for how abilities are perceived and teaching is approached.

In relation to abilities, the concept of the ZPD changes the focus from actual level of ability to potential ability. Indeed, Vygotsky argued against static measures of development such as IQ precisely because they focus on already matured functions and do not take into account potential development which can vary independently from the actual level of development. Vygotsky explains:

Now imagine that I do not terminate my study at this point, but only begin it. These children seem to be capable of handling problems up to an eight-year-old's level, but not beyond that. Suppose that I show them various different ways of dealing with the problem. Different experimenters might employ different modes of demonstration in different cases: some might run through an entire demonstration and ask the children to repeat it; others might initiate the solution and ask the child to finish it; or offer leading questions. In short, in some way or another I propose that the children solve the problem with my assistance. Under these circumstances it turns out that the first child can deal with problems up to a twelve-year-old's level, the second up to a nine-year-old's. Now, are these children mentally the same? (Vygotsky, 1978a: 86)

In relation to teaching approaches, the ZPD sets out a formula where learning is in advance of development. Rather than teaching at an individual's level of development where s/he can potentially stand still or even regress, creating a ZPD opens up the opportunity to challenge an individual and then scaffold her/him to competence.

Apart from addressing the importance of language or at least finding mutual modes of communication, Vygotsky does not define the nature of guidance or collaboration by or with

more experienced others. This may be intentional and serve to highlight that teaching should be flexible. Vygotsky's followers, however, have addressed the nature of guidance and collaboration with a variety of metaphors including '**scaffolding**' (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) which refers to the ways in which more experienced others can provide support to enable an individual to bridge the ZPD; '**guided participation**' (Rogoff, 1990) which refers to the varied ways that individuals learn as they participate in and are guided by the values and practices of their communities; '**collaborative learning**' where teachers and students work together or '**peer tutoring**' where more capable peers teach their less capable counterparts. Tharp defines the nature of assistance even more closely by identifying seven '**means of assistance**'. These include instructing, modelling, questioning, cognitive structuring (explaining), task structuring (breaking down tasks), contingency management (encouraging, positively or negatively) and giving feedback (Tharp, 1993). Means of assistance can be equally applied to peers as a way of defining how peers engage in collaborative learning and peer tutoring (Gnadinger, 2008). In this thesis, I use means of assistance as a way of analysing and defining precisely how teachers and peers appear to elicit and/or enable perspective taking in individuals with autism (see p162).

Working in the ZPD, therefore, is not simply about exposure to a social context but interaction and engagement with it. In interactive approaches, the individual with autism is an active participant and the adult or typical peer in the case of Integrated Play Groups (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993) builds on initiations from the individual with autism through scaffolding or assisting approaches. In the research reported in this thesis, I do not examine the content or drama skills that individuals with autism learn in their drama sessions, nor do I consider these in relation to teaching approach. My concern is with perspective taking (which, at times, may include some of the content or skills) and ascertaining whether individuals with autism show perspective taking in a drama context. If they do, I interrogate why this is the case and whether it can be explained socioculturally. Therefore, I am interested in uncovering how adults or more capable peers engage with individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama including uncovering modes of communication they may use and how they may scaffold or assist to support individuals with autism with perspective taking.

2.2.2.2 The role of play in development

The importance of play in development as outlined by Vygotsky underpins interactive educational approaches and interventions for individuals with autism in play (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993) and drama contexts (Sherratt & Peter, 2002). In a paper dedicated to the role of play in development, Vygotsky underscored three factors (Vygotsky, 1976).

First, play is a pivotal activity on the way to abstract thinking and symbolism proper. It marks a step forward in development where an individual learns to act independently from immediate perception and detach word meanings from their objects and actions.

Secondly, play raises self-awareness and self-control which is important in terms of perspective taking where an individual is able to think objectively about the self. This is primarily through the paradox of dual affect where the real and the imaginary sit side by side. For example:

The child weeps in play as a patient, but revels as a player. In play the child renounces his immediate impulse, co-ordinating every act of his behaviour with the rule of the game. (Vygotsky, 1976: 548-549)

In play an individual becomes consciously aware of her/his own actions and aware that every object and action has a meaning. It is the juxtaposition of these two affects of the real and the imaginary which heighten attention. These actions, however, are not free but bound by rules which impose constraints and necessitate self-control in the play situation. This, in turn, is considered to add to the pleasure of it.

Thirdly, through activity which takes place in the realm of pretence, an individual creates her/his own ZPD where what s/he is doing is above what s/he can typically do (see p44). This is because in pretence an individual can imitate cultural conventions, explore them and push boundaries.

In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behaviour. (Vygotsky, 1976: 552)

The role of others in pretend scenarios can also facilitate this process.

As I explained earlier, children with autism do not typically appear to engage in pretend play, either because of internal reluctance or lack of incentive (Jarrold, 2003). If play is as important for development as Vygotsky argues, this means that individuals with autism are missing out on a valuable part of development – namely of social development – that takes place in the first few years of life. This includes accessing a peer culture, learning and practising new skills in a safe and secure environment and learning about the self, other people and relations between them. Recognition of the importance of play in typical development (Forys & McCune-Nicholich, 1984) has led to growing interest in interactive play approaches for children with autism including DIR Floortime (Greenspan, 1992; Wieder & Greenspan, 2001), Integrated Play Groups (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993) and Options (Kaufman, 1976, 1994). It is also central in the rationale for engaging individuals with autism

in drama (Sherratt & Peter, 2002) and I expand upon this in the next section (see p61). Within this rationale, drama is regarded as part of the play continuum and a context in which individuals with autism can work explicitly with and practise play skills that may not have been used and enhanced in early development. As Peter explains:

It may be that drama can expedite the development of pretend play in children with autism: through an apprenticeship approach, they may be taught explicitly how to make their play more complex and how representation works, and so benefit from natural learning processes seen in typical development. (Peter, 2005: 7)

The features of play that Vygotsky identifies require perspective taking. Through the research reported in this thesis, I seek to identify whether these features are visible in individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama and, if they are, how they manifest and the circumstances under which they manifest.

2.2.2.3 The course of typical and atypical development

An important dimension of Vygotsky's work and a sociocultural framework is the way in which individuals with disabilities are viewed. Vygotsky's work was before autism had been identified and may not have been directed specifically at individuals referred to as having autism today. However, I consider the views Vygotsky held about individuals with disabilities to have relevance and regard this research as an opportunity to investigate how applicable they are for individuals with autism. Within Vygotsky's framework, typical and atypical development take a similar course with social interaction being integral to both. A disability, however, hinders the extent to which an individual can engage with the social context which can stymie development. It is, therefore, not the biological nature of the disability *per se* which is the primary problem in the development of those with a disability, but the social difficulties which result from it. Addressing the biological nature of the disability should, therefore, be only one part of compensating for it. The other is preventing secondary social difficulties and these can be mitigated through what Vygotsky terms a "positive differential approach" (Knox & Stevens, 1993: 19). A positive differential approach is where the focus is on strengths rather than weaknesses and emphasis is placed on what an individual can do with the support of others rather than independently.

The notion of a positive differential approach is consistent with the interactive model of disability (Wedell, 1978; Wedell & Lindsay, 1980) that I adopt in this research where the biological or behavioural basis is appreciated but it is highlighted that through a change in the interaction between an individual with a disability and society, the disability can be mitigated (see p22). Indeed, interactive educational approaches and interventions are about building bridges between people through mutual interaction as Powell notes, "using the

analogy of development within the social domain being a kind of dance: then both partners need to learn to move together if synchrony is to be achieved" (2000: 109).

In this research, I aim to clarify what this positive differential approach looks like when applied to individuals with autism by seeking to identify when, and understand more clearly how, more experienced others engage in mutual interaction with individuals with autism and interrogating whether it is under these circumstances that perspective taking is shown.

2.2.2.4 Differences between interactive approaches and other approaches for individuals with autism

Before considering research about interactive approaches and individuals with autism, I clarify two important differences between interactive approaches and other approaches for individuals with autism.

First, interactive approaches are framed within everyday interactions and the process of the interaction is of utmost importance. Being able to interact socially and communicate within interactive approaches is bound with a concept of self and other people that cannot be reduced to a set of specific skills but involves a complex interplay of abilities in affective, conative and cognitive domains that are learnt through experience and active use. I am interested in capturing this experience and active use in context. Interactive approaches contrast with behaviourist approaches which are based on Skinner's theory of operant conditioning where undesirable behaviours can be 'unlearned' and more adaptive behaviours and skills 'learned' through stimulus, response and reinforcement (Skinner, 1953). In behaviourist approaches, the learning is teacher-centred with the learner taking a relatively passive role in contrast. The focus is on learning specific skills primarily through discrete trial approaches where skills are broken down and presented in multiple, successive trials through the use of explicit prompting, prompt fading and contingent reinforcement. In relation to autism, social skills (Bellini, Peters, Benner, & Hopf, 2007; Matson, Matson, & Rivet, 2007; Rao, Beidel, & Murray, 2008; Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007), communication skills (Aldred, Green, & Adams, 2004; Carr & Felce, 2007; Sherer et al., 2001), play skills with and without peers (Goldstein & Cisar, 1992; Goldstein, Wickstrom, Hoyson, Jamieson, & Odom, 1988; Thorp, Stahmer, & Schreibman, 1995) and theory of mind skills (Feng, Lo, Tsai, & Cartledge, 2008; Gevers, Clifford, Mager, & Boer, 2006) have been taught successfully using behaviourist principles. Indeed, behaviourist approaches have considerable research evidence testifying their success (Green, 1996; Zachor, Ben-Itzhak, Rabinovich, & Lahat, 2007) and are used widely in relation to autism, particularly in the form of Applied Behavioural Analysis (Lovaas & Smith, 1989). The research in relation to interactive approaches is diminutive in contrast and needs expanding. My research contributes to this need.

Secondly, interactive approaches involve interaction with people in real world social contexts. This contrasts with approaches which focus on learning social, communication and theory of mind skills out of context or through video modelling (MacDonald & Clark, 2005) and DVDs (Baron-Cohen, 2002). As my focus is on perspective taking in real world social contexts and the circumstances under which it occurs, I do not consider approaches which aim to teach skills related to it directly and/or out of context.

2.2.3 What research exists about interactive approaches and individuals with autism?

In order to provide an overview of existing research about interactive approaches and individuals with autism, I integrate findings from four interactive approaches. These interactive approaches include Intensive Interaction, DIR Floortime, music therapy and Integrated Play Groups (see p41). I consider methodological challenges pertaining to research about interactive approaches and lessons learnt from them for the research at hand before reviewing their findings.

In general, interactive approaches have a strong evidence base for their underlying principles but there is consensus that specific approaches require further investigation before a solid understanding of process and outcomes can be reached when applied to individuals with autism (Accordino, Comer, & Heller, 2007; Caldwell, 2007; Jordan, Jones, & Murray, 1998).

Studies that do exist about interactive approaches with individuals with autism comprise a small number of retrospective narrative case studies and detailed case studies of an individual child or small group of children. These are predominantly young children (Hewett & Nind, 1998; Wieder & Greenspan, 2003; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999), although not always (Caldwell, 2006). A challenge presented by observing one individual or a small group is that it is difficult to gain a sense of how findings may be applicable to others with autism. However, where larger-scale studies have been conducted about particular interactive approaches, they tend to be framed experimentally with a focus on outcomes to the detriment of capturing the nature of the interaction within the approach and the processes that may facilitate outcomes (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2008; Solomon, Nechelles, Ferch, & Bruckman, 2007). In the research reported in this thesis, I focus on ten students with autism in order to gain a sense of how and why they may show perspective taking in the interactive context of drama both individually and as a group.

An advantage of smaller-scale studies is that they are able to give an in-depth, detailed picture of an individual engaging with an approach in context. As such, small-scale studies are important in uncovering processes within an approach and outcomes for particular individuals involved. This is a point that I take on board in the design of the research

presented in this thesis. An additional strength of these studies that I champion is that they often cover a prolonged period of time providing a deep understanding of how an individual developed over the course of engaging in a particular approach as illustrated in Wieder and Greenspan's case study which follows a young boy with autism engaging with DIR Floortime over a three-year period (2003). This study does consider whether outcomes for the child from engaging in the approach generalised to other contexts but it can be a shortcoming of research about interactive approaches that such consideration is not given (Accordino, Comer, & Heller, 2007: 113). Similarly, there is not always a clear understanding or analysis of how and why behaviours in the context of an interactive approach may differ from behaviours in other contexts. This type of analysis can be useful in further illuminating the contribution an approach can make and I incorporate it into the research at hand for this reason.

Although narrative and detailed case studies give guidance on effective aspects of a particular approach such as "scaffolding interactions" (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999: 45) and "following the child's lead" (Wieder & Greenspan, 2003: 428), clear links between components of an approach and observed behaviours are not always made (Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007: 1864; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999: 49). This is a line of enquiry that I regard as important in understanding more clearly perspective taking and the circumstances under which it can be elicited and/or enabled.

2.2.3.1 Research about interactive approaches and perspective taking

I bring together research about interactive approaches to give an overview of findings in relation to the six aspects of perspective taking investigated as part of this research (see p34).

Developments in social reciprocity are documented in findings from research about all four interactive approaches that I reviewed. These report increased responsiveness to the teacher which is visible through returning gaze or reciprocating interaction through clapping, vocalisations, music or play. In several studies, such interactions are reported to sustain for longer periods (Edgerton, 1994; Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2008; Muller & Warwick, 1993; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993; Zercher, Hunt, Schuler, & Webster, 2001).

There is an increase in the number of interactions initiated by individuals with autism reported in case studies relating to Intensive Interaction and music therapy. Studies about both of these interactive approaches also note links with increased language use for individuals with autism involved (Nind, 1999; Wimpory, Chadwick, & Nash, 1995; Wimpory & Nash, 1999).

In terms of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others, studies relating to Intensive Interaction, music therapy and Integrated Play Groups with individuals with autism have indicated increases in joint attention through sustained eye contact (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2008; Knott, 1998; Saperston, 1973; Starr & Zenker, 1998; Taylor & Taylor, 1998; Wigram, 2002; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Zercher, Hunt, Schuler, & Webster, 2001).

The ability of individuals with autism to engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe is highlighted in case studies relating to interactive play approaches such as DIR Floortime and Integrated Play Groups as well as in connection with improvisation in music therapy (Greenspan & Wieder, 1997a; Lantz, Nelson, & Leitin, 2004; Oldfield, 2001; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993; Yang, Wolfberg, Shu-Chin, & Pey-Yun, 2003). In relation to Integrated Play Groups, play repertoires are reported as being longer, more complex and including more instances of pretence (Lantz, Nelson, & Leitin, 2004; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993; Yang, Wolfberg, Shu-Chin, & Pey-Yun, 2003).

There are developments in emotional reciprocation noted in one research study focusing on music therapy where children with autism expressed and matched positive emotional expression more frequently and for longer periods of time during music therapy sessions compared with a control condition (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2009).

The primary purpose of Integrated Play Groups is to facilitate and develop social and symbolic play in children with autism but in the process the programme also addresses the intrinsic desire of children with autism to engage in play and to interact with typical peers of a similar age. During Integrated Play Group sessions, interaction with peers involving a 'common focus' on an activity has been found to double in comparison with other contexts (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993). The typical peers involved in Integrated Play Groups have been trained to support the children with autism in developing their play but, as a result of the programme, children with autism have developed friendships with typical peers in the group (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993).

Research findings about the aspects of perspective taking that I am interested in are relatively positive with each approach eliciting and/or enabling at least one aspect of perspective taking. This poses questions about whether and how perspective taking will manifest in individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama education.

But are there research findings that focus on why individuals with autism show perspective taking in interactive approaches?

2.2.3.2 Research about interactive approaches and factors associated with perspective taking

The case studies that focus on the process of interactive approaches with individuals with autism (Caldwell, 2006; Hewett & Nind, 1998; Wieder & Greenspan, 2003; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999) as well as studies that incorporate analysis of factors contributing to social engagement (Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007) reveal a certain amount of consistency in terms of factors associated with aspects of perspective taking investigated as part of this research. Although the factors are not closely analysed in relation to aspects of perspective taking shown, they do reflect sociocultural theory. This theory places emphasis on the role of social interaction in development; mutual modes of communication to enable successful interaction with the social context; and an individual's independent ability and preferences as a starting point for interaction and learning. I identified seven factors which I summarise below to provide an overview of key factors rather than an exhaustive list.

First, interactive approaches have flexibility within structure. From early studies, the importance of structure in education for individuals with autism has been highlighted (Rutter & Bartak, 1973) and structure is a key tenet in any educational guidance for those working with individuals with autism (Howlin, 1998; Mills, 1999). As Therese Jolliffe, who is diagnosed with autism, explains:

Reality to an autistic person is a confusing, interacting mass of events, people, places, sounds and sights. There seems to be no clear boundaries, order or meaning to anything. A large part of my life is spent trying to work out the pattern behind everything. Set routines, times, particular routes and rituals all help to get order into an unbearably chaotic life. (Jolliffe, Lansdown, & Robinson, 1992: 16)

However, the voice of another individual with autism, Temple Grandin, cautions that "the routine needs to be structured but not absolutely rigid" (Grandin, 1995: 49-50) so that it does not reinforce rigid behaviours. Interactive approaches are structured either explicitly in terms of how they are organised or implicitly through the rhythm of interactions (Doussard-Roosevelt, Joe, Bazhenova, & Porges, 2003; Nind & Powell, 2000; Wigram & Gold, 2006; Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999). Within the structure, however, there are opportunities for variability and flexibility which offset more rigid characteristics of the condition. Indeed, in relation to music therapy, music created spontaneously through improvisation which has within it an element of surprise has been found to encourage engagement and reciprocal social interaction (Edgerton, 1994; Oldfield, 2001; Wigram, 2002; Wigram & Gold, 2006).

Secondly, teaching is active and involves the active participation of all involved. In interactive approaches, active participation can be through engaging directly in interaction

with others as in the case of Intensive Interaction or participating in play routines as in the case of DIR Floortime or Integrated Play Groups.

Thirdly, teachers/carers employ multiple modes of communication with speech, in many cases, playing a marginal role. Instead the modes of communication are varied and include gaze, gesture, movement/stance, vocalisations, speech, music and play. Many of these modes of communication generate initially from a participant and are responded to and developed by teachers/carers to create an ongoing, meaningful dialogue with that participant. Communication or engagement with the social context which Vygotsky highlights as being so important (see p44) is, therefore, much more multimodal with emphasis placed on both the range of modes individuals use to communicate and the role these modes play in terms of communication. Communication as multimodal has two important implications. First, language becomes one of a range of modes of communication through which meaning can be made (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This has particular relevance for individuals with autism who may not use speech as their primary mode of communication or who may prefer or find it more meaningful to communicate through other modes. Secondly, the emphasis on communication broadens to focus on shared meaning which may concern information and/or affect. This meaning can be made through individual modes of communication or through the coming together of different modes. As Caldwell notes in relation to Intensive Interaction:

We are looking for ways of making emotional contact, ways of adapting spontaneously to one another so that we can share emotions and intentions. We are trying to establish a bridge of discovery and trust. (2006: 280)

Fourthly, teachers/carers engage with participant interests and competencies by following a participant's initiations. Taking note of participant initiation is important because it can represent current interests, show present and emerging capacities and give an individual a sense of her/his own agency (Greenspan & Wieder, 1997b; Nind & Hewett, 1994; Nind & Powell, 2000). In response to an individual's initiation, a teacher/carer can respond contingently and elaborate on the initiation in ways that impute intentionality and extend the participation of an individual within that individual's repertoire of interests and abilities. As Nind and Powell argue, "the child with autism can be enabled to learn what they do not learn naturally through a process which mirrors yet extends the natural" (2000: 105). To link this back to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, an individual's initiation is taken as an indication of what a child can do independently. The response of a more capable other whether that is a teacher, carer or peer can then engage an individual within her/his zone of proximal development. Indeed, there are findings from studies which indicate that the quality and quantity of social responsiveness improves when an adult follows the child's lead or responds contingently to the child (Koegel, Dyer, & Bell, 1987; Lewy & Dawson, 1992; Siller & Sigman, 2002).

Fifthly, the process of learning/interaction is based on initiation and response between teachers and participants. Linked with the previous point, approaches such as Intensive Interaction and music therapy which draw on carer-infant interactions often use imitation of aspects of an individual's behaviour as an approach to learn how that individual communicates and accompany it with a running commentary to give significance to what an individual is doing (Caldwell, 2006; Nind & Hewett, 1994; Nind & Powell, 2000; Wimpory & Nash, 1999). Indeed, studies suggest that there is greater responsiveness in interactive approaches when non-verbal communication approaches are adopted such as increased physical proximity and non-verbal object use (Doussard-Roosevelt, Joe, Bazhenova, & Porges, 2003) and several studies have noted that eye contact and visual monitoring of a teacher/carer by an individual with autism increases when their actions are imitated (Dawson & Adams, 1984; Dawson & Galpert, 1990; Field, Field, Sanders, & Nadel, 2001; Tiegerman & Primavera, 1984; Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007).

Sixthly, teachers/carers challenge participants and support them in their learning/interaction through scaffolding or assistance which facilitates participation. This scaffolding or assistance by an adult or more capable peer supports a participant through her/his zone of proximal development (see p44). The support needs to be pitched appropriately so that the gap between what an individual can do independently and what that same individual can do with help is not too large. The assistance is gradually removed as the individual learns to participate independently. The need for support is based on the belief that individuals can participate but the starting point is always with what an individual can do independently. The support may be through adapting the way an instruction is delivered, questioning or modelling. Indeed, a study focusing on symbolic play in individuals with autism highlighted the value of modelling in improving self-awareness of a pretence act and interest and engagement in symbolic meanings (Hobson, Lee, & Hobson, 2009). Similarly a study focusing on elicited communication found that the most effective approaches adopted a combination of verbal and non-verbal instructions and modelling (Chiang, 2009b). In the case of Integrated Play Groups, more capable peers who have been trained by adults in the intervention support the children with autism in their play by modelling, questioning and instructing in ways that attract attention and encourage engagement or imitation (Zercher, Hunt, Schuler, & Webster, 2001).

Seventhly, teachers/carers build a trusting relationship with the participants they are working with. Trust is central to many of the points already mentioned. The relationship, however, is not necessarily based on a set of skills but develops in a more organic way. The teacher/carer gets to know an individual, observes what s/he enjoys and how s/he relates to the world, is sensitive and empathetic in how s/he relates to her/him and enjoys the interactions. In the case of Intensive Interaction, findings from research report a profound

effect on practitioners who, in contingently responding to the way individuals with autism express themselves rather than directing the nature and course of communication, find that their interactions are more positive, successful and interactive (Barber, 2008; Nind, 1999). Indeed attempting to understand an individual with autism and her/his unique perspective is identified as particularly important by Temple Grandin who argues that, "some people are successful in teaching children with autism and others are not. Being successful requires an understanding of how people with autism think and feel" (Grandin, 1995: 33).

In this research I interrogate whether these factors are associated with perspective taking that may be shown in the interactive context of drama education and ascertain whether there are distinctive elements particular to drama.

2.2.4 Summary: Interactive approaches and individuals with autism

Research findings from interactive approaches suggest that such approaches can elicit and/or enable in individuals with autism the six aspects of perspective taking that I investigate. Additionally, there is a certain amount of consistency in relation to successful factors within these approaches. Through the research reported in this thesis, I intend to complement and contribute to the understanding of interactive approaches in the following ways:

- By investigating the interactive context of drama education to uncover how this approach compares with other interactive approaches in terms of eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking in individuals with autism and to identify specific features relating to it.
- By focusing on students aged 16 to 19 and clarifying whether perspective taking or factors associated with it differ with age. The age group 16 to 19 is an older age range than the majority of studies about interactive approaches which often involve young children aged three to seven (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2009; Solomon, Nechelles, Ferch, & Bruckman, 2007; Wieder & Greenspan, 2003; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993).
- By involving ten students which open up the opportunity to provide a clearer picture of how different individuals with autism engage in an interactive approach and give a sense of wider applicability. Ten students is a larger number of individuals than in many studies about interactive approaches which often focus on case studies of one individual child or a small group of children (Caldwell, 2006; Hess, 2006; Hewett &

Nind, 1998; Wieder & Greenspan, 2003; Wimpory & Nash, 1999; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993).

- By analysing more closely factors associated with perspective taking and ascertaining whether these reflect sociocultural theory. Although retrospective narrative case studies provide a clear picture of an interactive approach in practice, there is the opportunity for closer analysis of the relationship between components of an approach or factors in the context and observed behaviours (Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007: 1864; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999: 49). Comparable to Wimpory's study of social engagement in preschool children with autism (Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007) and to investigate further Wolfberg and Schuler's avenue of research, I seek to identify factors associated with perspective taking. Such identification is not to reduce the 'social' in teaching and learning to "particular teaching technologies and procedures" as Daniels cautions (1996: 13) but to clarify the role of other people in the social context.
- By gaining a greater understanding of the role of peers with autism in supporting each other. Integrated Play Groups focus on interaction between individuals with autism and typically developing peers who have received specific training. In this research, I consider the spontaneous support that students with autism give their peers.

Having given an overview of what interactive approaches can offer individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, in the next section I focus specifically on drama and drama education with individuals with autism.

2.3 Drama/drama education and individuals with autism

2.3.1 What is drama and drama education?

I view drama education in a particular way in this thesis. I place it under the umbrella of interactive approaches for individuals with autism and the reason for this positioning is two-fold. First, it locates drama education within the wealth of educational approaches and interventions for individuals with autism. By focusing on the interactive nature of drama education, there is the opportunity to compare and contrast drama with other interactive approaches for individuals with autism, draw out and interrogate similarities and differences and identify specific features. Secondly, it focuses attention on a shared theoretical underpinning between drama education and interactive approaches where the interactive context of drama education in this research is regarded as an opportunity to investigate the relevance and applicability of sociocultural theory for individuals with autism. Currently, this is underexplored with only passing references to the value sociocultural theory may bring to approaches for individuals with autism (Sherratt & Peter, 2002: 2-3; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993: 470). Before I clarify how drama exemplifies a sociocultural approach, I define drama and drama education in this thesis.

The word '**drama**' can be interpreted in a variety of ways. It can refer to a genre of literature written to be performed either on stage or screen; to an emotional or tragic situation or to the arts of writing and production of plays, performance, TV and film. In this thesis, it is a derivative of the latter definition which is my major concern. I am interested in drama as an art and how individuals with autism engage in the process and product of drama as an art, in the form of drama education. The defining feature of drama as an art is enactment. Drama is about making sense of the world through enacting aspects of it whether they are particular characters, situations or emotions. This way of making sense is relatively subjective, interpretative and experiential. It contrasts with logical or deductive approaches that are more akin to reaching scientific understandings of the world. As Arts Council England's definition clarifies:

Like the other arts, it [drama] involves imagination and feelings and helps us to make sense of the world. It does this through the creation of imagined characters and situations, and the relationships and events that they encounter. (Arts Council England 2003: 4)

The enactment in drama draws on performance practices and is focused towards an audience – comprising peers, the class teacher or visitors to a production. Communicating to this audience and considering how they will respond to it forms a critical part of the process.

This clarification of what drama is raises questions in relation to individuals with autism. Are they able to engage with drama? How do they engage with drama and make sense through it? Are they aware that they are communicating to an audience when performing? What is the aim of a performance when it involves individuals with autism? Is it to dispel myths about autism or to showcase the talents of the individuals involved? Can these talents be appreciated in their own right if, as Kuppers argues, “when disabled people perform, they are often not primarily seen as performers, but as disabled people” (2001: 26)? Is the performance to be received as a piece of art in its own right or as a performance which “challenges our assumptions about what disability is and what it means” (Eckard & Myers, 2009: 60)? Within the Disability Arts movement there is active discussion of these questions, particularly in relation to people with physical disabilities (Conroy, 2009; Eckard & Myers, 2009; Kuppers, 2003). Although in relation to autism there has been some active discussion about how autism is portrayed in drama, this discussion predominantly focuses on the portrayal of individuals with autism by non-disabled performers and the implications this has for audiences understanding autism (Kuppers, 2003, 2008; Murray, 2006). Particularly in light of growing public interest in performance work with individuals with autism such as the Channel 4 documentary *Young, Autistic and Stagestruck* (Dehaney, 2010) and the BBC Three programmes *Autism, Disco and Me* (Kelly, 2010) and *Autistic Superstars* (Gilbert, 2010), there is a serious need to debate the intricacies and implications of individuals with autism performing in terms of both the individuals themselves and their audiences. In this thesis, although I refer to this debate, I do not enter into it in great detail because in looking at perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education my focus is predominantly on the interactions in sessions leading up to performances rather than the implications of the performances themselves.

Mirroring the breadth of the definition of drama, **drama education** is broad and is seen in different guises within and outside of a school context. Some regard drama education as the arena for learning about performance practices in preparation for a performance (Hornbrook, 1998) whereas others regard it as a vital teaching tool which does not need a formal performance element (Bolton, 1984; Heathcote, 1984; Peter, 2003). Teachers and practitioners in the latter camp tend to refer to the drama activities they lead as **drama-in-education** or **drama-for-learning**. There is, of course, middle ground where drama is used as both a teaching tool and a subject in which to learn performance practices and work towards performance (Fleming, 2003). In the research reported in this thesis, drama is a dedicated subject where students learn about performance practices in preparation for a performance and my focus is on perspective taking and factors associated with it in this context. From a curriculum perspective, drama at the further education unit is understood as drama education. A broad understanding of drama, however, is taken which incorporates within it dance and musical theatre and this leads to a range of activities taking place in drama sessions including warm up exercises, playing drama and movement games, learning

drama and dance skills and rehearsing for a performance. Although activities in drama may sometimes involve literacy and numeracy and may be therapeutic for some students, I do not directly address drama-in-education and dramatherapy in this thesis.

Drama has been elevated in schools in the last decade as part of a governmental drive to boost creativity (NACCCE, 1999). This has opened up doors to schools in terms of both funding and artistic expertise in the form of organisations and accolades such as Creative Partnerships and Artsmark to support and acknowledge drama, art and music projects. Indeed in the UK, over £112 million was invested in school creative arts projects between 2002 and 2004 (Hall & Thomson, 2007). Within the curriculum in England and Wales, however, since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, drama sits within the Primary Framework for Literacy and within English as part of the National Curriculum at secondary level. Here, it is considered to have an important role in the development of communication, particularly speaking and listening. The drama element is compulsory which means all pupils educated in England and Wales in mainstream and special educational needs settings are supposed to engage with drama at some level. To facilitate drama with pupils with special educational needs, guidance has been developed for teachers and this includes advice about pupils with autism (DfES, 2005; North West SEN Regional Partnership 2004: 22-23). The actual extent to which drama is embraced and worked with in schools for pupils and students with autism is, however, unclear and I address it as part of the research reported in this thesis (see p83).

2.3.2 How does drama education reflect sociocultural theory?

One reason why drama is perceived to be valuable in education is for its focus on perspective taking and the potential it is regarded to have in enabling those involved to gain a clearer understanding of human experience. As Neelands explains:

Drama ... is one of the key ways in which children can gain an understanding of themselves and others. (Neelands, 1992: 3)

From a theoretical perspective, drama may lead to a clearer understanding of human experience because of its sociocultural nature. In this section, I expand on how drama education can be seen to reflect sociocultural theory in relation to the three aspects of Vygotsky's writing discussed earlier (see p42).

2.3.2.1 Drama education and the role of social interaction in development

In outlining the role of social interaction in development, I raised three points.

First, I highlighted that development takes place through interaction with others in a social context. Drama education is social involving interaction between people on a real-time basis as part of activities in a lesson and within the boundaries of a scene that may comprise part of a lesson. As Neelands notes:

Drama is a social (interactive) way of creating and interpreting human meanings through imagined action and language that simulates and corresponds to real-life actions and language. (Neelands, 1984: 6)

Part of the task of this research is to ascertain whether and how the social, interactive context of drama may elicit and/or enable individuals with autism to show perspective taking.

Secondly, I emphasised the importance of 'psychological tools'. These are mutual modes of communication which enable an individual to interact with the social context. Finding mutual modes of communication can be challenging when working with individuals with autism, for whom conventional modes of communication may not be meaningful. Drama, however, is a particular educational context where there is more focus both on different modes that can be used to communicate and the ways in which these modes can be used separately and together to communicate different things. This incorporation and acceptance of a range of modes opens up the opportunity for individuals to engage with the social context in ways that are meaningful for them. Indeed, Baldwin and Fleming argue that it is the multi-sensory and multimodal nature of drama which allows participants to access and interpret the material in different ways.

The mind, body and emotions have opportunities to connect and function together rather than separately, enabling children to make all-round and interconnecting sense of their experiences and learning. (Baldwin & Fleming, 2003: 4)

In this research, I seek to investigate the different modes of communication used by teachers and students in drama to ascertain whether the multimodal nature of drama elicits and/or enables perspective taking in the students involved.

Thirdly, once there are means through which to engage with the social context, the way in which Vygotsky argues that interaction with others stimulates development is through the zone of proximal development – the distance between what an individual can do independently and what s/he can do with adult guidance or in collaboration with peers. The role of the teacher in drama education is extremely important because it is the teacher who frames the session, guides individuals into the realm of pretence and helps shape drama.

There are a wide range of drama methods that teachers draw on in order to engage individuals in a drama context such as drama and movement games, role play and hot seating (see Michael Fleming, 2003; Neelands, 1998; Winston & Tandy, 2001 for examples). Rather than prescribing how an individual should be doing something in drama, these methods stimulate an individual to think about how s/he can make sense of the drama context s/he is involved in. As Neelands explains:

learning through drama depends upon a form of teacher intervention which aims to bring new shapes and fresh ways of knowing to children's existing experience ... (Neelands, 1984: 6)

Other people in the room, however, also play an important role in this regard. Peers, for example, may take on a scaffolding role by enabling an individual to remain engaged in the drama and to extend it. Audience members may help an individual make meaning through their response to the drama and their presence may encourage an individual to consider how to portray experiences to others. In investigating perspective taking and factors associated with it, I aim to analyse the role of others in the drama context to ascertain how they may influence the perspective taking an individual shows.

2.3.2.2 Drama education and the role of play in development

Vygotsky's paper on the role of play in development has particular relevance for drama education because it centres on the relationship between reality and make-believe. Drama, like play, involves make-believe and part of the aim of this research is to investigate whether and how individuals with autism engage with make-believe in drama. Through engagement in make-believe, a paradox is created where the real and the imaginary sit side by side. This juxtaposition of reality with make-believe has two important implications in drama education. First, it heightens the awareness of an individual's action. Secondly, as Bolton argues, it is where meaning is made (Bolton, 1979: 20-22). This may be objective meaning which might be shared with others, such as one object standing for another, or subjective meaning which is distinctive to an individual, where an individual comes to an understanding with the action that is taking place through participation in drama. Grove and Park place weight on this attitude in their work with people with learning difficulties arguing that "understanding can emerge through participation" (Grove & Park, 2001: 16). The role of others in drama can be viewed in terms of the ZPD as discussed above. Drama activities, however, which take place in the realm of make-believe can also open up the opportunity for an individual to create her/his own ZPD. By moving into the realm of imagined or abstract experience, an individual "can try out and experiment with new ideas, concepts, values, roles and language in action" (Neelands, 1984: 6). In this research, I endeavour to reveal whether engagement in drama heightens an individual's awareness of what s/he is doing; show examples of how

individuals with autism make sense of make-believe in drama and explore whether and how individuals create their own ZPD through participation in drama.

2.3.2.3 Drama education and the course of typical and atypical development

Within Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, the primary problem relating to disability is not the biological or behavioural nature of the disability but the social difficulties which result from it. These social difficulties can hinder access to the social context and as a result impede development. The way in which to mitigate these social difficulties, therefore, is through an approach which facilitates interaction with the social context. Core to this is starting with the individual and using that individual's existing modes of communication, experience, motivations and interests in order to engage and interact with her/him. Starting with the individual is also central in drama education where drama aims to employ and build on an individual's "existing cultural resources in ways that are both familiar and also stretching" (Neelands, 1984: 6). In this research, I intend to investigate whether and how an individual's cultural resources are drawn upon in drama and whether starting with an individual influences the extent to which s/he shows perspective taking.

Considering the ways in which drama education reflects sociocultural theory draws many parallels with the seven factors associated with perspective taking that I distilled from research about interactive approaches (see p52). Indeed, in relation to children with special educational needs, Peter argues that good arts practice which includes drama can "exemplify *interactive* approaches to teaching" (Peter, 1998: 170). In the research presented in this thesis, I seek to identify how particular factors within the interactive context of drama education may elicit and/or enable perspective taking in individuals with autism.

But what research exists about drama and individuals with autism?

2.3.3 What research exists about drama and individuals with autism?

It is engrained in the history of drama education that drama is good for development across mainstream and special needs education (Heathcote, 1984; Kempe, 1996; Peter, 1994; Slade, 1954; Way, 1967). These claims, however, do not have extensive empirical substantiation. Indeed, in a recent review on the state of drama education, the ongoing need for further classroom research was highlighted to justify advocacy claims and clarify the potential of drama for those who continue to question its educational value (Anderson & Donelan, 2009: 166). It could be argued that this is the result of research in drama education being a relatively recent field. Indeed, the first peer-reviewed journal for research in drama education was launched in 1995, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of*

Applied Theatre and Performance. However, drama research has become a healthy field of enquiry evidenced by the number of dedicated journals to drama education and applied theatre and the success of international drama education organisations such as the International Drama, Theatre and Educational Association (IDEA) and the International Drama in Education Research Institute (IDIERI). Alternatively, it may be the result of how 'clarifying the potential of drama' is perceived. Stemming from arts organisations needing to justify funding and/or government requests to demonstrate how the arts contribute to academic learning, there continues to be a drive for drama education to be evaluated in positivist ways where the outcomes from participating in drama are identified and measured over time. Experimental studies are, however, relatively few in number and researchers that have investigated drama in this way have acknowledged the difficulties in capturing the complexity of interactions in drama and accurately attributing change to activities in the drama context (Catterall, 2002: 60; De la Cruz, Lian, & Morreau, 1998; Fleming, Merrell, & Tymms, 2004; Podlozny, 2000; Turner et al., 2004; Walsh, Kosidoy, & Swanson, 1991). Indeed, challenges presented by defining drama, identifying outcomes from it and measuring these seem to be key obstacles in researching drama experimentally (Jindal-Snape & Vettriaino, 2007; Mages, 2008). Clearly, how research is designed depends on the questions being asked and the purpose for which it is being conducted. Given the flexibility in which drama education is delivered and the individual ways in which participants respond to drama and make meaning in it, surely the best way in which the potential of drama education can be clarified is through ensuring a broad range of studies that capture and interrogate in detail the different and dynamic ways in which individuals work with drama in educational contexts. In the research reported in this thesis, I research within an interpretative paradigm using case study methodology so that I can examine individuals with autism participating in drama in context and capture perspective taking and factors associated with it in this context (see p76).

Turning to drama with individuals with autism, it is neither new nor rare. Indeed, documented in Asperger's notes in the early 1940s is evidence of the use of drama with those with autism. As Frith recounts:

One of Asperger's formative experiences, he reports, was witnessing Sister Viktorine calm a panic-stricken toddler in the midst of a destructive tantrum. Sister Viktorine's programme started with a PE lesson, using rhythm and music. There were organised dramatic enactments of events or of songs. There were also proper school lessons and speech therapy. The pervading ethos was that the clinic's work should be governed by a wish to understand and help children. (Frith, 1991: 9)

It has already been mentioned that all children and young people with autism in the education system in England and Wales should have some access to drama as part of the National Curriculum at primary and secondary level and that there is specific guidance about drama for teachers of pupils with autism. In the past decade, there has also been a notable

increase in the number of books dedicated to drama with children and young people with autism. Sherratt and Peter's book discussing the psychology and pedagogy of autism in relation to play and drama, *Developing Play and Drama in Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders* (2002) was one of the first to be published on the subject. This book set out a rationale and approach for play and drama. It contends:

play-drama intervention can prepare children for life, enabling them to understand human interaction and engage more effectively in a social world. It is our job to unlock this potential – and entitlement. (Sherratt & Peter, 2002: x).

Although the book provides examples drawing on practice, it does not incorporate an evidence base or detailed case studies specific to children and young people engaging in drama and there have not been systematic empirical studies in relation to play-drama intervention since the publication of the book. There have, however, been additional books published outlining approaches of 'how to' do drama with children and young people with autism (Conn, 2007; Davies, 2004; Schneider, 2007) and a small number of articles that document approaches for and experiences of doing drama with those with autism (Clethero, 2001; Minyard, Negri, & Walker, 2009; Neame, 2003; Peter, 2000, 2002, 2009; Sherratt, 2002b; Sturrock, 2004; Williams, 2005). These include reflections on teaching approach which are similar to those already highlighted in relation to interactive approaches such as pitching the activities at the level of the children involved; responding with emotional intensity; and structuring the activity to incorporate turn taking and key moments that can be anticipated later on (Peter, 2009). Prior to 2000 there were only isolated references or discussion of drama with those with autism (Cattanach, 1996; Jones, 1996; Lindkvist, 1977; Lord, 1997). The majority of these references are very favourable towards drama. Wing in her book, *The Autistic Spectrum*, explains that drama and dance can help to "reduce tension and disturbed behaviour" (Wing, 1996: 196) and Attwood, in evaluating approaches for children with Asperger syndrome, notes that "conventional speech and drama lessons can be used to encourage the child how to act in social situations" (Attwood, 2000: 97).

Many of the books and articles focusing on drama, particularly those by Peter, provide a strong theoretical rationale for carrying out drama with individuals with autism. These mirror those outlined in relation to interactive approaches adopting a stance in relation to learning where individuals with autism can learn through interaction with others and where particular benefits can be wrought from working with make-believe. Sherratt and Peter argue:

That creative potential within everyone *can* be developed – and taught – through structured 'play' opportunities, both individually and in inclusive contexts. Through play-drama intervention it seeks to present a *means* to replace a 'triad of impairments' with a 'triad of competence': the development of more creative, flexible thinking, with associated gains in communication and greater sensitivity in social interaction. (Sherratt & Peter, 2002: 14-15)

However, empirical research investigating drama with individuals with autism is in its infancy. Recognition of the fact that research is behind practice in this field is seeing efforts to change this. Indeed the creation of the International Association of Theatre for Autism and its accompanying journal – *ArTran: Journal of Applied Theatre Research and Autism Network* – launched in the US in 2009 highlights both the amount of drama taking place with individuals with autism and the requirement for empirical research. In its first volume Nelson notes, “though anecdotal evidence is strong, no empirical studies have been conducted to demonstrate efficacy of these [drama/theatre] interventions” (Nelson, 2009: 6). There are, however, a small number of studies which can give an indication of the types of manifestations and outcomes that relate to perspective taking for individuals with autism engaged in drama activities. These include three narrative case studies concerning dramatherapy with individuals with autism published in books (Cattanach, 1996; Jones, 1996; Lindkvist, 1977), three qualitative research studies documenting research about drama with children and young people with autism in journals with a readership aimed at practitioners over and above researchers (Clethero, 2001; Peach, 2003; Whitehurst, 2006), one conference paper concerning a qualitative research study about a drama project with young people with autism (Davies & Lee, 2005) and one mixed-methods study evaluating an opera programme for young people with autism published by the Royal Opera House education department (Alcock & Howlin, 2003).

There are methodological challenges relating to these studies and I consider briefly how and why these need to be addressed. First, although many studies provide good descriptions of the individuals involved, only one provides standardised measures about the participants with autism (Alcock & Howlin, 2003). Without such measures, it can be difficult to understand where the participants sit on the autistic spectrum and, as a result, how relevant the findings may be to others with autism. Secondly, the narrative case studies rely solely on retrospective personal reflection. They do not use other methods to research systematically the case at hand as in case study methodology (Yin, 2003). Additionally, steps in place to enhance the trustworthiness of personal reflection are not recorded which potentially brings into question findings that are reported. Thirdly, the majority of studies do not incorporate feedback from those involved which can limit understanding of how those involved experience drama. On this note, in Jones’s case study, he does make the point that it can be extremely challenging to gain feedback from individuals with autism (Jones, 1996). That said, two qualitative studies do draw on feedback from participants illustrating the value of incorporating their voice (Davies & Lee, 2005; Whitehurst, 2006). Fourthly, none of the studies is able to suggest whether outcomes maintained over time, internalised and/or generalised to other contexts. This makes it difficult to ascertain whether drama can make a difference to individuals with autism over time and whether outcomes from drama can be observed in other settings. Fifthly, although details of the drama activities are given, an

absence of information about how participants interacted and responded during sessions makes it unclear how drama activities may relate to particular responses and whether there are specific factors within drama activities that contribute to different responses.

With these challenges in mind, I review the findings from these studies in relation to aspects of perspective taking investigated as part of the research reported in this thesis.

The majority of these studies focus on the social and suggest that drama activities can support individuals with autism in reciprocating socially. Lindkvist provided a detailed study of drama and movement sessions with individuals with autism. She described the typical characteristics of the individuals involved, discussed their individual responses to drama and how these developed through a series of sessions. She concluded:

Although it would be unrealistic to claim that drama and movement therapy is a cure for mental and physical disorders, it seems clear that it can be used as a means of communication for developing relationships, increasing body awareness, and for minimising stereotypes, in sessions at any rate, if that is considered desirable. It can give satisfaction to the doer, and encourage verbalisation as well as group awareness and a sense of sharing a creative experience. It can also increase confidence. (Lindkvist, 1977: 10)

As part of this study, Lindkvist incorporated a controlled aspect to measure social skills in six children with autism aged nine to 14 over a six-month period of participation in weekly dramatherapy sessions. Simultaneously, six different children took part in a general activities session. The movement and drama sessions aimed to support the forming of relationships. At the end of the six-month period of 18 hours in total, there were no statistical changes in the children but there were clinical differences noted. For example, the children who participated in the sessions were more often in the centre of the room rather than at the edge and children were more relaxed and looking forwards in the sessions. This suggests a difference in the quality of the behaviour but not the quantity and shows the importance of qualitative data collection methods in order to capture how individuals with autism engage in the context of drama and how this may change over time.

Cattanach described a series of dramatherapy sessions at a residential home in the Netherlands for people with autism. The aim of the sessions was to develop maximum social independence for each individual with one group focusing on developing individual body awareness and the other rudimentary social interaction. Cattanach detailed the activities that took place during the sessions and concluded that both groups developed their creativity and their ability to play together (Cattanach, 1996: 89). There was not a close analysis, however, of what happened during activities which prevents an understanding of how activities may have contributed to developments in these areas.

In a qualitative action research project Peach (2003) carried out drama with a small group of young pupils with severe learning difficulties including three with autism. She used her own personal reflections, discussions with other teachers and video footage to look at the outcomes of her classroom work. This work involved a small repertoire of songs and rhymes everyday for the 40 weeks of the school year. Peach found that the drama work encouraged awareness of others, interaction and turn taking. She gave a good description of the contents of the activity and showed the value of observing over time and of using video to support this extended observation. Video had two additional advantages: it enabled discussion with others about what was observed and it provided evidence of areas of development. These reasons form part of my rationale for incorporating video as a data collection technique as part of the research at hand (see p102). Peach, however, did not describe the duration of the activity each day; provide specific details of interactions between the teacher and children with autism involved; or suggest whether the areas of development highlighted generalised to other contexts or maintained in the longer term. These aspects hinder a clearer understanding of the processes that led to the findings reached and a longer-term picture.

Alcock and Howlin (2003) evaluated a multi-disciplinary arts project for young people with autism and Asperger syndrome at the Royal Opera House, The Turtle Opera Project. Although the research was conducted to justify the project at the Royal Opera House, it is interesting to look at because of its subject matter. The research methods included both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the impact of a two-month project on the social skills and self-confidence of 13 young people aged between 10 and 13. The young people were assessed using the Ravens Coloured Progressive Matrices (Raven & Lewis, 1962); the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (Dunn, Dunn, Whetton, & Burley, 1997); the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (Gardner, 1990) and the Student Self-Concept Scale on the SSRS (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). Parents were asked to fill in a semi-structured strengths and difficulties questionnaire and the Social Skills Rating System. Over the two-month period, there was a significant improvement in the social skills ratings of the young people involved between the first and final workshop, particularly in the area of self-assertiveness. There were no significant changes in their scores for self-concept. Parents reported that behavioural difficulties had reduced over time and there was also a significant decrease in emotional difficulties as rated by both children and parents. The researchers concluded that "the social skills and emotional state of children with ASD may be improved by means of structured social, artistic activities" (Alcock & Howlin, 2003: 14). The findings showed the importance of incorporating the perspectives of parents alongside those of participants. In focusing solely on standardised measures to ascertain outcomes from the project, a clear picture of particular activities or how participants responded or interacted with others during sessions was not presented. Without data on these aspects, it is difficult to identify whether particular types of interaction or activity facilitated a particular response.

The focus on those with high functioning autism and Asperger syndrome made it unclear whether a comparable approach would benefit those less able or without strong language abilities. Additionally, examination did not extend to analysis of behaviours across contexts which made it difficult to trace whether and how those involved interacted differently during the sessions compared with other contexts; whether gains could be attributed specifically to the project and whether behaviours that were seen to improve as a result of engagement in drama generalised to other contexts. These are all points that I consider to be important for the research at hand.

In addition to Cattnach's case study already mentioned, one qualitative research study suggests that individuals with autism can engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe and that their creative resources can be celebrated and developed. Clethero (2001) investigated creativity in a group of adults with autism through a drama and music project which involved working towards qualifications and public performances. She observed the adults in sessions; discussed the sessions with them and drew on the reactions of visitors and audiences. Bringing the information together, she concluded that "all of the participants in the groups had vast untapped reserves of talent and creative energy" which challenged traditional descriptions of autism (Clethero, 2001: 46). The research findings showed the value of using different data collection methods to produce findings but its limited description of those with autism made it difficult to ascertain the nature of the difficulties of the participants involved. Without this information, it is unclear how these individuals with autism relate to others with autism and the extent to which the drama and music project supported and enabled them.

One case study and two qualitative research studies suggest that drama activities may help individuals with autism reciprocate emotionally and offer them the opportunity to share how they think and feel both personally and about particular issues with others. Jones (1996: 224-227) provided a case study of young adults with autism engaged in a two-year dramatherapy project. Behaviours were briefly described highlighting a core difficulty in communicating distressing experiences and that the main reason for introducing dramatherapy was to address this difficulty and ascertain whether through story work a "metaphoric relationship between the young adult's inner experience and the outer expressions of a story" (Jones, 1996: 225) could be established. Jones argued that over time the stories "transformed into a personal story" (Jones, 1996: 227) and that, although it was not possible to reflect upon personal connections with the young adults involved, the stories did appear to reflect feelings, inner dilemmas and anxieties through recurring themes and scenarios. Indeed Jones suggested that working with stories through dramatherapy "marked not only a discovery of the internal resonances of the story work, but also indicated that the clients were returning to areas of conflict or difficulty which needed attention" and were even able to develop and explore alternatives which could resolve them (Jones, 1996:

227). The study, however, did not provide a clear description of participants and was a relatively subjective account which did not report steps to enhance trustworthiness. These points hinder the extent to which the findings can be seen to be applicable to others with autism.

Davies and Lee (2005) discussed the impact of a five-day drama project involving students with autism and mainstream pupils as part of a conference paper. The project was led by a small drama company called Fairgame comprising a director, musician and a designer. It centred on the subject of special educational needs and involved creating and devising a piece of film based on interviews with members of the public. The evaluation used visual data from the film produced; interview data from members of the drama company, teachers in a large comprehensive school where the production had been used, teachers in two special schools where students had participated as either actors or audience, students from special schools and mainstream schools involved in the project; and documentary evidence from supporting documentation prepared by the company. The interviews focused on the educational and social value of the project. The evaluation found gains in the self-esteem and self-confidence of those with autism in giving them the opportunity for self-advocacy and appreciating them for who they are.

The evidence collected suggests that the approach used by Fairgame for this production can form the basis for some radical and substantial developments in both the task of enhancing the communication skills of many young people on the autistic spectrum (as well as their self-esteem) and at the same time, make important impact on ensuring that young people are confronted with their own prejudices in a form where it can be constructively explored. (Davies & Lee, 2005: 11)

The researchers drew on multiple sources of evidence, including the voices of the students with autism involved, and were able to bring these together to build a picture of what was going on. This approach is core to the research at hand. The researchers, however, did not present a clear description of the students involved which makes it difficult to gain a detailed picture of how the project supported individual students and to ascertain how the findings may be applicable to others with autism.

Whitehurst (2006) evaluated a two-year drama project which involved six young people with profound and complex learning needs, including one with autism, and 23 pupils from a mainstream school. The project aimed to offer an enriching experience for the young people with special needs and, with its culmination in a performance, presented an opportunity to appreciate their abilities and celebrate them alongside mainstream peers. The research accompanying the project centred on inclusion and was designed to be inclusive research. Whitehurst wanted to know what the young people thought about the project when it came to an end. She used a flexible approach that combined verbal and non-verbal methods. It drew on the support of photographs and an interview approach devised to help individuals

with communication difficulties express their views, '**Talking Mats**' (Murphy, 1998). The answers the young people gave were combined with observations and interviews with carers and education staff. A case study of the one girl with autism was given and Whitehurst found that this girl could talk about how she felt during the project and comment on the experience of working with mainstream students by drawing on aspects she liked and did not like. There is a good demonstration of how the voice of students involved can be heard, ensured to be trustworthy, and learnt from. It shows that young people with autism can contribute their opinion even when language is limited and this point is important for the research at hand (see p105).

2.3.4 Summary: Drama/drama education and individuals with autism

Existing research about drama and individuals with autism suggests positive outcomes in terms of three aspects of perspective taking investigated as part of this research – reciprocating socially; engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe and reciprocating emotionally. There is, however, a clear need to build on research about drama and individuals with autism and in the research reported in this thesis I aim to extend research about drama and individuals with autism in the following ways:

- By demonstrating how individuals with autism show perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education and ascertaining whether and how this may be different from perspective taking shown in other curricular areas. The focus on perspective taking shown during sessions contrasts with studies about drama and individuals with autism that have no particular focus or a specific focus on an area of skill such as social skills as an outcome from participation. A focus on perspective taking is also consistent with a current of thought that approaches will be more effective if they are based on a psychological understanding of autism (Attwood, 2000; Mackay, Knott, & Dunlop, 2007; Swettenham, Baron-Cohen, Gomez, & Walsh, 1996; Tutt, Powell, & Thornton, 2006).
- By investigating factors associated with perspective taking in drama education and ascertaining whether these reflect sociocultural theory. Comparison with factors in other curricular areas also presents the opportunity to identify whether there are distinctive factors and/or activities in drama which elicit and/or enable perspective taking.
- By investigating in the interactive context of drama education. A focus on drama education compares to two studies reported (Alcock & Howlin, 2003; Clethero, 2001), one of which focuses on self-concept and social skills and the other which

takes a more general approach to outcomes from participation in the activity. My research has a different aim by focusing on perspective taking and factors associated with it.

- By observing individuals with autism engaging in drama over an extended period of time. It is well established that individuals with autism make gains in response to new approaches in the short term which are not sustained (Jordan, Jones, & Murray, 1998: 132). It is also clear that more gains are likely if approaches are more intensive (Legoff & Sherman, 2006; Panerai, Ferrante, & Caputo, 1997). In the research reported in this thesis, I follow students participating in drama over the course of a school year (34 weeks) in order to paint a clearer picture of perspective taking shown in drama sessions and enable suggestions of development or maintenance over time, internalisation and generalisation to other contexts.
- By incorporating a larger number of individuals and providing a clear description of them. The number of participants in the majority of studies reported is small and often complicated by poor description which prevents a clear understanding of how the response of participants compares and contrasts with other individuals with autism. In the research reported in this thesis, I incorporate data collection techniques that enable a clear profile of autism in the individual students and a picture of how they typically socially interact and communicate which can then be compared with how they interact in drama education. The number of students involved in the research is ten which is a larger number of participants than in the majority of studies reported in this review. This allows for a greater sense to be gained of how perspective taking manifests across individuals with autism in drama and whether this is consistent or inconsistent with other contexts.
- By focusing on an older age group across the spectrum. Many of the studies discussed involve very young children or those with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome and strong language abilities. In focusing on students aged 16 to 19 across a broader range of the spectrum, I aim to build a picture of the extent to which older individuals with a range of language abilities can participate in drama education.
- By incorporating the views of participants. Three of the studies reviewed engaged the views of participants. Two of these involved those with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome with strong language abilities and interviewed those involved in a similar way to interviews with typical participants (Alcock & Howlin, 2003; Davies & Lee, 2005). One, however, grappled with how to elicit the view of one individual

with autism with limited reciprocal communication (Whitehurst, 2006). In the research reported in this thesis, I build on these studies by seeking to understand how ten students with a range of characteristics view the drama they participate in and whether what they communicate sheds light on the perspective taking they show.

- By providing a clearer picture of the prevalence of drama in schools for individuals with autism and perceptions of teachers in relation to opportunities and outcomes for individuals with autism from participation in drama.

2.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I positioned the research reported in this thesis in relation to three areas of literature concerning individuals with autism – perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education – and set out how my research will extend them.

I clarified that this thesis focuses on perspective taking in individuals with autism. I explained that I frame autism within an interactive model of disability which allows for dialogue between different perspectives. I highlighted that perspective taking became relevant to understanding autism through experimental studies which sought to explain the behavioural difficulties and that two theories dominate as a result. The first theory hypothesises that individuals with autism have a specific cognitive deficit in theory of mind which limits the ability to attribute mental states to themselves and other people. Within the theory, the deficit in theory of mind relates to a particular cognitive mechanism which is separate from social experience, although can be triggered by it. The theory has considerable empirical support with experimental studies suggesting that individuals with autism do indeed find it difficult to conceive of different thoughts, feelings, ideas and knowledge beyond their immediate experience. In order to address these difficulties, teaching individuals with autism about these aspects of understanding the self and other people is advocated. Findings from experimental studies in relation to the theory of mind hypothesis raise questions about the pervasiveness of the difficulty, the extent to which it is broader than understanding false belief and the influence of social context. These implications indicate that the deficit in individuals in autism is not one of an absent cognitive module versus a present one but a more complicated difficulty in terms of perspective taking. This more complicated picture is closer to the second hypothesis put forward that the perspective taking difficulty in autism is more than cognitive and has affective and conative dimensions as well. Rather than rooting the perspective taking difficulty in an absent or defective cognitive module, the proponents of this alternative hypothesis suggest that the difficulties in interpersonal understanding and symbolic functioning in autism lie in being less prone to perceiving, responding to, and engaging with bodily-expressed attitudes of other people. Research findings reporting a disruption in self-other equivalence and self-other difference are recruited in support of this hypothesis. Within this frame of understanding autism, perspective taking is more integrated and is influenced by social context. Comparable with research findings about the theory of mind hypothesis, however, findings are based on experimental studies which do not provide a clear picture of how perspective taking manifests in real world social contexts and why this may be the case.

I moved on to illustrate how perspective taking can manifest in the everyday social interaction and communication of individuals with autism, using six items from diagnostic criteria for autism as a basis. Through the research reported in this thesis, I aim to build on

the understanding of perspective taking in autism by investigating the nature of perspective taking as manifested in social interaction and communication in real world social contexts; by exploring the nature of perspective taking as manifested in the same individuals with autism across real world social contexts to ascertain whether there is a variance between contexts and suggest whether social context can influence perspective taking; and by interrogating factors which may be associated with perspective taking.

With a particular interest in how interactions can elicit and/or enable perspective taking and placing drama education within a broader category of interactive approaches for individuals with autism, I defined interactive approaches and explained their sociocultural stance in relation to human development. Theoretically, interactive approaches locate typical and atypical development in interactions with others and highlight the central importance of play in this regard. Core to these approaches is drawing on Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD. With the ZPD the focus shifts from actual levels of development to potential development with the view taken that what an individual can do with help today, s/he can do independently tomorrow. In reviewing findings from research about interactive approaches, I suggested that they can elicit and/or enable aspects of perspective taking focused on in this thesis but that research about specific interactive approaches is still in its infancy. I also identified key factors associated with the success of these approaches. These include allowing for flexibility within structure; teaching through action; employing multiple modes of communication; engaging with participant interests and competencies; basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and participants; challenging participants and supporting them in their learning; and building a trusting relationship with participants. I argued that, through the research reported in this thesis, I seek to extend research about interactive approaches by investigating the real world social context of drama education; by focusing on a larger number and older age range of individuals with autism than the majority of interactive approaches to gain a sense of how different individuals with autism engage and to gain a sense of wider applicability; by analysing more closely factors in interactions associated with perspective taking and considering them in relation to sociocultural theory; and by providing a more detailed picture of the role of peers with autism in eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking in other individuals with autism.

In relation to drama education, I explained that it is placed under the umbrella of interactive approaches to position it in relation to other approaches for individuals with autism and to focus attention on shared sociocultural underpinnings. I defined drama and drama education and raised questions about the politics of individuals with autism performing and the extent to which drama is incorporated into the curriculum and valued by teachers in schools for children and young people with autism. I moved on to discuss how drama education reflects sociocultural theory in relation to the role of social interaction in development; the role of play in development; and the course of typical and atypical development and highlighted areas of

enquiry for this research. In reviewing research about drama and individuals with autism, I highlighted that empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals are limited but considerable anecdotal report and a small number of studies published in practitioner-focused journals suggest positive outcomes in relation to aspects of perspective taking. I identified clear opportunities to broaden existing research by clarifying the extent and nature of drama education in schools for individuals with autism; by investigating drama education to ascertain whether and how individuals with autism show perspective taking in drama and by identifying particular factors and/or activities in the drama context which appear to elicit and/or enable perspective taking; by drawing comparisons between perspective taking and factors associated with it in drama contexts compared with other curricular areas; and by adopting a research design which observes individuals with autism engaging with drama education over an extended period, incorporates a larger number and older age range of individuals than previous studies and engages the views of the individuals with autism involved.

Having positioned the research reported in this thesis in relevant fields of literature and practice and highlighted how I intend to elucidate and extend previous work through the research, I turn to the methodological approach and data collection methods in the next chapter.

3. Methodological approach and data collection methods

“Daisy, and action.” (Deborah)
“Yes, I’ve got the video camera today, is that ok?”
“Yes.” (Deborah)

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological approach and data collection methods devised to investigate perspective taking and factors associated with it.

First, I discuss the rationale for working within an interpretative paradigm. Although this paradigm is comparatively rare in terms of research about autism, I argue that it is most suitable for research which seeks to capture the complexity of perspective taking and factors associated with it in real world social contexts. I move on to explore implications an interpretative paradigm can have for methodology and methods and outline the rationale for choosing case study as the methodology for this research.

Secondly, I explain that the setting of the research was chosen following a survey of Autism Accredited schools and units which identified it as unique in terms of the intensity of drama offered and the fact it is offered continuously throughout the school year. The survey had the additional benefit of providing a clearer picture of the prevalence of drama in schools for individuals with autism and perceptions of teachers about opportunities and outcomes for individuals involved. I detail the setting of the research including the students involved and the educational contexts under investigation.

Thirdly, I delineate the central place of ethics in the research. This reflects the interpretative paradigm where I respect and value the involvement of those in the context who help to construct a picture of what is going on. In particular, I emphasise the approach I devise for the students with autism which extends debate concerning how to involve individuals with autism in research.

Fourthly, I describe data collection methods which include observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. I discuss each method in terms of rationale, process and steps taken to enhance trustworthiness. I explain that observation is the main data collection method and that the way in which I collect and analyse observation data uses multimodality, which is a new direction in autism research. I close with an overview of steps taken to pilot the methodological approach and data collection methods and lessons learnt.

I outline the process of analysing data in order to reach findings in the next chapter alongside findings.

Figure III gives an overview of the methodological approach and data collection methods.

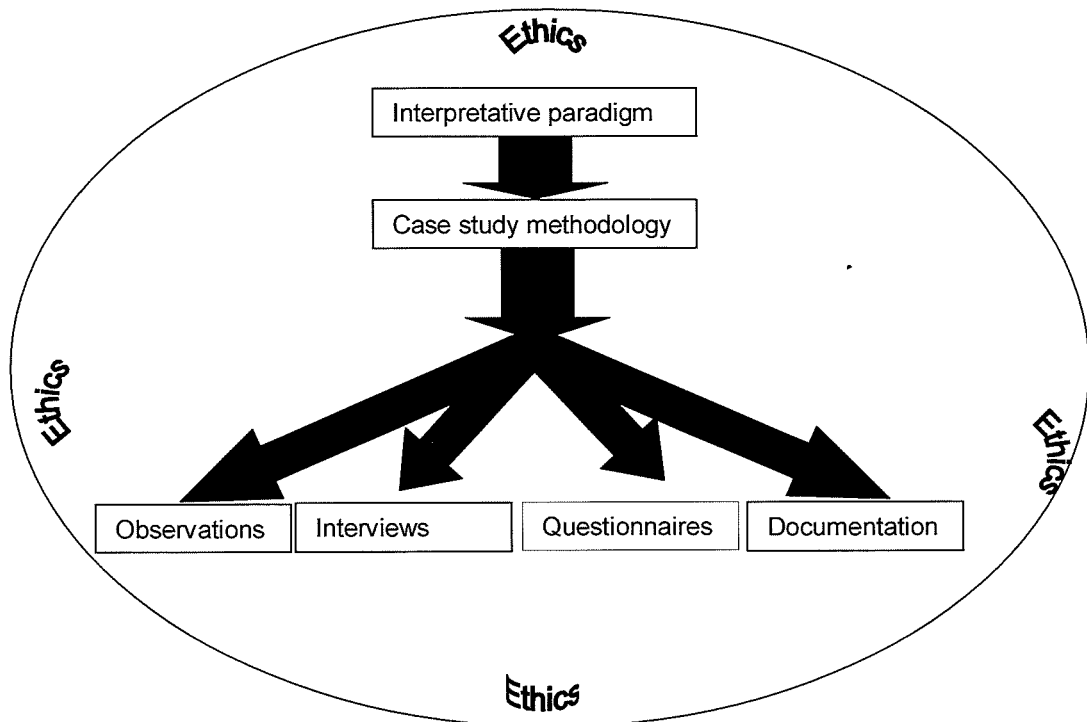


Figure III: An overview of the methodological approach and methods used

3.1 Research paradigm and methodology

3.1.1 What is the research paradigm?

In the research reported in this thesis, I focus on perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it in the interactive context of drama education and other areas of the curriculum. The research process involves identifying and analysing whether and how individuals with autism show perspective taking across these contexts and uncovering and examining factors that appear to be associated with it. My overall aim is to increase understanding about perspective taking in individuals with autism in real world social contexts and to explore the sense I gained from my own drama workshops that drama education may be a facilitative context for eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking.

In the description of this research, I make certain assumptions about the nature of social reality and these align most closely with an interpretative paradigm. A paradigm is “a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world” (Patton, 1990: 37) and it holds within it certain philosophical assumptions that guide the way in which research is conducted. Within an interpretative paradigm, there is an ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed. This means that there is an understanding that social reality is complex and that there can be different interpretations of it. There is an epistemological assumption, therefore, that a range of methods and perspectives are needed in order to capture the complexity of what happens in social contexts and make sense of it. An interpretative paradigm is appropriate for the research at hand because, through it, I seek to explore the process of interactions in context, capture the socially situated nature of experience and make sense of different meanings people hold about it. It is consistent with researching within the frame of an interactive model of disability and with investigating interactive approaches and their sociocultural underpinnings because the focus is on capturing and analysing interactions in social contexts.

An important implication of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of an interpretative paradigm relates to the nature of truth in research findings. Truth is not a singular, objectively established, fixed entity but a consensus that is reached by bringing together different interpretations and this is the view I adopt in this research. As Guba and Lincoln explain:

‘Truth’ is defined as the best informed (amount and quality of information) and most sophisticated (power with which the information is understood and used) construction on which there is a consensus (although there may be several constructions extant that simultaneously meet that criterion). (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 84).

Such a view of truth departs from those working within a **positivist paradigm** where there is a belief in the reality of objectively established truth in the social world that can be generalised. Within this paradigm, it is argued that such truth is best obtained through an experimental design which tests a hypothesis or theory and seeks to establish a relationship between variables. Indeed, in an attempt to understand the nature of autism more clearly and ascertain whether particular educational approaches or interventions are 'effective' in ameliorating core characteristics of autism, the experimental design prevails and is promoted. It is also noteworthy that debate about the quality of autism research centres on issues pertinent to an experimental design such as how well the research provides: a good diagnostic description of the individuals with autism; a clear definition of the intervention and the aspects of autism it aims to treat; an element of control so that the observed effects can be attributed to the intervention; observation over time so that it can be established whether behaviours maintain and develop in the longer term; evidence of maintenance and development over time and generalisation to other contexts; and measures to minimise bias (Dempsey & Foreman, 2001; Jordan, Jones, & Murray, 1998; Matson, Nebel-Schwalm, & Matson, 2007; Rao, Beidel, & Murray, 2008; Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007). As highlighted in the literature review, experimental studies dominate research about perspective taking in individuals with autism. Findings from these studies are useful in terms of refining the nature of the perspective taking difficulty. However, in order to understand perspective taking in individuals with autism more fully, I believe findings from experimental studies need to be complemented with and interrogated by studies about individuals with autism interacting in real world social contexts. To date, as I have already highlighted, the number of studies conducted within an interpretative paradigm is diminutive in comparison with experimental studies (Bagatell, 2007; Billington, 2006; Kremler-Sadlik, 2004; Ochs, Kremler-Sadlik, Sirota, & Solomon, 2004; Solomon, 2004). Those that exist, however, illustrate how real world accounts of individuals with autism can challenge perceptions about the condition and "advance understanding of autism" (Solomon & Bagatell, 2010: 2).

An interpretative paradigm has particular implications for how research is conducted with a preference for a methodology that incorporates a combination of qualitative methods so that the rich complexity of the context can be captured and an understanding of the different interpretations held by people in the context can be gained. Within this process, the researcher is the instrument and integrally bound with the construction of the research and conclusions drawn (Angen, 2000: 383; Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 88; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005: 183; Patton, 2002: 14). As such, there needs to be transparency and consideration of the role of the researcher throughout the research. As Mason advises:

Qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity. This means that the researcher should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject them to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their 'data'. (Mason, 2002: 6)

I seek transparency in this research in three ways: first, by clarifying how I came to the research and my relationship with the organisations connected with it; secondly, by illustrating in the literature review how I position the research and where my starting points are in relation to individuals with autism and perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education; and thirdly, by considering my role in the data collection and analysis process so it is clear how I reach my findings.

Reflection on the role of the researcher is considered to be a central part of ensuring that the research can be judged as trustworthy. Within an interpretative paradigm, there are different indicators from positivist research for ascertaining the quality of the research. Although there is an argument that quality indicators are not relevant or philosophically consistent with an interpretative paradigm (Scwandt, 1996; Smith, 1984: 390; Stenbacka, 2001: 552; Wolcott, 1990), I subscribe to the view that taking steps to enhance the trustworthiness of the research is important both as an exercise for the researcher and as an aid for those reading the research to judge its quality and show that the conclusions are consistent with the evidence provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mason, 2002; O'Leary, 2004; Patton, 2002; Seale, 1999). Indicators of trustworthiness that I find useful in qualitative research include **dependability** where a consistent, systematic approach to individual data collection and analysis methods is demonstrated; **authenticity** where clear correspondence is shown between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their view point and where the description of the phenomenon captures what is happening in a way that is 'true' to the experience; **transferability** where the extent to which findings can have a wider applicability is considered; and **auditability** where it is clear to readers how data have been collected, analysed and findings reached. I take these indicators into consideration when describing data collection and analysis methods where I consider specific approaches to enhancing trustworthiness and when discussing the credibility of my findings.

3.1.2 What is the research methodology?

Within an interpretative paradigm, there are different research methodologies that can be used to guide how data are collected and analysed including case study, ethnography and grounded theory. Although these methodologies are not mutually exclusive (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000: 1), the methodology that I adopt in this research is **case study methodology** which can be defined as:

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident ... The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of

interest than data collection points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2003:13-14)

I adopt this methodology for five reasons:

First, I am investigating a particular complex phenomenon – perspective taking in individuals with autism – in real-life contexts. My purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of how perspective taking can manifest, by identifying and analysing instances of it, and why perspective taking can manifest, by uncovering and examining factors associated with it. The real-life contexts in this research, or real world social contexts as I refer to them, are the interactive context of drama education and other areas of the curriculum at a further education unit for students with autism (see p89). When case study research examines a phenomenon across individuals and contexts, it is often referred to as a **multiple case study design** (Yin, 2003: 47). I took the decision to research perspective taking in individuals with autism across contexts so that I could analyse similarities and differences in perspective taking and factors associated with it within and between contexts and reflect on my sense from my own drama workshops that a drama context may facilitate perspective taking in individuals with autism.

Secondly, the students involved in the research are individual ‘cases’ (see p86). As explained above, as well as examining perspective taking across contexts, I am examining perspective taking across individuals with autism making this research a multiple case study design. There are ten ‘cases’ in this study which allow for the heterogeneity of the individual students to be captured but there is also scope to observe patterns across students. I refer to individual students as students rather than cases to retain the humanity of the students involved.

Thirdly, I use multiple sources of evidence from direct observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation to construct a detailed picture of how perspective taking manifests in individuals with autism across contexts and to closely interrogate factors associated with it (see p98-112). These multiple sources of evidence are important because they allow for multiple facets of perspective taking and factors associated with it to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 545).

Fourthly, I analyse data across students and contexts using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to coding. These approaches code in a systematic way how perspective taking can manifest and the circumstances under which it can occur (see p118 and 161). The approaches allow for patterns in the data across students and contexts to emerge and be analysed. In order to capture the detail of how a particular aspect of

perspective taking or factor associated with it may manifest in context, I use a representative example from one student. I analyse data and present findings by research question so that the analysis and findings remain focused and there is clarity about how data interact together.

Fifthly, as set out in the literature review, I began the research with particular theories in mind about perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it. I use flexible methods to collect data but, in the analysis of data, I create coding frames by combining inductive codes emerging from the data with deductive codes taken from theories about perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it (see p118 and 161). Incorporating a deductive component at the analysis stage departs from some interpretations of interpretative research where there is a preference for inductive approaches to analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A theoretical component is, however, advocated in case study methodology as Yin's quote on the previous page exemplifies. The deductive part of the coding frames in this research allows the data to be clearly linked back to theories and research enabling the research to "inform and transform existing theory and research" (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005: 183). This 'linking back' takes place in the discussion chapter where I systematically compare and contrast findings to each question with prior theory and research so that new data can be situated into pre-existing data and implications discussed (see p231). The separation of the presentation of analysis and findings from a discussion of their significance is advised within case study methodology (Yin, 1999: 1219).

In an interpretative paradigm and case study methodology, a detailed description of the setting is central to understanding who the cases are and what constitutes the real world social contexts under investigation. This is the focus of the next section.

3.2 Research setting

3.2.1 How was the setting of the research found?

Before giving a description of the setting of the research, I want to give some back story on how it was identified. As I explained in the introduction (see p13), in early 2004, I encountered a school for individuals with autism that was in its first year of running a dedicated expressive arts programme involving drama at its further education unit. At this stage, although I knew that drama sat within the Primary Framework for Literacy, within English as part of the National Curriculum at secondary level and that there was Government guidance available to those teaching drama to pupils with autism, I did not know the nature of drama provision in autism-specific schools and units and there was no data that I was able to find specifically on this point. As a result, I decided to conduct a survey of Autism Accredited schools and units. **Autism Accreditation** is an autism-specific quality assurance programme. The aim of the survey was to gain a clearer picture of the availability, use and understanding of drama in autism-specific schools and units. It included 28 short questions in a closed format to facilitate statistical analysis and presented opportunities for more detailed responses should participants wish to expand on the questions asked. I refined the survey following a workshop with research colleagues, piloted it with the head teacher of the further education unit, before distributing it more widely by email via the Autism Accreditation office (Appendix 4: 309).

When I conducted the survey in early 2007, there were 45 Autism Accredited schools and units in the UK and these were all sent a survey. There were 27 responses giving a response rate of 60% spread relatively evenly across Autism Accredited schools and units. Of the respondents, 16 were either head or deputy head teachers, nine were class teachers and two did not specify their role. There were no obvious patterns in the data that differentiated the views of class teachers from those of head or deputy head teachers.

Almost half of the respondents (48%) worked in schools and units that specifically catered for pupils and students with autism. One third (33%) worked in specialist schools for pupils with learning difficulties and a small proportion (18%) worked in mainstream schools with specialist provision for pupils with autism.

The majority of schools and units surveyed offered drama, 24 of 27 (89%). For three quarters of these schools, drama was incorporated as an art form or performing art which is where my interest lay. A large proportion of schools and units used drama as a teaching tool in other subjects (71%) and almost two thirds employed drama in English (63%). A range of activities took place in drama at these schools and units with the most popular activities being role play, working towards an annual or biannual show, movement with music, and

singing songs. I illustrate the distribution in Figure IV and this was consistent across age ranges.

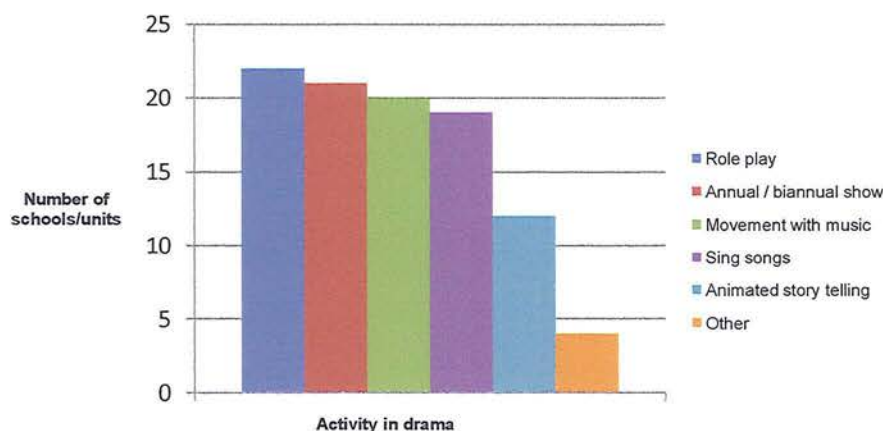


Figure IV: Drama in schools and units for those with autism

Of the 24 schools and units offering drama, it was timetabled at 16 schools and units (67%) and offered every week by 11 (46%). I can explain the discrepancy in timetabling and the frequency in which drama is offered in two ways. First, many of the schools and units rotated drama with other expressive arts including art and music. This was the case at seven of the 24 schools and units offering drama (29%). Secondly, whether drama was used in lessons depended on the teacher (13%). In terms of the length of a drama session, the majority was less than one hour (67%) with three schools and units offering sessions of more than one hour. Of these, two schools offered drama on rotation with other expressive arts so it was not offered continually throughout the school year and a third school offered drama as part of English, and as a teaching tool in a social and communication programme. These findings indicated that drama is prevalent in schools for individuals with autism but that the further education unit which I had encountered was unique in offering a dedicated drama programme for over six hours per week on a continual basis throughout the school year. This finding suggested the suitability of the further education unit for my research which aimed to observe students in detail and over time.

As well as providing detail about the prevalence of drama in schools and units for individuals with autism, I was able to use the survey to gain perceptions from teachers about the value of drama for pupils with autism. Although some respondents were more cautious than others about the appropriateness of drama for pupils with autism, all of them identified outcomes for their pupils from participating in drama activities as shown in Figure V. This included respondents from two of the three schools and units who claimed not to work with drama.

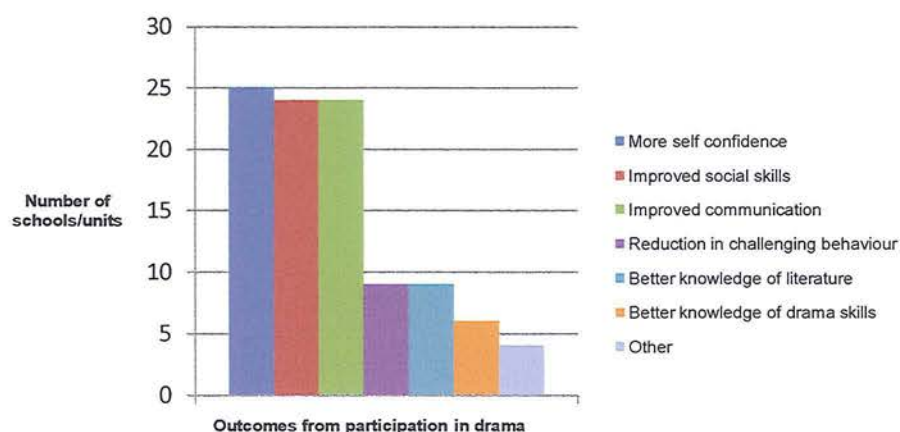


Figure V: Outcomes from participating in drama activity

Of schools and units surveyed, 25 of 27 respondents (93%) believed drama activities helped to boost their pupils' self-confidence and a similar number 89% (24 out of the 27) claimed drama improved their pupils' social and communication skills. Smaller numbers considered drama to reduce challenging behaviour (33%) and improve knowledge of literature (33%) and drama skills (22%). Other outcomes mentioned included improved understanding of other perspectives; personal and social development of the individual in their specific needs area such as sensory curriculum; enjoyment and parental satisfaction. These findings reinforced the comments and narrative case studies that I discussed in the literature review. Additionally, they added further weight to the rationale for my research and the requirement to investigate in more detail the participation of individuals with autism in drama.

3.2.2 What was the setting of the research?

I based the research at the further education unit of a school for students with autism aged 16 to 19 which offered drama as part of an expressive arts programme that prepares the students for adulthood. I purposely chose the setting because, as I discovered from the survey of Autism Accredited schools and units, it is the only school in the UK which runs an intensive drama curriculum for students with autism continually throughout the school year.

The further education unit is part of an independent special school for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (DfES, 2001) confirming diagnosis of autism. The school caters for pupils aged 11 to 19 and it is owned and managed by an autism charity. This charity provides well-established, autism-specific approaches that follow the **SPELL** framework – structure, positive, empathy, low arousal, links with parents (Mills, 1999; Siddles, Mills, & Collins, 1997). The expressive arts programme including drama, music and

art was introduced at the further education unit in 2003. The reason for its introduction was based on positive experiences of practice which very much tallied with experiences from my own drama workshops. The expressive arts embraced the interests of students, had the potential to be adapted to engage students across a wide range of abilities and the school believed that it could help the students to express themselves. Students, with the support of teachers and parents, chose to follow one expressive art intensively for the three years they were at the further education unit. Students involved in drama engaged in over six hours of drama per week. This presented a rare opportunity to look in detail at individuals with autism engaging in drama activities both over time and in comparison with other curricular areas. This would provide empirical evidence about drama and individuals with autism that currently does not exist and which organisations, individuals and schools with positive experiences of working with drama, particularly the one where the research is based, were eager to gain.

3.2.3 Who were the students participating in the research?

There were 36 students in the further education unit over the school year of 2007 to 2008 and ten were involved in drama. The ten students participating in drama comprised the 'cases' in this research and I collected data about these students in drama and other curricular areas over 34-weeks of the school year (Appendix 2: 304). The students were aged 16 to 19. This age range has received less interest in research pertaining to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama concerning individuals with autism. Although by young adulthood these students have learnt skills and can be better able to manage their behaviour, there is evidence to suggest that difficulties in perspective taking, particularly in the form of social reciprocity, remain more central and more persistent than other core characteristics of autism (Mesibov, Schopler, Schaffer, & Michal, 1989; Shattuck et al., 2007; Volkmar & Klin, 2005). Six of the students were girls and four were boys. Four students were in their first year of the curriculum; three were in their second year and three were in their third and final year. I give a more detailed, qualitative description of the students in Appendix 3 (see p306). Observing students across year groups as well as over a school year offered opportunities to examine whether perspective taking in drama maintained and developed over time, internalised and generalised to other contexts.

In addition to qualitative description of the ten students, I drew on two standardised assessment measures to aid my understanding of how autism typically manifested in the students involved. The use of such standardised assessment measures could be regarded as contradictory with working within an interpretative paradigm where the focus is on the individual experience in context. However, I considered their incorporation to have potential value for two reasons. First, scores from these assessment measures would be able to give me an overview from one particular viewpoint of the students involved in terms of the severity of their autism and their social and communication competencies. This can be

useful in ascertaining how the participants in this research may relate to participants in other research studies which can be important when considering how transferable research findings may be. Secondly, scores from these assessment measures can be compared and contrasted with findings about the same individuals in the contexts investigated as part of this research as an additional way of ascertaining whether particular contexts may mitigate difficulties associated with the condition. This approach is consistent with my rationale for viewing autism within the interactive model of disability and for researching using case study methodology where observations from individuals in context can be used to illuminate understanding about a condition. I discuss the relationship between these scores and my findings in the chapter on analysis and findings and consider the extent to which they were actually valuable in my discussion chapter.

I conducted the **Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ)** as an interview with class teachers. The SCQ was developed as a simple 40-item diagnostic tool for autism (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003) and is derived from the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) (Lord, Rutter, & Le Couteur, 1994) which is recognised as one of the best validated instruments in the diagnosis of autism. The SCQ asks about the characteristics of autistic behaviours and recommends a cut-off score of 15 and above for autism. Scores for the students participating in this research ranged from 5 to 19 ($M = 14.6$, $S.D = 4.67$, range = 5 to 19) with the diagnosis confirmed for seven of the ten students. The three students who did not receive a diagnosis on this measure were the most able in the group and it is possible that autism was not picked up using this particular measure for two reasons. First, the measure was designed for younger children; as adolescents, these students may have developed skills and learnt to better manage their behaviour (Shattuck et al., 2007). Secondly, research has shown that there is low specificity using this measure with one research project seeing a 54 per cent hit rate for the SCQ as a screening measure (Eaves, Wingert, & Ho, 2006).

I also measured the adaptive behaviour of students through an interview with class teachers to give a more detailed picture of the students, particularly in terms of social and communication abilities. Adaptive behaviour is defined as “the development and application of the abilities required for the attainment of personal independence and social sufficiency” (Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1984: 6). I used **Vineland-II Adaptive Behaviour Scales (VABS)** which have been standardised for individuals with autism (Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005), including those with an associated learning difficulty (de Bildt, Kraijer, Sytema, & Minderaa, 2005). These scales are common in research about individuals with autism as a means of giving a detailed diagnostic picture which is where my interest in them lay (Barry et al., 2003; Marriage, Gordon, & Brand, 1995; Ozonoff & Miller, 1995; Pine, Luby, Abacchi, & Constantino, 2006; Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007). They can also be used to measure change in social and communication abilities over time (Gevers, Clifford, Mager, &

Boer, 2006; Legoff & Sherman, 2006; Mackay, Knott, & Dunlop, 2007; Magiati & Howlin, 2003; Sherer et al., 2001). However, I did not believe such a use would be valuable for the research at hand because the scales are not able to capture the social use of behaviours in context or their quality which are important for my research (Caldwell, 2007: 97; Mirenda, Donnellan, & Yoder, 1983).

VABS measure adaptive behaviour with 307 items across three domains – daily living (personal, domestic, community), communication (receptive, expressive, written) and socialisation (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, coping skills). I calculated standard scores for each of the domains and these showed the distance of an individual's raw score from the mean raw score. I also calculated an adaptive level which summarised an individual's 'overall level of functioning' according to the measure. For the ten students participating in drama, adaptive behaviour composite scores ranged from low adaptive functioning to moderately low ($M = 61$, $S.D = 10.3$, range = 52 to 85). In comparison with the typical age range, the percentile rank ranged from less than 0.1 to 16 with the majority of student scores being 0.1 or 0.2. VABS also give a more detailed picture of social and communication abilities and the extent to which these vary between individual students and across students. In Table I, I summarise the characteristics of the students participating in drama.

Table I: Characteristics of the students participating in drama

Participant	Gender	Age at the beginning of the research	SCQ	VABS adaptive behaviour composite	VABS social skills composite	VABS comm skills composite
Ben	Male	18 years, 4 months	5	85	73	113
Fran	Female	17 years, 5 months	10	73	76	74
Claire	Female	18 years, 1 month	13	64	64	67
Alice	Female	18 years, 8 months	15	57	60	59
Deborah	Female	17 years, 11 months	15	57	63	52
Jacob	Male	17 years, 1 month	15	57	65	45
Eddie	Male	17 years, 6 months	18	56	64	43
Gina	Female	16 years, 11 months	19	55	52	57
Harry	Male	16 years, 1 month	19	55	56	52
Isy	Female	16 years, 2 months	19	52	49	45

According to the scores that I calculated as part of this research, the participating students varied in their severity of autism and adaptive behaviour with Ben being the most able in the group in terms of social and communication competencies and Gina, Harry and Isy the least

able. It is also visible that, although the SCQ and VABS adaptive behaviour composite scores correlated, this correlation was not reflected to the same extent across the more specific domains of social and communication skills. This is important to bear in mind because it reflects the breadth of the autistic spectrum and the uneven profiles of individuals with autism. Recognition of the uneven profiles of individuals with autism presents an opportunity in this interpretative piece of research to gain a picture of perspective taking and factors associated with it at both a group and individual student level.

3.2.4 What were the educational contexts under investigation?

The real world social contexts that form the focus of this research are educational contexts at a further education unit. As such, they bring with them a certain amount of predictability that a home environment, for example, may not. This predictability is in terms of the staff and students involved in the session; the format of the session and the location. In the research presented in this thesis, I draw a comparison between what happens in the interactive context of drama education and other areas of the curriculum. I describe these in turn.

3.2.4.1 What did drama consist of at the further education unit?

Drama at the further education unit involved learning about performance practices. These performance practices included a broad understanding of drama which incorporates within it dance and musical theatre. The drama sessions took place in a dedicated drama room and involved a range of activities. These included warm up exercises; playing drama and movement games; learning drama and dance skills and rehearsing for a performance. Indeed, as part of the drama programme, students worked towards two major productions per year, with shorter performances taking place at other points during the year. The drama was predominantly, therefore, drama education rather than drama-in-education or dramatherapy as I explained in the previous chapter (see p58). The sessions were well structured with morning sessions broadly adopting the same five-step routine which is detailed in Figure VI. **Widgit literacy symbols** were used to set out the steps in the session. These symbols illustrate a single concept without adding unnecessary information (Detheridge, Whittle, & Detheridge, 2002).

Students participated in two drama sessions for three mornings per week which equated to over six hours but could be more intensive in the run up to performances. Some students participating in drama took part in work experience or mainstream school activities which consumed one or two mornings of the weekly drama sessions (Appendix 3: 306).











Activity	Session one: 0930-1020	Session two: 1115-1220
Step one:  Sitting	Students sit on the floor.	Students sit on the floor.
Step two:  Greeting	The teacher shakes hands with each student and greets him/her to the class.	The teacher shakes hands with each student and greets him/her to the class.
Step three  warm up: walking  movement game  drama game	Led by the teacher, the students walk around the room to warm up. They walk and move in different ways such as walking as if 'picking apples', walking as if 'picking strawberries' and moving as if 'riding a horse'.	Movement/drama game. This may involve bean bags or moving in different ways.
Step four:  warm up: stretching  drama  dance  performance	Drama/dance/performance exercise such as a yoga stretch or stretching.	Drama/dance/performance activity where students learn and practise drama or dance skills or rehearse for a performance.
Step five:  Relaxation	Relaxation where the students lie on the floor and listen quietly to music.	Relaxation where the students lie on the floor and listen quietly to music.

Figure VI: The format of drama sessions

The drama programme incorporated a vocational skills component of the National Skills Profile through which students were accredited by Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations in various aspects of performing arts such as preparing for and taking part in a performance. Targets to meet through drama were also placed in each student's individual education plan

outlined in their annual review. These targets included, for example, further developing improvisation skills or participating in school performances with increasing confidence and independence.

Two teachers, Simon and Carina, led the sessions. Simon had a professional dance and choreography background and had been teaching at the further education unit for five years and Carina had a professional drama background and had been teaching at the further education unit for two years. Common to other teachers at the further education unit, Simon and Carina adopted a very positive, accommodating and empathetic approach towards teaching their students and nurtured them closely in their learning. During a drama session, the lead teacher was supported by at least one teaching assistant.

The productions and performances were put together in a particular way reflecting many of the successful factors highlighted in the previous chapter in relation to interactive approaches (see p52). Crucially, they were not imposed on to the students but were developed with the students. This was in three ways. First, the theme of the production drew on student interests. This was a story such as *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 2007) or *The Snowman* (Briggs, 1978) or songs from shows or contemporary artists. Secondly, a script was put together by a member of staff which was tailored to the students in the production. This member of staff knew the students very well and, when writing lines for them, was aware of how they communicated and what they liked. As such, the lines incorporated particular words, phrases and signs used by the students and included aspects of interest for the students. Thirdly, when the production was being put together, the teachers continuously drew on student feedback by incorporating suggestions and shaping how students responded to the script and movement routines. These three ingredients aimed to make the production relevant and meaningful for the students and to give them ownership over the material that they were performing.

3.2.4.1 What were other curricular areas at the further education unit?

Students participated in taught and community activities at the further education unit. In general, taught activities took place in the morning and community activities in the afternoon. Taught activities included expressive arts and Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE). Students participated in their chosen expressive art for three mornings per week and the remaining two mornings they participated in PSHCE and a second expressive art. The community activities that students participated in during the week included visiting the library, going swimming in the local swimming pool or to the neighbouring college gym and going to a café in the community. In this thesis, where I refer to **other curricular areas** or **curricular areas apart from drama**, these include taught and community activities that students participate in aside from their drama sessions. In the

example below, the other curricular areas that Eddie participated in on a Tuesday include registration and timetable, food intake and going to the library. I set out this timetable in Figure VII.

0900	Registration and timetable
0930	Drama
1020	Snack
1030	Break
1115	Drama
1230	Lunch
1300	Break
1330	Food intake
1400	Library
1530	Home

Figure VII: Eddie's timetable for Tuesday

3.3 The place of ethics in the research

Ethics surround and lie at the heart of my research. The research is about people and I strongly believe that the people involved need to be respected and that their experiences and views should be valued and fairly represented. I also regard ethics to be a critical part of working within an interpretative paradigm where the research takes place in a social context and the views of people in that social context are drawn upon in order to capture and make sense of its complexity. In this section, I detail how ethics was bound into the research process from beginning to end.

At the beginning of the research process, I sought endorsement from the National Autistic Society to confirm that researching drama education with individuals with autism would be a valuable exercise. This endorsement was given on the basis of strong anecdotal evidence and increasing prevalence of drama programmes without an evidence base. The relationship developed into an informal partnership with the National Autistic Society and Research Autism. I encouraged this partnership so that I could progress the research with access to expertise in the field of autism and to facilitate the dissemination of findings to individuals with autism and people who work with them. I believed this would enable the research to have the potential of improving quality of life for individuals with autism which I considered to be an important ethical goal.

At a regulatory level, I conducted the research within the guidelines of the ethical mission statements of my sponsor the Economic and Social Research Council; my research partners the National Autistic Society and Research Autism and my research base, The Institute of Education. I also fulfilled British Psychological Society (BPS, 1978 (Revised 1992)) and British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) guidelines. Although I drew upon guidance from these organisations, I constructed and carried out the research independently from them.

As part of the methodological approach that I devised, ethics go beyond regulations and infuse the research. I set up an interest group at the beginning of the research process which included representatives from the National Autistic Society, the further education unit where the research was carried out, the Institute of Education and others interested in the research. The group met once a term and this meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the progress of the research, ethical issues and ways forward. During the research, I maximised opportunities to share the research (Appendix 5: 323). These provided occasions to discuss the methodological approach and ethical dilemmas relating to it.

Main issues in relation to ethics related to the informed, voluntary consent, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants which included the further education unit as a whole

through the head teacher; staff and teachers at the further education unit; parents of students involved and most importantly the students themselves. It also involved access to student reports, the use of video and storage of data in line with the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 1998. I approached these issues in the following ways.

At the start of the research, I sent a letter to the head teacher setting out the research ambitions and approach. I enclosed a short pack explaining the research and requesting consent (Appendix 6.1: 324). Consent was given and, following a preliminary study (Loyd, 2006b), I sought consent once again to continue researching at the further education unit for another school year (Appendix 6.2: 332). This included requesting consent to video record during drama sessions and to use excerpts from observations, feedback conversations, interviews and assessment measures in the final report. Consent was given. At the end of the research, I wrote to the head teacher and thanked for her support and enthusiasm throughout the research period (Appendix 6.3: 340).

As part of the consent process for the main study, I asked the school psychologist to outline the research to staff and teachers at the further education unit. This was done as part of a staff meeting in September 2007. Previously, however, I had written a short article for the school newsletter summarising my preliminary study and plans for its extension and provided the further education unit with copies of a published article about this preliminary study (Loyd, 2006a). This ensured all staff had the opportunity to learn about the research. During the course of the research, I ensured that I was visible when in the further education unit and discussed the research with staff when asked. As part of the research, I carried out interviews with staff at the further education unit. Before each individual interview commenced, I asked participants if they were happy to speak with me and gave them a disclaimer to read which set out why I wanted to interview them and assured them that what they said would be kept anonymous in a research report (Appendix 6.4: 341). I also asked in the disclaimer whether the interview could be tape recorded to enhance trustworthiness. In all but one case, participants gave their verbal consent and on this occasion I took notes during the interview. I was aware that gathering data on individual students would take considerable time and that some class teachers had more than one drama student in their group. The timing of meetings with teachers were, therefore, as flexible as possible and I let teachers know at every opportunity how grateful I was for their time and input.

I asked all parents of the students in the drama group to consent to their child being involved in the research and to being contacted about the research during the course of the year. I outlined these points in a letter (Appendix 6.5: 342). Letters to parents were sent by the school psychologist on my behalf. The letter explained that participation was voluntary and that their child could be withdrawn from the research at any point during the year. It explained that references to individual students would be kept anonymous in the research

report with names changed. The letter also set out my desire to video record sessions and that excerpts from observations would be used in a research report. The consent information highlighted that live video data would be used solely to aid my observation and video recordings would only be shared with research partners. All parents gave their consent. As an additional measure to protect the anonymity of the students, I printed still images from the video data that I incorporated into the research report in black and white and blurred them. I gave parents the opportunity to hear about the research in more detail when I spoke at the further education unit's Annual General Meeting in May 2006. In all letters to them, I gave parents the opportunity to speak with me should they wish and provided contact details in order to facilitate this. At the end of the research, I wrote to parents and thanked them for their involvement (Appendix 6.6: 344).

In the research reported in this thesis, my focus is on drama with students with autism. As discussed in the literature review and pertinent to my own experience, this terminology is important because it respects the students as individuals (see p23). In placing ethics at the heart of this research, it has, therefore, been paramount to ensure students not only consent to the research themselves as the guidelines suggest (BPS, 1978 (Revised 1992): 2) but are an integral part of it. Indeed, whereas in learning disability research incorporating the voice of those with a disability is seen as a valid and accepted means of doing research (Oliver, 1992; Tarleton, Williams, Palmer, & Gramlich, 2004; Zarb, 1992), in autism research this continues to be comparatively rare (Waltz, 2006: 1). I sought to involve the students in three ways.

First, I prepared consent material specifically for the students (Appendix 6.7: 345). There is a concern when presenting material to students with autism that they may not understand it or that it will be simplified to such an extent that it deceives the participant about what s/he is actually signing up to. As Grisso and Appelbaum note, "information alone is an inadequate predicate to meaningful choice" (Grisso & Appelbaum, 1998: 14). In order to make it meaningful, I developed material using widgeit literacy symbols (Detheridge, Whittle, & Detheridge, 2002). These symbols were used in materials and signage for students at the further education unit. I put together information in a format inspired by Carol Gray's **social stories** (Gray, 1998). This set out who I was, why I wanted to watch the students in their drama classes and whether students would be happy with me watching them in their classes. It built on approaches developed for involving children with autism in research (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Tozer, 2003) and provided the opportunity for verbal and/or written consent. I sent out the consent material for students with consent information for parents and asked parents to read it through with their child. The material for students also provided the opportunity for them to mark their consent if they wished. Some of the students chose to do this and parents commented on its value. At the end of the research, I developed similar information thanking the students for their involvement in the

research (Appendix 6.8: 351). I thanked the students in person and asked one of the students to read the information I had prepared to the group before thanking them again.

Secondly, each time I joined students in a class, students were asked by the teacher if they were happy with me observing what they were doing in order to ensure ongoing consent (Alderson, 2004: 107). The teacher would welcome me into the class, paraphrase my research and ask the students if they were happy for me to come and watch. When I wanted to record, I asked the teacher to ask each student if they were happy for me to record the session. The teacher would do this by supporting the words with pointing to me and the video camera. When students commented on the camera directly, as in the case of Deborah quoted at the beginning of this chapter, I used the comment as an opportunity to ensure that the student was happy with being recorded. Seeing me in the classroom watching what they were doing, taking notes and recording, combined with the frequent explanation by teachers presented regular opportunities for students to be reminded of what I was doing and let me, or a member of staff, know whether they were happy with me being present. If at any point they were not, I agreed not to use the video or to remove myself from the setting. I did not need to take this action during the data collection period. An opportunity to check the extent to which students understood my work was also given when students prepared a short scene about my research. This explained that unlike a medical doctor, I was interested in psychology and understanding what students do in drama sessions.

Student 1: Doctor, Doctor, I have a sore arm.

Student 2: **I can't help you with your arm because I'm not that sort of doctor. I'm a doctor of psychology and I'm interested in watching people do things like this.**

All students perform a song from the production of Grease performed in May 2007.

All students: Thank you, Daisy.

For me, this scene was important in two respects. First, by preparing and acting out the scenes, the students were given another opportunity to share in the research and understand that it is about them doing drama. Secondly, in thanking me, they were able to connect that it was me leading this research.

Thirdly, I gave students the opportunity to speak with me directly about their experience of the further education unit and drama. I introduced this strand because I had found comments from the young people involved valuable in informing my own drama workshops. It is also consistent with the interpretative paradigm and interactive model of disability within which I am working where personal accounts are core to understanding the individual experiences of people with autism (Bagatell, 2007; Barrett, 2006; Billington, 2006). It is

important ethically in four respects: it appreciates the students' right to express their opinions and for these opinions to be heard (Alderson, 2004; DCSF, 2008; DDA, 1995; DfES, 2001, 2003; DoH, 1989, 2001; UN, 1989); it respects the students as active social agents and experts about their own lives (Chappell, 2000: 40); it treats the contribution of students as valid in constructing a picture of what is going on (Beresford, 1997; Germain, 2002; Stalker, 1998; Walmsley & Johnson, 2003); and it appreciates that a student's perspective may differ from that given by teachers and/or carers (Franck & Callery, 2004; Mitchell & Sloper, 2002; Rose & Grosvenor, 2001: 32). Clearly there are challenges when interviewing students with autism, particularly those with minimal language, and I address these in more detail when discussing the approach for interviewing students (see p105).

3.4 Data collection methods

I collected data over a school year (34 weeks) and data collection methods included observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. I describe these methods in turn in terms of relevance to research questions, process and steps to enhance trustworthiness.

3.4.1 How were observations carried out?

3.4.1.1 *Rationale for observing*

Observation was the primary data collection method that I used in this research and it needed to be for two reasons.

First, this research is about perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education. In order to find out about perspective taking in this context and attempt to understand it, I needed to observe what happened in this context and I also chose to observe what happened in other curricular areas so that I could ascertain whether there were differences and, if so, interrogate the context further to establish why this may be the case. This is why I chose to research within an interpretative paradigm and use case study methodology because this methodological approach is based on the premise that knowledge can be generated by observing in real world social contexts and that interactions within such contexts can be captured, described and analysed through direct observation (Hobart & Frankel, 2004; Sharman, Cross, & Vennis, 2000).

Secondly, observation is the only way in which the multimodal nature of perspective taking and factors associated with it can be captured and scrutinised. **Multimodality** is an approach to analysing social contexts that has rarely been incorporated into research about individuals with autism and is, indeed, a relatively new dimension to educational research as a whole (see Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001). It refers to a form of social semiotics which regards speech as one of a range of modes of communication through which meaning is made. Although the concept of speech as one of a range of modes of communication is not new, analysis of human interaction tended to prioritise speech. This is primarily because in speech there was seen to be consistency between form and function i.e. a shared understanding between a chosen word and what that word means in context. This is the basis on which Halliday developed his functional linguistic analysis (Halliday, 1975, 1978, 1985). In contrast, other modes of communication were not seen to share this consistency and, as a result, have the potential to be analysed on the same grounds. As Flewitt explains:

In contrast to words, nonverbal signs have often been excluded from study on the grounds that they are problematic for data collection and analysis, ancillary to learning through spoken or written modes and are idiosyncratic or arbitrary, characterized by personal and cultural variations with limited functional potential that render them unsuitable for systematic research. (Flewitt, 2006: 27)

These grounds, however, have been challenged by proponents of multimodality who argue that different modes of communication can be analysed using the principles that Halliday applied to speech because signs – whatever their form – always carry meaning (Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This is an important point because, far from being arbitrary, it assumes that an individual is motivated to choose a particular sign or particular signs in concert because s/he regards it to be the most effective way to communicate the meaning s/he wants to convey. As such, multimodality widens the lens on how people communicate and interact in two ways: first, by broadening the resources people draw on to communicate i.e. the form(s) of communication; secondly, by considering how these resources are used separately and together to make meaning i.e. the function of the form of communication. This widened lens brings added layers of complexity because, in recognising the functional potential of the different signs individuals use, it embraces 'personal and cultural variation' and firmly roots the analysis of how people communicate and interact to the social context in which they are in (Kress & Mavers, 2004). Advances in recording what happens in social contexts using digital technology such as video facilitates this multimodal analysis. In educational research, multimodality has been used in different ways and for different purposes (see Jewitt & Kress, 2003: 5). I used it as an approach to examine in detail the range of modes that students and teachers employ. My argument for the particular relevance of multimodality for this research is three-fold and it draws together points I have alluded to in my literature review.

- Individuals with autism communicate in idiosyncratic ways and may not use speech as their main mode of communication or may prefer or find it more meaningful to communicate through other modes. The comments by individuals with autism (see p35-39) suggest very clearly that these idiosyncratic ways are intentional and "need to be recognised" (O'Neill, 1998: 201). As speech is not the main mode of communication for the majority of students involved in this research, I needed an approach to help me capture and analyse the individual and different ways in which students choose to interact by observing their gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech in context. This would enable me to identify how different aspects of perspective taking in individuals with autism may manifest.
- Appreciating that the students may use different modes of communication to interact, I wanted to be able to capture the modes teachers were employing to engage the students in the interactive context of drama education and other areas of the curriculum. This would help me build a detailed picture of factors that may be

associated with perspective taking in individuals with autism and identify factors distinctive to the drama context.

- In drama, there is a focus both on different modes that can be used to communicate and the ways in which these modes can be used separately and together to communicate different things. This incorporation and acceptance of a range of modes opens up the opportunity for individuals to engage with the social context in ways that are meaningful for them. I wanted to be able to investigate the different modes of communication used by teachers and students in drama to ascertain whether the multimodal nature of drama may elicit and/or enable perspective taking in individuals with autism.

3.4.1.2 *Process of observing*

I observed the students in drama and other curricular areas during the school day over a prolonged period of 34 weeks over the school year (Appendix 7: 354). During observations, I was a **non-participant observer** and sat in one corner of the room taking notes (Rose & Grosvenor, 2001: 31). I adopted this role so that I could observe closely and capture the detail within interactions between those actively participating in the context. I did not believe that such detail could be captured if I had been participating in the context as a staff member, for example. This meant that even during drama sessions when I arguably became part of the audience when students were performing, I did not participate as a typical audience member would. First, I was not observing the drama session from the physical position of the 'audience' so students were not performing to me as Figure VIII illustrates. Secondly, I did not actively respond to what students were doing during sessions by clapping or expressing my opinion to the students except on rare occasions when I was specifically approached by a student. This stance may seem strange given my background as a drama practitioner and my experience of watching people engage in drama activities and it is not without complications. I felt it was necessary, however, in order to prioritise my focus on observing whether the students with autism show perspective taking in the context and, if they do, identifying factors that may be associated with it.

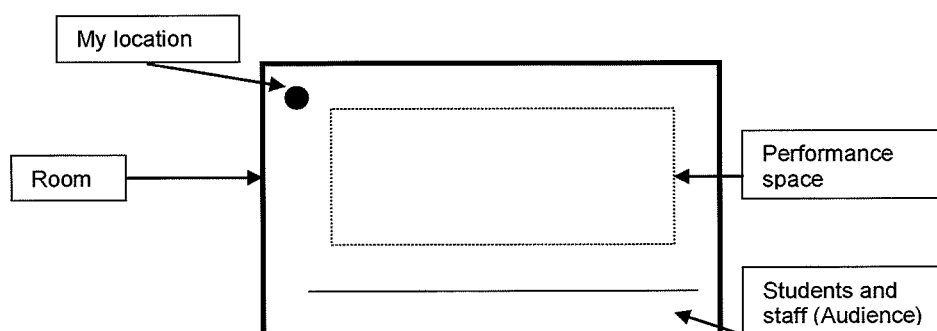


Figure VIII: The layout of the drama classroom

As I described in the section on ethics, I was not a stranger in the room to the teachers and students (see p96). They were aware of who I was and why I was there and had given consent to my presence. This potentially further complicates my stance as a non-participant observer. However, I maintain this stance because I was consciously not an active participant in the contexts in which I was observing. My reasons for ensuring everyone in the context knew me and my purpose related to their comfort with my presence so that I could be happy that I was observing a typical session. Observing over time; conversations with students and teachers; and my knowledge of frequent visitors and inspections that meant students and teachers were used to being observed led me to feel confident that students and teachers were comfortable with my presence and that my presence did not alter the course of sessions.

I used detailed field notes and video as techniques to capture what I was observing.

I chose detailed field notes because they enable a holistic picture of the social context to be painted without restricting what is observed to pre-coded categories (Cockburn, 2005: 381). I took field notes during each session and they incorporated summary observation notes and a narrative (Appendix 7.3: 362). The summary observation notes documented the date, name of teacher, session, time of session, session length, number of students, number of adults, location and activities. The narrative observation focused on one student at a time and I took notes for the duration of the session beginning when students started to arrive into the session and ending when the teacher finished the session. I segmented field notes into five-minute sections to open up the opportunity to gauge frequency of perspective taking in individual students. I decided to observe one target student at a time to provide a focus to observations and to enable me to collate a picture of perspective taking in individual students. This decision was also important within the multiple case study design where I sought to investigate perspective taking and factors associated with it at an individual and group level. In the field notes, I captured the student's interaction with other people, the student's engagement with activities and other people's interaction with the student. I was particularly interested in different modes of communication students used to interact with others and used by others when interacting with students so that I could capture the multimodal nature of perspective taking and factors associated with it. At the end of each session field note, I incorporated reflections or points of interest raised by students, teachers or other members of staff. I typed up the field notes on returning home from the observation and incorporated reflections at the end.

I observed each student for six drama sessions and six sessions from other curricular areas spread evenly over three terms. This amounted to approximately 300 minutes in drama and other curricular areas over the school year. These observations enabled me to gain a sense of how perspective taking manifests in individual students across contexts and over time.

There was one exception in Ben who, aside from drama sessions, spent most of his time in a mainstream environment which limited the opportunities for observing him in curricular areas apart from drama at the further education unit (Appendix 3: 306).

I used video four times per term and 12 times in total over the 34-week research period (Appendix 7.1: 354). I used it solely in drama sessions because the consent to record students had only been given by and for students in the drama group. I incorporated video to enhance and substantiate field notes (Flewitt, 2006: 30); enable more detailed multimodal analysis of perspective taking and the context in which it is shown (Flewitt, 2006: 29; Watson & Fisher, 1997: 80); provide footage to discuss during interviews with students (Rosenstein, 2002: 21); and allow for discussion with peers (Rosenstein, 2002:11). As Detheridge explains:

Video recordings of interactions which can be independently analysed, the use of multiple data formats, including formal assessments as well as informal observation, will facilitate interpretation of data. (Detheridge, 2000: 115)

Video was particularly valuable in this research to enable closer examination of different modes of communication used to articulate perspective taking and factors associated with it. It opened up the opportunity to examine the nature of these modes, their articulation and how they worked independently and together (Flewitt, 2006; Franks & Jewitt, 2001; Norris, 2004).

When I used the video, I placed it next to me in the corner of the room. So that it would be less of a distraction, I did not move it around the room during use but set it to a wide angle to capture the majority of the action taking place. A concern with video in research is that it is intrusive and presents ethical difficulties relating to anonymity. I discussed the latter in the section on ethics (see p95). In relation to the former, I piloted the use of video prior to and during the preliminary study (see p112). Although students sometimes commented on the video camera at the beginning of sessions as the comment at the start of this chapter illustrates, the video camera did not appear to distract the students during sessions and its location next to me as shown in Figure VIII meant students did not play to the camera. Through observations over time, with and without the use of a video camera, combined with discussions with students and teachers, I became confident that the video was not significantly impacting on the comfort of either students or teachers. After sessions were video-taped, I watched the video footage alongside field notes from the same session. This process enabled the trustworthiness of field notes to be enhanced and for key points about the session to be highlighted. I carefully marked video footage and filed it on my computer alongside respective field notes.

3.4.1.3 Steps to enhance the trustworthiness of observation data

I took steps to enhance the trustworthiness of observation data to ensure the conclusions drawn from it could be judged to be dependable and consistent with the evidence provided. I took four steps to support trustworthiness.

First, as I have already mentioned, I used video material to judge the trustworthiness of the field notes and this was done both by me subsequent to the observation and as part of three peer debriefing workshops – two with a group of six academic peers and a third with a group of three professionals working outside of an academic context. In peer debriefing workshops, it was not practical for peers to watch over twelve hours of video and compare this with the associated field notes. Instead I picked five-minute samples at random from across six sessions. I asked peers to describe what happened in those five minutes and their descriptions were compared and discussed in relation to the relevant field notes. The general consensus was that the field notes presented a clear picture of what was happening in the session.

Secondly, after observations, I held informal conversations with teachers and members of staff to discuss and clarify observations from the session. This process was particularly important in relation to the observation of sessions from other curricular areas where comparison with video material was not possible.

Thirdly, I discussed observation data in interviews with teachers and staff and reviewed it alongside documentation. Comparing data from multiple sources is a form of “triangulation” (Patton, 2002: 247) where conclusions can be reached if the sources converge. This can be problematic because data do not always converge (Mathison, 1988). In these instances, I used divergences as a way of interrogating and illuminating conclusions.

Fourthly, my research involved prolonged engagement with teachers, staff and students at the further education unit and observations took place over an extended period. This had twin benefits. Teachers, staff and students became familiar and comfortable with my presence so I could be relatively confident that I was gaining a natural picture of classroom practice and collecting realistic, in-depth data about perspective taking in the individual students observed. It also enabled me to compare observations over time to ascertain the stability of observations and, as a result, the extent to which perspective taking shown by individual students and factors associated with it was representative.

3.4.2 How were interviews conducted?

3.4.2.1 *Rationale for conducting interviews*

When I was carrying out my own drama workshops, I found conversations with parents, carers and the young people involved very helpful in terms of confirming my own observations and illuminating whether and how the workshops were engaging and/or helpful. As a result, I felt that interviews with the students, staff in the context and those who knew the students well should form an important data collection method in this research. This is consistent with research designed within an interpretative paradigm where the views of others in the social context enable a clearer construction and understanding of what is happening in the social context to be reached. In the research reported in this thesis, data from interviews are important in providing additional data to observations about perspective taking and factors associated with it; in interrogating factors associated with perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas; and in gaining a picture of perspective taking in individual students over time and across contexts.

The participants that I interviewed in this research include:

- Two drama teachers to understand the structure and content of drama sessions; how teachers work with individual students and the group; whether teachers perceive any differences or changes in student perspective taking between sessions and over time.
- Six class teachers to gain a more general picture of individual students; to discuss student individual education plans and to gain an independent perspective on differences between sessions and over time.
- Head teacher of the school and manager of the further education unit to understand the ethos of the school and the place of drama within the curriculum.
- School psychologist to understand how drama may support individual students with their learning and day-to-day life.
- Ten students to ascertain how they understand drama and whether this informs what they gain from participating in drama in general and in relation to perspective taking.

3.4.2.2 *Process of conducting interviews*

The interviews with drama teachers and class teachers took place at the beginning and end of the school year with interviews with the head teacher, the manager of the further education unit, the school psychologist and students taking place at one point during the year (Appendix 2: 304).

The interviews with teachers and staff were semi-structured in format (Appendix 8.1 – 8.5: 366-370). I chose this approach for two reasons: first, to provide a framework to facilitate open, relaxed and flexible dialogue; secondly, to enable discussion of observations. In all cases, verbal consent to conduct and preferably audio record the interviews was given before they started (Appendix 6.4: 341). The conversations took place in a quiet room at the further education unit, and I audio tape recorded them so that I could analyse closely their content. I thanked teachers and staff verbally after the interview and transcribed them verbatim on returning home.

3.4.2.3 Process of conducting interviews with students

In the section outlining the ethical approach, I emphasised the importance of finding ways to involve participants and incorporate their viewpoints in research (see p95). The interviews with students required a different format because of the challenges presented when attempting to elicit views of individuals with autism, particularly those with limited verbal communication (Porter, 2003: 14). The process is exacerbated by difficulties in perspective taking which can influence the understanding of what is being asked (Whitehurst, 2006: 60), attention (Whitehurst, 2006: 59) and self reflection (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985; Capps, Yirmiya, & Sigman, 1992). In developing an approach for interviewing the students, I referred to the few studies which directly address interviewing individuals with autism (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Preece, 2002; Tozer, 2003; Whitehurst, 2006) in addition to research about eliciting the views of very young children, particularly Clark's Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2001), and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (Grove, Porter, Bunning, & Olsson, 1999; Porter, Ouvry, & Morgan, 2001; Ware, 2004).

I carried out the interviews half way through data collection which provided time to get to know each student and spend time with her/him in different contexts. In addition to observing students, I sought advice and support from class teachers, the school speech and language therapist, the school psychologist and the interest group. These different sources of information enabled me to understand more clearly how each student communicated and comprehended and placed me in a stronger position to tailor an interview approach that would be suitable (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Cameron & Murphy, 2007; Clark & Moss, 2001; Grove, Porter, Bunning, & Olsson, 1999; Porter, Ouvry, & Morgan, 2001; Watson, Abbott, & Townsley, 2006).

I designed an interview approach that was multimodal to enable students to access the questions in different ways and to allow them to respond in the way in which they preferred to communicate (Minkes, Townsley, Weston, & Williams, 1995; Murphy, 1998; Peeters,

2000). Some students, for example, preferred to communicate verbally with single words or sentences whereas others preferred to point to symbols or pictures to show their response to questions or aspects they liked or disliked. The multimodal and predominantly visual approach was particularly important for students with limited language as well as for those who find initiating a conversation or coming up with new ideas difficult. The approach builds on research which suggests visual approaches are more accessible for individuals with autism than verbal approaches (Preece, 2002). It allowed all students to be asked the same questions which facilitated analysis but incorporated flexibility within it for students to expand on their answers if they wished. The interview approach had four parts and together there were 16 core questions (Appendix 8.7: 376).

The first part of the interview involved seven questions inspired by Murphy's approach to help people with communication difficulties think about issues and express their views – 'Talking Mats' (Murphy, 1998). Talking Mats have been used with individuals with severe and complex needs in research, including those with autism, and the approach has been found to be useful in capturing viewpoints (Germain, 2002; Whitehurst, 2006; Wright, 2008). Talking Mats uses three sets of picture symbols – topics, options which relate to that topic and a visual scale enabling individuals to indicate their feelings about each topic and options such as happy, unsure and unhappy. Borrowed from Talking Mats, I employed widely used literacy symbols that the students were familiar with (Detheridge, Whittle, & Detheridge, 2002), topics, options and asked about feelings. My approach departed from Talking Mats, however, by separating out the visual scale concerning feelings into individual questions which asked about likes, dislikes or particular feelings and incorporating questions which did not ask about feelings. I decided to make this change following advice from the school psychologist, speech and language therapist and interest group who suggested that asking about likes and dislikes within one question or asking students to choose options and how they feel about those options in the same question could be too complicated for some of the students. Rather than asking direct questions which can be confusing for individuals with autism, I put the questions into a sentence format and offered three options to complete the sentence. I chose the number three on the advice of the school psychologist and speech and language therapist. As shown in Figure IX, I placed the start of the sentence on to the top of a piece of paper and put three options with which the student could complete the sentence below the paper. I read the start of the sentence to the student and asked the student to choose a response or responses from the three options. I encouraged the students to talk more broadly around each question area.

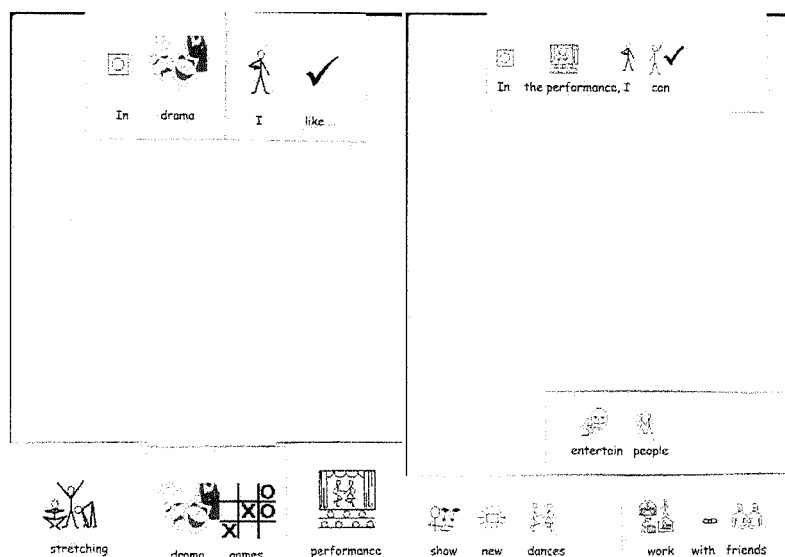


Figure IX: Part one of the interview approach for students

The second part involved five questions using photographs which can help individuals with autism recall activities in which they have participated (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Preece, 2002). I gave the student three photographs of herself/himself in drama and asked her/him to describe what was happening in the picture and then to choose her/his favourite and least favourite picture from the three options. I asked a question followed by a sentence for the student to complete. Where verbal communication was not the main way of communicating for a student or where prompting was needed, I placed symbols linked to the activity in the photograph near the photographs for the student to point to. I encouraged students to explain their choice of the picture they liked and disliked. This approach repeated some of the question areas covered in the first part and was a way of enhancing the trustworthiness of responses (Beresford, 1997; Germain, 2002).

The third part used video. I asked the student to watch a two-minute video of herself/himself in drama. While s/he was watching it, I asked the student what was happening in the video and who s/he was with. Where verbal communication was not the main way of communicating for a student or where prompting was needed, I placed words and symbols linked to the activity in the video near the computer for the student to point to. This part of the interview engaged students in another activity while asking questions taking pressure off the interview situation. Such an approach has been recommended as a way of enhancing the trustworthiness of responses (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Donaldson, 1978). I also considered it to be another approach to support the students in recalling and reflecting on activities in which they have participated. I repeated the video if the student wanted to watch it again.

The fourth part of the interview involved two simple theory-of-mind tests so that I could compare observations during drama and other curricular areas concerning student abilities to recognise how themselves and other people think and feel with performance in simple theory-of-mind tests. I used two simple theory-of-mind tests which are common in research studies testing theory of mind capacity in individuals with autism– the ‘Sally-Anne test’ (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985) and the ‘Smarties test’ (Perner, Frith, Leslie, & Leekam, 1989).

In addition to meeting some of the challenges outlined above, I devised the interview approach with the aim of protecting against three difficulties in eliciting views from individuals with autism: first, falling into the trap of only asking about likes and dislikes rather than probing more deeply into what students think or feel (Ware, 2004); secondly, asking leading questions which may encourage the students to acquiesce to a particular viewpoint (Stalker, 1998); thirdly, asking questions that are either too challenging or too patronising.

I carried out the interviews with each student on an individual basis. Prior to the interview, the student was asked by her/his class teacher if s/he was happy to speak with me (Cameron & Murphy, 2007). It was explained to the student that I would like to talk with her/him about the further education unit and the student was asked whether s/he would be happy to do so. On agreeing, I led the student to a quiet room in the further education unit. I set out the room with a table and two chairs next to each other. I sat down and asked the student to sit next to me and gave her/him the option to sit somewhere else around the table. In some instances, students chose to sit on another side of the table from me. I then asked the student if s/he was happy to be video recorded. All students were happy to be video recorded. I used video so that I could capture and incorporate into analysis different modes of communication. I explained the process of the interview very clearly to the student and reassured her/him that s/he could leave the room whenever s/he wanted. S/he was also introduced to a ‘stop’ card so that s/he could draw the session to a close when s/he wanted (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004). I explained each question to the student before asking it to prepare her/him for what to expect. Students did not have to give a response (Porter, Ouvry, & Morgan, 2001) but I did give them space and time to respond. I repeated the student’s response after s/he had given it to confirm the answer. All students were able to participate in interviews and respond to all of the questions asked. At the end of the interview, I thanked the student and led her/him back to her/his classroom.

3.4.2.4 Steps to enhance the trustworthiness of interview data

I took three steps to enhance the trustworthiness of information collected through interviews.

First, I harnessed a close working relationship with teachers, staff and students before the interviews took place. This facilitated a more relaxed atmosphere during interviews where participants were comfortable talking with me about their experiences at the further education unit and in drama. As described earlier, in the case of students it also enabled greater understanding of how individual students communicate.

Secondly, I recorded the interviews and transcribed them verbatim (Appendix 8.6: 371). In the case of videoed interviews with students, I transcribed these multimodally separating speech and action and including a column for images used during the interview (Appendix 8.8: 382). This approach to transcription drew on approaches used in the description of multimodal classroom interaction (Flewitt, 2006:36-38; Franks & Jewitt, 2001: 206). On completing the transcription, I double-checked it against the original recording and an independent source did the same.

Thirdly, I compared and contrasted responses to the interviews with other sources to create a rich data picture for analysis. These other sources included responses given by other participants such as a class teacher and drama teacher about the same student; the same participant in response to other questions such as student responses to questions involving symbols and questions involving photographs; the same participant on another occasion such as a student or drama teacher during a drama class; data from other sources including observations, questionnaires and documentation. This process was particularly important in helping with the interpretation of views elicited by individuals for whom face-to-face communication can be challenging and for whom contributions can be misinterpreted or over-interpreted (Grove, Porter, Bunning, & Olsson, 1999; Porter, Ouvry, & Morgan, 2001; Snelgrove, 2005). As Grove cautions:

Whatever the context, the systematic collection of evidence across naturalistic settings and over time will allow us to be clear about the extent to which our interpretations can be validated through other sources of information, and where they cannot. (Grove, Porter, Bunning, & Olsson, 1999: 201)

3.4.3 How were questionnaires administered?

3.4.3.1 Rationale for using questionnaires

Questionnaires enabled access to the views of parents which I considered to be crucial in gaining a more rounded picture of students. Parents were also able to indicate whether elements from drama sessions were shared at home and whether they saw differences in their child when they were doing drama or changes over time as a result of participating in drama. In this regard, responses from questionnaires formed an important part of understanding perspective taking in individual students over time and across contexts. I

chose a questionnaire over and above face-to-face interviews with parents because, although the latter would have been preferable, it was advised by the school psychologist that this option would be difficult to co-ordinate. I offered parents the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting in all correspondence with them.

3.4.3.2 Process of administering questionnaires

I devised the parent questionnaires in tandem with interviews with class teachers and drama teachers. They covered similar types of questions asking about student likes and dislikes, student feedback following drama activities and changes in a student over time as a result of drama. Through the questionnaire however, I sought wider information from parents about individual students, her/his participation in drama activities beyond the further education unit and their own perspectives about their child's involvement in drama (Appendix 9.1: 393).

I gave multiple choice options to facilitate responding to the questions in the questionnaire and asked parents to explain their choice and provide examples. The questionnaire was sent to parents by the school psychologist once they had given consent for their child to be involved in the research. The parents of seven students responded to the questionnaire. I sent a follow up questionnaire to parents at the end of the school year (Appendix 9.2: 397). There was a lower response rate to this questionnaire with only four parents responding. This was despite follow up by class teachers and the school psychologist. As three students involved in the research were leaving the further education unit and one was moving from the drama group to the art group, the low response rate can be explained in part by parents focusing on future challenges for their child rather than activities that their child would no longer be involved with.

3.4.3.3 Steps to enhance the trustworthiness of questionnaire data

I strengthened the trustworthiness of information given in the questionnaires in two ways.

First, as there was not the opportunity with a questionnaire for the respondent to seek clarification, I took steps to minimise misinterpretation of questions asked. These included discussing the questionnaire at interest group meetings and with the school psychologist, and piloting it with two independent sources. I incorporated changes to the wording of some questions as a result.

Secondly, I combined and interrogated responses from parents with information from other sources including interviews with drama teachers, class teachers and the school psychologist, documentation and observations.

3.4.4 How was documentation gathered?

3.4.4.1 Rationale for gathering documentation

Documentation is a meaningful part of the social world and, as such, forms an important part of research conducted within an interpretative paradigm. It provides an independent, indirect and unobtrusive perspective on the social context. In this research, documentation provided further information about individual students as well as data to combine with other sources to understand more clearly perspective taking in individual students over time and across contexts. Documentation also gave a valuable insight into individual student communication and behaviour which formed an important source in devising the interview approach for students. I collected three types of documentation from the further education unit:

- Student profiles which gave the student's name and date of birth, summarised how that student communicated; what the student liked and did not like and the student's main behaviours (Appendix 10.1: 400).
- Student behaviour support plans which provided more detail on the student's key behaviours; the triggers and functions of these behaviours and the strategies to deal with them (Appendix 10.2: 401).
- Student annual reviews at the beginning and end of year which gave an overview of student targets and progress over time as well as details about the student in each activity they were involved in at the further education unit. (Appendix 10.3: 403)

3.4.4.2 Process of gathering documentation

I collected student profiles and student behaviour support plans from the school psychologist at the beginning of the school year and annual reviews at the beginning and end of the school year.

3.4.4.3 Steps to enhance the trustworthiness of documentation data

I enhanced the trustworthiness of information gathered through documentation in two ways.

First, I recognised that each piece of documentation was created for a specific purpose and had the potential to be reviewed by different levels of authority at the further education unit, by parents as well as by inspectors from Autism Accreditation and OFSTED. This meant that the material could be biased towards placing the further education unit in a good light. That said, individual student profiles and behaviour support plans served a practical purpose for staff in terms of helping them to work with individual students and, as such, they would

not benefit from inconsistent information in this documentation. Similarly, annual reviews had the input of several members of staff which enabled a rounded picture of individual students to be created.

Secondly, I considered information in annual reviews during interviews with class teachers and drama teachers and data within them were combined with and interrogated by other data sources, including data from interviews, observations and questionnaires.

3.4.5 What steps were taken to pilot the methodological approach and data collection methods?

I piloted data collection methods to address issues that may be encountered in advance of the main study. Piloting is encouraged within case study methodology (Yin, 2003: 79) and there were two stages in piloting this research: a six-week preliminary study (Loyd, 2006a, 2006b) and the trialling of recommendations from this study.

The preliminary study was a six-week piece of research in which I focused on how drama education with individuals with autism can be researched. The methodology that I adopted for the research was case study focusing on two students and it involved qualitative approaches to collecting and analysing data from observations, interviews and documentation. I adopted a similar methodology for the main research but expanded it to use a multiple case study design to allow for comparison across contexts and all ten students participating in the drama programme.

An ethical dimension formed a key part of the preliminary study and I expanded this in the main research. I adopted the consent procedures that I had devised for the preliminary study but developed approaches to ensure ongoing consent from the students and to actively engage students, parents and class teachers in the research.

The approach to observation in the preliminary study included field notes, structured observation and the use of video to support both of these. After piloting, I removed structured observation for two reasons: first, it did not capture the quality of behaviours; secondly, it did not capture the context which in this research, where perspective taking and factors associated with it in context forms the focus, is a central requirement. In contrast, I was able to capture behaviours shown as well as the context in which they are shown using the more flexible approach of field notes. Therefore, I trialled field notes and retained them focusing on a target student during a particular session and taking note of that student in relation to interaction with teachers and peers, and engagement with activities. In the preliminary study, I used video to enhance the trustworthiness of field notes. After piloting, I considered that video could be used in a more productive way as part of data collection and

analysis because video had the potential to capture different modes of communication and allowed for more detailed examination of these and the context in which they appear. As a result, I incorporated an expanded scope for video into the main research and attended to different modes of communication in field notes as well. I presented the approach to collecting and analysing video data at peer debriefing workshops and conferences where its value was discussed (Appendix 5: 323). I also introduced a more organised approach to observations where students were observed over comparable timeframes in drama and other curricular areas so that I could make a fair comparison of student perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas.

In the preliminary study, I interviewed the school psychologist, one drama teacher and the manager of the further education unit to gain an understanding of drama at the further education unit and its impact on students involved. Interviews provided useful data, particularly in relation to individual students. For the main study, I incorporated two additions to the approach to interviewing. First, I extended the number of people interviewed to include the head of the school who envisioned the curriculum and was, therefore, clearer about why it had been introduced; class teachers and parents of individual students to give a broader picture of individual students; and the students themselves so that they could participate in the research and provide their perspectives about the further education unit and the drama they participated in. Face-to-face interviews were not possible with parents. Instead, I devised a questionnaire and sent it to parents to gain this home perspective. I developed the approach for students over time through observing students and through close consultation with class teachers and the speech and language therapist. I trialled the approach initially with one student, and being satisfied with the student's ability to respond to the questions asked, extended it to all students. Secondly, I introduced beginning and end of year interviews with class teachers, drama teachers and parents via questionnaires to facilitate examination of development over time. The interviews and questionnaires were semi-structured asking comparable questions so that I could make a comparison between responses at the beginning and end of the year.

The preliminary study incorporated student profiles, student behaviour support plans and student annual reviews to provide broader information about individual students and an indirect perspective on the social context. For the main research, the same types of documentation formed part of data collection. However, I collected annual reviews at the beginning and end of the research to gain a longer-term perspective on individual students and a different avenue through which to examine development in drama.

3.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological approach and data collection methods devised to investigate perspective taking and factors associated with it in the interactive context of drama education.

First, I discussed the suitability of an interpretative paradigm for the research arguing that it is most appropriate for research which seeks a greater understanding of perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it in real world social contexts. I considered differences in the concept of truth in this paradigm compared with a positivist paradigm and concluded that interpretative research is vital in order to gain a holistic picture of autism. I moved on to look at the implications an interpretative paradigm has for methodology and methods and highlighted that there is a tendency towards qualitative methods. These raised particular questions about the role of the researcher and the ways in which findings can be judged to be trustworthy and I discussed how I address these issues in this research. I introduced the range of methodologies that can be drawn upon in interpretative research and explained the strategy for adopting case study methodology to guide data collection and analysis.

Secondly, I explained that the research setting was purposely chosen following a survey of Autism Accredited schools and units which identified it as offering drama more intensively than any other setting for students with autism in the UK. This presented a unique opportunity to research individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama over time and in comparison with other curricular areas. I detailed the setting of the research, described the ten students involved and clarified the contexts under investigation.

Thirdly, I delineated the place of ethics in the research showing how it forms an integral part of the research process. In particular, I emphasised specific, new approaches that I developed to ensure students gave their fully-informed, voluntary consent to the research; were able to contribute to the research in a meaningful way through a one-to-one interview; and were given the opportunity to understand my appreciation of their involvement in the research.

Fourthly, I described the data collection methods which include observations, interviews, questionnaires and documentation detailing rationale, process and steps taken to enhance trustworthiness. I took particular time to explain the process devised for observation in order to capture how perspective taking in individual students and factors associated with it may manifest in multimodal ways. Similarly, I outlined the approach devised for interviewing students explaining the multiple modes of communication incorporated to enable students to access and engage with the interviews. I closed the section by reviewing steps taken to pilot

the methodological approach and data collection methods documenting how I adapted, extended and/or changed the approach and individual methods used in the preliminary study for the purposes of the main research.

Having described the methodological approach and data collection methods used, I move on in the next chapter to data analysis and findings from the research.

4. Analysis and findings

"I'm going to do magic. Oh right. Abracadabra, azakazu, here it is. Whey!"
Alice

My interest in this research is with perspective taking in individuals with autism in the interactive context of drama education. My investigation was a step-by-step process and, in this chapter, I present data analysis and findings in response to the steps I took. I present these findings in four sections.

In the first section, my concern is with identifying and analysing perspective taking.

1. Do students with autism show perspective taking in drama?
2. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, do they also show it in other curricular areas and does it manifest in the same way?

The initial line of enquiry follows my preliminary observations when working with individuals with autism and concerns establishing whether students show perspective taking in the interactive context of drama and, if they do, how it manifests. If students do show perspective taking in this context, I extend the investigation to ascertain whether students also show perspective taking in other areas of the curriculum and, if they do, whether it manifests in the same way as it does in drama.

In the second section, I turn to uncovering and examining factors associated with perspective taking.

3. If students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do they show it?
4. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it and are these circumstances the same as in other curricular areas?

If perspective taking is shown in curricular areas apart from drama, I scrutinise circumstances under which it is shown to uncover factors associated with it. If perspective taking is shown in drama, I examine circumstances under which it is shown. I then compare factors associated with perspective taking that are uncovered in drama with those shown in curricular areas apart from drama to ascertain similarities and differences.

In the third section, I consider and interrogate differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas.

5. If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, why are there differences?

If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, I seek to determine whether differences can be explained by the interactive nature of drama or whether there are distinctive factors within drama that appear to elicit and/or enable perspective taking in the students.

In the fourth section, I examine the nature of perspective taking shown in drama over time and across contexts.

6. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, does it maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts?

If students with autism are found to show perspective taking in drama, I analyse data from the beginning and end of the school year to ascertain whether the perspective taking shown by students in drama maintains and/or develops over time. I examine comments made by students during interviews, observations across contexts and interview data to discuss the extent to which perspective taking shown in drama internalises and generalises to other contexts.

To maintain clarity, I outline the approach to analysing data in order to reach findings for specific questions prior to presenting the findings to that question.

4.1 Perspective taking

4.1.1 How was perspective taking identified and analysed?

4.1.1.1 *Clarifying perspective taking*

I use the term 'perspective taking' to encapsulate both the understanding of and relations between the self and other people. I argue in the literature review that inferences about perspective taking can be made by observing how an individual interacts and communicates with other people as well as how s/he engages in make-believe. The ways in which an individual interacts, communicates and engages in make-believe can, therefore, be interpreted as manifestations of perspective taking in everyday life. In this thesis, as explained in the literature review and in the previous chapter, my starting point is not a blank slate about autism but a theoretical understanding of autism as a difficulty in perspective taking. As a result, I use diagnostic criteria for autism in DSM IV-TR as an organising tool for clarifying the manifestation of perspective taking in autism. By engaging with theories about autism and empirical studies in relation to them, I identify six items in the diagnostic criteria as reflecting manifestations of perspective taking in everyday life (see p34). I refer to the six items as 'aspects of perspective taking' and they form the focus of investigation in the research. The aspects of perspective taking adopt wording from diagnostic criteria but concern presence rather than absence of behaviour. They are:

1. Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others
2. Reciprocating socially
3. Reciprocating emotionally
4. Initiating interaction with others
5. Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe
6. Forming peer relationships

The aspects of perspective taking provided me with broad categories for the ways in which perspective taking can manifest in everyday life but, as they stood, they were not necessarily mutually exclusive. In order to set boundaries around each aspect of perspective taking, I needed clearer definitions.

4.1.1.2 Defining aspects of perspective taking

The process I devised to define each aspect of perspective taking emerged through coding a sample of material from separate forms of written data – field notes, interviews, questionnaire responses and documentation. In order to frame and make sense of data collected about perspective taking through this research, I coded data by aspect of perspective taking and a more specific level of annotation which detailed precisely what the student was doing. This approach to coding combined inductive and deductive approaches to coding data (Caudle, 2004; Mason, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Attride-Stirling advises, devising a coding framework:

tends to be done on the basis of the theoretical interests guiding the research questions, on the basis of salient issues that arise in the text itself, or on the basis of both. (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 390)

This approach may seem contradictory with an interpretative paradigm in which there is preference for analysis to be purely inductive (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The reason I choose to combine inductive with deductive approaches to coding is to allow for dialogue between the research at hand and prior research so that I am in a position to clearly highlight where the research extends or elucidates existing theory and research. This approach is consistent with my rationale for case study methodology (see p82).

I give two examples of the coding process in Figure X, the first from a field note and the second from an annual review. In these excerpts, the name of a teacher is in bold to differentiate a teacher from a student.

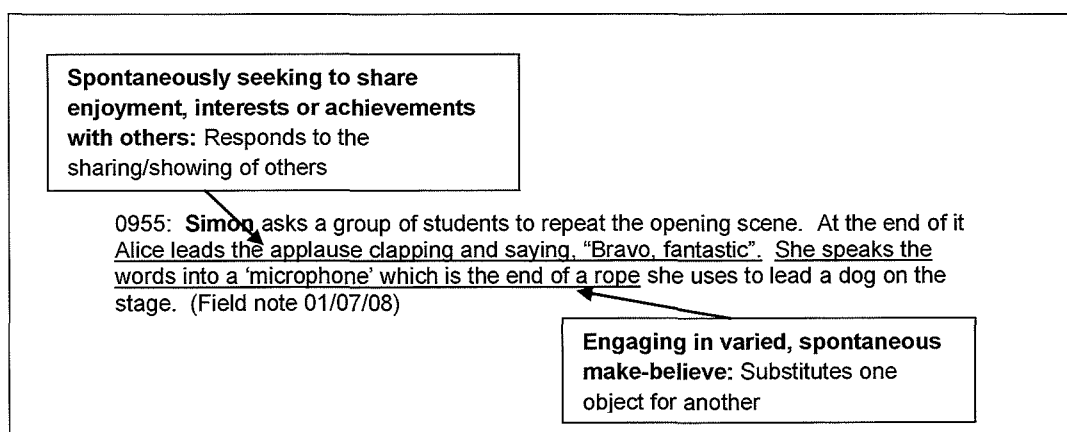


Figure X: Defining aspects of perspective taking within field notes (01/07/08)

Two aspects of perspective taking are visible in the field notes shown in Figure X. The first aspect shows Alice spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others. Alice is showing this aspect of perspective taking by sharing her enjoyment of

the performance of her fellow students and responding to it. The second aspect shows Alice engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe. Alice is showing this aspect of perspective taking by substituting a microphone for the end of a piece of rope.

The excerpt from the annual review in Figure XI also incorporates two aspects of perspective taking. The first manifest aspect is reciprocating socially whereby Eddie is following instructions. The second aspect illustrates Eddie engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe by creating movement sequences based on shapes and letters.

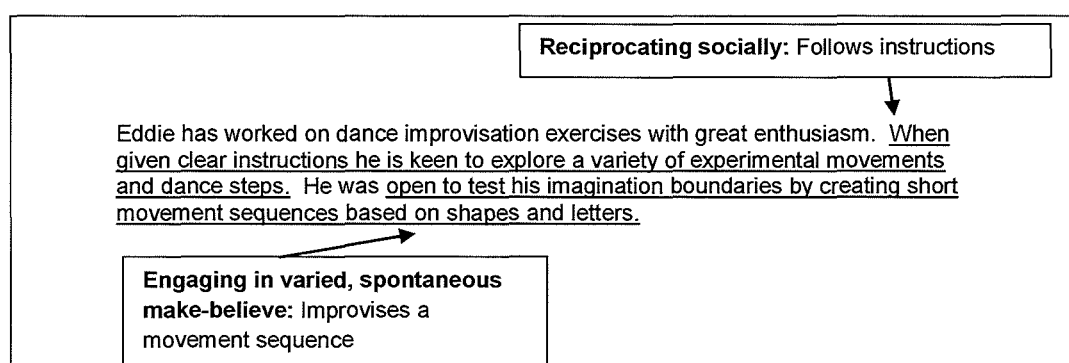


Figure XI: Defining aspects of perspective taking within documentation (Eddie's 2008 annual review)

By coding a sample of data through inductive analysis of different sources using the process described above, I was able to produce an initial list of detailed codes which defined further the manifestation of different aspects of perspective taking. I applied manually these detailed codes to all of the written forms of data. If an additional code was needed, I added this to the list in a different colour. I then reviewed the inductive, detailed codes and rationalised them by checking them against research questions for relevance and collapsing codes into one to make them more robust. For example, in the initial list I coded 'asking questions' and 'asking for help' as two separate codes whereas I collapsed them into one code 'asks questions/for help' in the final list. I detail the final list of codes defining each aspect of perspective taking in Figure XII on the following page. 'Forming peer relationships' includes any code that involves peers so that a differentiation can be made between perspective taking overall (i.e. with adults and peers) and perspective taking with peers alone.

By defining aspects of perspective taking, I could apply a consistent coding process across data allowing for patterns in aspects of perspective taking to be observed, compared and contrasted across the group as well as within individual students and across contexts. As well as enabling systematic analysis, this consistent coding was important in enhancing the trustworthiness of the data analysis process. This was in terms of auditability (Mason, 2002: 191) and clarifying the route by which I was reaching my conclusions. I discuss additional

steps to enhance trustworthiness later in this chapter (see p123). Within field note data, the codes and coding process allowed me to isolate instances of perspective taking and analyse them quantitatively and qualitatively. I set out the process of identifying an 'instance' of perspective taking in the next section.

1. **Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people**
 - Shares/shows to others
 - Responds to the sharing/showing of others
2. **Reciprocating socially**
 - Follows instructions
 - Responds to questions
 - Gives instructions and monitors response
 - Imitates others
 - Takes turns
 - Helps others
3. **Reciprocating emotionally**
 - Expresses feelings
 - Expresses opinion
 - Shows interest in / awareness of how others think and feel
4. **Initiating interaction with others**
 - Asks questions/for help
 - Initiates sharing information or affect
5. **Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe**
 - Substitutes one object for another, real or imaginary
 - Improvises a movement sequence / scene / around a script
 - Talks about pretence
6. **Forming peer relationships**
 - Spontaneously seeks to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with peers
 - Reciprocates socially with peers
 - Reciprocates emotionally with peers
 - Initiates interaction with peers
 - Engages in varied, spontaneous make-believe play

Figure XII: The final list of aspects of perspective taking and inductive, detailed codes

4.1.1.3 Identifying instances of perspective taking

With steps taken to ensure the field notes were trustworthy (see p103), I analysed field note data from 60 drama sessions (56 hours) and 58 sessions from other areas of the curriculum (53 hours) using the codes and coding process outlined above. Following the coding of the material, I counted instances of perspective taking so that I could examine patterns between different aspects of perspective taking, between perspective taking in individual students and across the group and between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas. An 'instance' of perspective taking refers to an isolated instance of perspective taking coded in the data or the first in a series of the same type of perspective taking coded in the data. The examples in Figures XIII and XIV clarify each of these.

Figure XIII illustrates an isolated instance of perspective taking recorded in field note data.

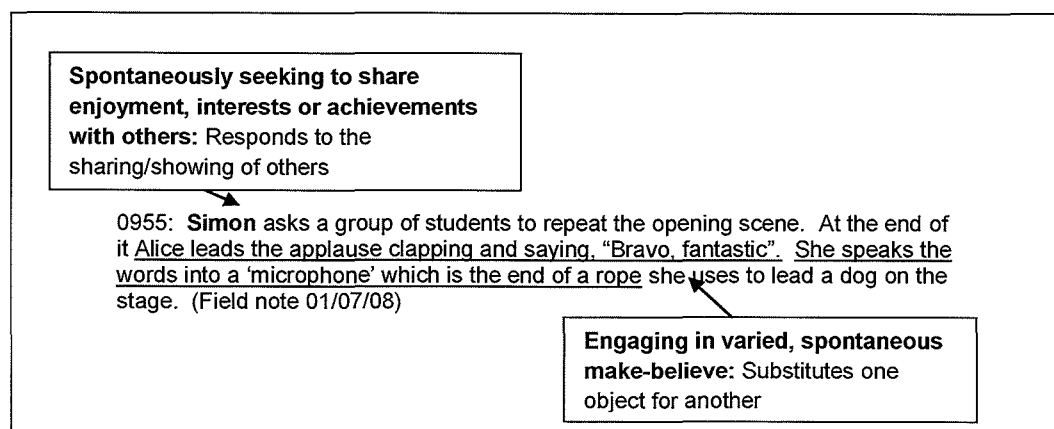


Figure XIII: Identifying instances of perspective taking within field notes (01/07/08)

I identify two instances of perspective taking in this example. The first instance is of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others manifest in Alice responding to the sharing/showing of others. The second instance is of engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe where Alice substitutes one object for another.

Figure XIV shows the first in a series of the same type of perspective taking coded in field note data.

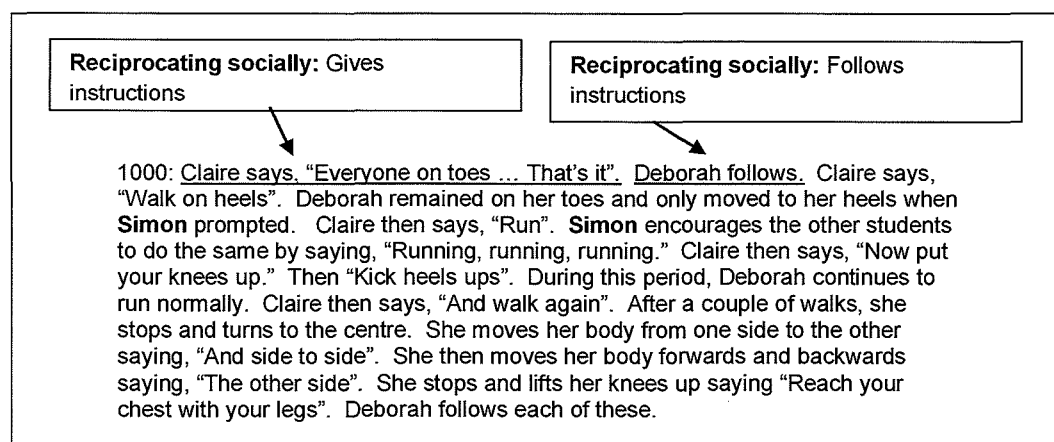


Figure XIV: Identifying instances of perspective taking within field notes (02/10/07)

I code two instances of perspective taking in this section. The first concerns Claire reciprocating socially – visible in her giving instructions to the students; the second concerns Deborah following instructions as part of the warm up exercise. I code only the first of each of these as they are the first in a series and, for each student, the detailed code is uninterrupted by another detailed code.

4.1.1.4 *Enhancing the trustworthiness of the codes and coding process for identifying and analysing perspective taking*

To enhance the trustworthiness of the codes, I took three steps.

1. I examined each code to establish its theoretical relevance to the questions at hand by reviewing codes used to identify aspects of perspective taking in the data in relation to theories explaining autism. This review was in terms of a difficulty in perspective taking and associated empirical evidence (see p34).
2. I considered the practical relevance of inductive, detailed codes by reviewing the codes in relation to assessment measures used with individuals with autism to ensure the validity of the code as a distinct item, with relevance to autism and to perspective taking. The assessment measures referred to included the Social Communication Questionnaire (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 8); the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18); the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132) and Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 301-318). Each code corresponded to an item in at least one assessment measure.
3. I presented the categories and codes at three peer debriefing workshops where their interpretation was discussed – two with a group of six academic peers and a third with a group of three professionals working outside of an academic context. In these workshops, I asked the participants to describe what they understood by each code. Responses were synthesised and incorporated into the definition that I used for each code in this research (Appendix 11: 411).

I used four approaches to enhance the trustworthiness of the coding process.

1. I introduced participants in the workshops described above to the codes, showed them three excerpts of video footage and asked them to discuss these with reference to the codes. This exercise provided an opportunity to ascertain how other people could interpret and apply the given codes and revealed general consensus in the application of codes.
2. I asked participants in the workshops to code a section of field notes using the codes. This formed a second approach through which to judge whether there could be consensus in what was happening in the data and it proved to be the case.
3. I showed two independent sources – one an academic peer and the second a professional peer – a randomly ordered list of the detailed codes relating to

perspective taking and they were asked to sort them according to aspects of perspective taking. Of the 16 detailed codes, the sources agreed on the location of 12. They accepted the location of four following explanation. This exercise led to further clarification of the definition of detailed codes and how they link with the particular aspect of perspective taking to which they refer.

4. I coded the data a second time using the computer programme NVivo (Richards, 1999). This exercise presented an opportunity for further immersion in the data. It also had the added benefit of bringing together all the written material into one place and enabled data to be retrieved by student, by aspect of perspective taking and by detailed code. As such, the computerised coding facilitated navigating the material and enabled me to respond more fully to the questions I was posing.

4.1.2 Do students with autism show perspective taking in drama?

4.1.2.1 An overview of perspective taking shown in drama

Data from field notes of 60 drama sessions – 56 hours – suggest that all students participating in this research show perspective taking with adults and peers in drama.

As described in the previous chapter, in the field notes I focused on one student at a time and captured the student's interaction with other people, engagement with activities and other people's interaction with the student. I took steps during data collection to ensure field notes were trustworthy (see p103) and analysed the field notes using the codes and coding process described above (see p118). In the analysis process, I read the field notes, identified instances of perspective taking captured within field notes and analysed them quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis provided an overview of what the data revealed in terms of the number of instances of each aspect of perspective taking across the group, by individual student and the extent to which instances may be concentrated into a particular part of drama sessions. The qualitative analysis allowed a picture to emerge of how each aspect of perspective taking manifested in individual students in context and I used an example from one student to do this. Analysis of the complete data set informed my choice of this example (Flewitt, 2006: 45).

Table II shows the number of instances of perspective taking that I captured in field note data pertaining to 56 hours of drama sessions. It also shows the proportion of instances of each aspect of perspective taking in relation to total instances of perspective taking captured. To give an example from the table, there are 203 instances of initiating interaction captured and this number represents 16.06% of total instances of perspective taking captured.

Table II: Number and percentage of instances of perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by aspect of perspective taking

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	742	58.70
Initiating interaction with others	203	16.06
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	145	11.47
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	106	8.39
Reciprocating emotionally	68	5.38
Total	1,264	100.00

The table shows that all aspects of perspective taking that I investigated are manifest in drama sessions⁷. Perspective taking is most dominant in the way students reciprocate socially with adults and peers and it is least dominant in the way students reciprocate emotionally with adults and peers.

When I interrogated instances of perspective taking at an individual student level, there were clear individual differences. Table III provides an overview of the cumulative number and percentage of instances of perspective taking captured in drama sessions by student.

Table III: Cumulative number and percentage of instances of perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	250	19.78
Alice	246	19.46
Deborah	176	13.92
Fran	130	10.28
Ben	119	9.41
Gina	84	6.65
Harry	81	6.41
Isy	71	5.62
Jacob	61	4.83
Eddie	46	3.64
Total	1,264	100.00

To some extent, the individual differences reflect characteristics of the students participating in the research. According to assessment measures that I used, Claire has fewer characteristics of autism and better adaptive behaviour than seven other students. Only the scores of Ben and Fran are better than Claire's, according to the assessment measures (see p88). Although the assessment measures do not score Eddie lower than other students in terms of characteristics of autism and adaptive behaviour, the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scores (VABS) communication skills composite does score Eddie lower than other students. As Eddie does not use verbal language, it may be that this hinders his perspective taking abilities or opportunities presented to him to show perspective taking. I investigate this latter

⁷ Instances of perspective taking in the table include perspective taking with adults and peers. Perspective taking with peers is focused on separately to give a sense of how the students form relationships with peers in drama sessions (see p144).

line of enquiry in more detail in response to questions about factors associated with perspective taking (see p186, 188).

In the following sections, I examine each aspect of perspective taking quantitatively and qualitatively. In practice, perspective taking manifests in a variety of ways and often different aspects of perspective taking occur in concert. The examples I give bring to the fore the aspect of perspective taking under focus and I do not discuss other aspects which may also be visible. I take the examples from field notes which are tallied with video footage to enable me to examine the perspective taking in more detail using multimodal semiotic analysis (see p98-100). I reserve discussion of the implications of findings for the following chapter (see p231).

4.1.2.2 Reciprocating socially

Reciprocating socially accounts for 58.70% of total perspective taking instances captured in field note data pertaining to drama sessions. It is the most dominant way in which perspective taking manifests.

Students reciprocate socially in a variety of ways including following and giving instructions, responding to questions, imitating others, taking turns and helping others. All ten students reciprocate socially. There are, however, quantitative differences in the number of instances of reciprocating socially relating to individual students. These are illustrated in Table IV.

Table IV: Number and percentage of instances of reciprocating socially captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Reciprocating socially	Number	Percentage
Claire	122	16.44
Alice	111	14.96
Deborah	105	14.15
Fran	78	10.51
Harry	72	9.70
Ben	70	9.43
Gina	62	8.36
Isy	52	7.00
Jacob	37	4.99
Eddie	33	4.45
Total	742	100.00

Comparable to cumulative instances of perspective taking by students, Claire showed the most instances of reciprocating socially and Eddie the least.

I observed reciprocating socially in all parts of drama sessions (Appendix 12.1: 415). The highest number of instances of reciprocating socially occurred when students were rehearsing for a performance accounting for almost one third of such instances (212 of 742).

In contrast, as may be expected, the least number of instances of reciprocating socially occurred when students were relaxing at the end of the session (20 of 742).

An example of reciprocating socially follows. I take this example from a drama session which focuses on creating movement patterns from geometrical shapes. I give a video transcription of the example which is multimodal so that I can examine the nature of perspective taking. The transcription draws on approaches used in the description of the multimodal classroom and I created it by viewing the video clip with image only to record action; with sound only to give a verbal transcription; with both sound and image to bring together transcriptions across modes of communication (Flewitt, 2006:36-38; Franks & Jewitt, 2001: 206). The resulting transcription documents video time, action and speech. I place action before speech because action in the forms of gaze, gesture, movement/stance is often more prevalent than speech for the students involved in this research. I strengthened the trustworthiness of the transcription by cross-referencing it with corresponding field notes and through peer debriefing workshops.

In Figure XV, the teacher, **Simon**, has placed Eddie, who does not use verbal communication, in the role of the teacher and is supporting him in this role.

Video time	Action	Speech
28.51-29.21	<p>Eddie points to Isy. He moves over and gives Isy a shape. Simon beckons Isy to stand up.</p> <p>Simon shows Isy where to stand. Eddie watches Simon.</p> <p>Eddie approaches Jacob and gives him a shape. Jacob takes the shape and starts to stand up.</p>	<p>Simon: Choose two people.</p> <p>Simon: Ok, second dancer.</p> <p>Simon: And second dancer is ...</p>

Figure XV: Reciprocating socially (02/10/07)

Simon's first instruction to Eddie in this excerpt is to "choose two people". Eddie shows he understands what **Simon** has asked him by responding immediately and he uses gesture and movement to give his instruction. He looks towards Isy, points at her, moves towards her and then gives her a shape. Isy takes the shape and recognising that she has been chosen to take part in the exercise, she starts to stand up and **Simon** reinforces her actions through gesture. Eddie watches **Simon** as he shows Isy where to stand and **Simon** then prompts Eddie to choose a second dancer. Eddie uses the same modes of communication as he did with Isy. In the following images, I draw out the different modes of communication to provide a visual picture of perspective taking in context.

Movement/stance:

Eddie moves
towards Jacob.

Gaze: Eddie looks
at Jacob and Jacob
returns his gaze.

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Gesture:
Eddie points to
Jacob.

Video time: 29.11

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Gaze:
Eddie
continues
to look at
Jacob.

Gesture: Eddie
gives Jacob a
shape.



Movement/stance:
Jacob starts to
stand up.

Video time: 29.13

In order to make his choice and instructions clear, Eddie uses gaze, gesture and movement/stance. The return of Eddie's gaze by Jacob suggests that Jacob recognises that Eddie wants him to be part of the task and this is reinforced when Eddie hands him the shape and Jacob starts to stand up.

The example illustrates that Eddie is able to reciprocate socially by responding to instructions given to him by **Simon**, engage with other students in order to act on these instructions and give instructions to his peers. As Eddie does not use verbal communication, he recruits a number of different modes of communication including gaze, gesture and movement/stance to communicate his intentions to other students and they appear able to interpret these intentions and respond. **Simon** reinforces some of these modes through gesture.

4.1.2.3 Initiating interaction

Initiating interaction with others comprises 16.06% of perspective taking instances identified. Students initiate interaction with others to ask a question/for help or to share information or affect and I observed instances in eight of ten students participating in this research. There are quantitative differences in the number of instances of initiating interaction relating to individual students. These are shown in Table V.

Table V: Number and percentage of instances of initiating interaction captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Initiating interaction	Number	Percentage
Alice	60	29.56
Claire	50	24.63
Deborah	36	17.73
Fran	26	12.81
Gina	11	5.42
Ben	9	4.43
Jacob	7	3.45
Isy	4	1.97
Eddie	0	0
Harry	0	0
Total	203	100.00

I observed Alice initiating interaction most capturing 60 instances in field notes from drama sessions. In contrast, I did not observe Eddie or Harry initiating interaction with others during drama sessions.

The majority of instances of initiating interaction occurred in drama sessions during the greeting phase at the beginning of the session (92 of 203). I observed few instances of initiating interaction when students were playing drama and movement games (9 of 203) or going through the timetable (1 of 203). The reason may lie in these parts of drama sessions being predominantly teacher led.

The example in Figure XVI follows that given in the previous section where **Simon** has asked Eddie to be the teacher and is supporting him in this role. Eddie has chosen two dancers, as described earlier, given them a shape and asked them to move a specific part of

their body in that shape. After the instructions have been given, **Simon** casually suggests that Eddie puts the music on to cue the start of the exercise.

Video time	Action	Speech
30.23	Simon goes to sit down and Eddie moves towards the music.	Simon: Ok, do you want to play music or something Eddie?
30.24-30.54	Eddie is looking at the CD player. Deborah looks at Eddie. Eddie looks at Simon . He returns to look at the CD player.	Simon: Music
30.55-31.25	Eddie continues to look in the cupboard where the CD player is. Claire takes her scarf off and swirls it. She looks to Simon and he nods. Claire swirls her scarf.	Claire: My scarf. Claire: Excuse me. Simon .
31.26-31.56	Claire lets go of her scarf and it lands on Simon . Eddie continues to look in the cupboard where the CD player is. Simon puts the scarf to one side. Deborah looks towards Eddie. She gets up and walks towards him. She looks in the cupboard where Eddie is looking.	Deborah: Simon. Eddie, try and help.
31.57 – 32.27	Simon gets up. Eddie looks in the cupboard and is pointing. Simon points at the button to press. Simon turns to Isy and Jacob.	Simon: What is it Eddie? What is it? Simon: This one. Simon: Ready, go.

Figure XVI: Initiating interaction (02/10/07)

Gaze: Whereas Claire is engaged in an interaction with **Simon**, Deborah is looking at Eddie.

Movement/stance: Eddie is concentrating on turning on the music.

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Video time: 31.31

Eddie is leaning towards the CD player suggesting that he is concentrating on turning on the music. Meanwhile, Claire is talking to Simon but Deborah holds her gaze on Eddie for the minute in which he attempts to turn on the music.

Movement/stance: Deborah moves across to Eddie. Eddie continues to concentrate on turning on the music.


Gaze: Deborah looks into the cupboard.

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Video time: 31.47

After about a minute, Deborah moves over to Eddie and looks in the cupboard suggesting that she is attempting to identify what Eddie is doing.

<p>Gaze: Deborah looks towards Simon.</p> <p>On hearing his name, Simon looks up at Deborah.</p>	<p>Speech: Deborah - "Simon. Eddie, try and help."</p>
<p>PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES</p>	
	
<p>Gesture: Deborah points at Eddie on saying Eddie's name.</p>	

Video time: 31.54

Deborah turns her gaze towards **Simon** and on saying his name, **Simon** looks towards her. Deborah uses gesture to point to Eddie and says to **Simon**, "Eddie, try and help". **Simon** responds to Deborah's request and helps Eddie directly.

The example illustrates Deborah initiating interaction. She has understood the task Eddie has been asked to do and she retains an interest in how Eddie responds to the task. After a period of time she gets up to see what Eddie is doing. She appears to make a judgement that Eddie needs help and that **Simon**, as the teacher and person with usual control over the CD player, is the relevant person to help him. Deborah recruits **Simon's** help by asking him very clearly with speech and gesture to help Eddie.

4.1.2.4 Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people

I interpret spontaneity in this research in two ways. First, it is sharing without any prompts. Secondly, it is sharing with an initial prompt but which continues without further prompting for more than one minute or until the sequence is complete (Brown & Whiten, 2000: 190). Of perspective taking instances captured in drama sessions, spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people accounts for

11.47% and I observed it across all ten students. There are quantitative differences in the extent to which individual students spontaneously seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people. For example, I observed Alice and Claire show many more instances of it than other students as Table VI reveals.

Table VI: Number and percentage of instances of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interest or achievements with other people captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	Number	Percentage
Alice	41	28.28
Claire	28	19.31
Fran	16	11.03
Ben	14	9.66
Deborah	14	9.66
Jacob	10	6.90
Isy	7	4.83
Harry	6	4.14
Gina	5	3.45
Eddie	4	2.76
Total	145	100.00

Students typically seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others in drama by performing movement sequences or scenes to others as part of rehearsing for a performance (53 of 145), playing drama and movement games (40 of 145) and learning drama and movement skills (26 of 145).

I provide an illustration in Figure XVII. I take this example from a drama session where a magician has visited the drama class and shown the students some magic tricks.

Video time	Action	Speech
24.37-24.47	The students move to sit by the mirror. Alice remains standing. Simon goes to the multi-sensory room.	Simon: Sit down, please. Good. Thank you.
	Alice moves back to where Simon is. She does a magic trick and bows at the end. The students clap, led by an assistant.	Alice: Simon, I'm going to do magic. Oh right. Abracadabra, azakazu, here it is. Whey. (The tone of her voice goes up).

Figure XVII: Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people (17/01/08)

In this example, **Simon** has asked the students to sit down. Alice, however, does not follow **Simon's** instructions. Instead, she uses a multitude of modes of communication to indicate to **Simon** that she wants to share her interest and enjoyment in the magic she has just seen.

**Movement/
stance:** Alice
moves to where
Simon is.

Gaze: Alice
looks at **Simon**.

Gesture: Alice lifts one arm up to
attract **Simon's** attention.

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Speech:
Alice -
"Simon,
I'm going
to do
magic."

Video time: 24.38

Alice knows that **Simon** is the most relevant adult in the room to approach. As the teacher, he is in charge and has the authority to grant her request. Alice uses proximity to attract **Simon's** attention by moving to where he is; she gestures by lifting one arm up; she directs her gaze at him and she tells him she is going to do some magic. **Simon** does not protest and Alice proceeds.

Gesture: One arm coming down
over a hand – casting a spell

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Gaze:
Away from
Simon
and peers
towards
the
magician

Speech: Alice -
"Oh right.
Abracadabra,
azakazu, here it
is."

Video time: 24.44

Alice prepares the audience for the impending 'trick' by saying, "Oh right". The phrase serves as a 'discourse marker' (Stubbs, 1983) indicating a change in focus which attracts the attention of the audience. The audience which is important to Alice is the magician who is sitting straight ahead and she performs for him. She then shows how she can simulate a magic trick through gesture and speech. She curves her right hand towards her and moves her left hand around in a circle in the gap between her arm and her body. She accompanies this movement with two of the magic words she has heard the magician using, "Abracadabra" and "Azakazu".

Gesture: Arms up in the air.

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Gaze: To the magician at the far end of the room.

Speech: Alice – "Whey!"

Video time: 24.45

After the magic words, there is a moment of revelation which Alice anticipates with, "Here it is". She does not specify the outcome of the trick but does clearly show to the audience that this is the highpoint of the performance through gesture and speech. Her arms are triumphantly in the air and she accompanies this gesture with a vocalisation, "Whey!".

Gaze: To the ground.

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Gesture: *Clapping from the audience.*

Movement/ stance:
Turns towards the audience and bows.

Video time: 24.47

After the highpoint, adults and some students in the audience start to clap and cheer. Alice marks the end of her performance by turning towards the major part of the audience and bowing.

In this example, Alice has integrated body, mind and emotion to spontaneously share with the group her magic trick. The trick highlights the aspects of performing a magic trick that Alice is interested in and enjoys. In showing the trick, Alice uses a variety of modes which she regulates to gain and maintain the attention of the audience. This suggests awareness of the impact her behaviour can have on others. The audience responds to her cue that the trick has come to an end and shares in her enjoyment by cheering and clapping. Alice acknowledges the appreciation and/or shows cultural awareness of how a performance ends by bowing.

4.1.2.5 Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe

Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe comprises 8.39% of total perspective taking instances captured in drama sessions. Instances include substituting one object or attribute for another, improvising and talking about pretence.

All students engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe but there are differences in the number of instances captured across students as I illustrate in Table VII. I observed Alice and Claire show the most instances of engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe and Eddie and Harry show the least.

Table VII: Number and percentage of instances of engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	Number	Percentage
Alice	26	24.53
Claire	23	21.70
Ben	13	12.26
Deborah	12	11.32
Isy	8	7.55
Jacob	7	6.60
Gina	6	5.66
Fran	5	4.72
Eddie	4	3.77
Harry	2	1.89
Total	106	100.00

Students typically engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe in drama sessions as part of playing drama and movement games (39 of 106), rehearsing for a performance (35 of 106) or learning drama and movement skills (29 of 106).

In the example that I give in Figure XVIII, Ben and Claire rehearse a scene for a performance where Ben is interviewing Claire about being an actress. The words from the scene are scripted out of conversations between Ben, Claire and teachers about their drama work at the school.

Video time	Action	Speech
16.50-17.20	<p>Ben walks on stage clapping. He puts his hands out to accentuate the word 'marvellous'.</p> <p>Ben puts his hand out in the direction of the stage where Claire is going to enter. Claire walks on stage and as she reaches her chair both Ben and Claire sit down.</p> <p>Ben leans in towards Claire.</p>	<p>Ben: Bravo. That was absolutely marvellous.</p> <p>Ben: Now without further ado let's introduce Claire.</p> <p>Ben: Ok, Claire it's very nice to have you here on the show tonight.</p> <p>Claire: It's a pleasure to be here.</p> <p>Ben: That's great. Now tell me Claire, how long have you been in this company for?</p> <p>Claire: Three years.</p> <p>Ben: You've been doing quite a lot of performance so do you think teamwork can be very important.</p>
17.21-17.45	<p>Claire turns towards the audience and puts her hand out on "all go wrong".</p> <p>Ben clenches up his fingers to illustrate frustration.</p> <p>Claire does hand movements to illustrate stop, breathe and think.</p>	<p>Claire: It's very important because if you don't work together it can all go wrong.</p> <p>Ben: So I take it that you get really like, really like rrrh really frustrated if things don't go your way.</p> <p>Claire: Yes, I get very frustrated (her voice goes up) like everybody does but you have to stop, breathe and think.</p> <p>Ben: That's good advice for all performers.</p> <p>Claire: Uh-huh. Just stop, breathe and think.</p>

Figure XVIII: Engaging in make-believe (24/07/08)

In the rehearsal, both Ben and Claire show that they are in their respective roles. Ben, as the presenter, takes control of the scene. He welcomes Claire onto the stage by putting his hand out in her direction and this gesture also serves to indicate to the audience where Claire will enter the stage. When Ben is talking to Claire, he is able to convey that he is interested in what she is saying not only through how he speaks to her, but also by adding in nods, different gaze patterns and gestures which reinforce what he is saying, empathise with what Claire is saying or redirect the conversation. Claire, in turn, takes on the role of the actress being interviewed. She takes her seat, strikes a relaxed pose and shows awareness of both of her audiences, Ben the interviewer and those watching the performance, by alternating her gaze between them. Claire similarly adds in her own gestures to add meaning and feeling to the words she is saying. An example from the end of the interview is illustrated in the images on the following page.

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Gesture:
Claire puts
both hands
out to
indicate stop.

Speech: Claire – "...
you have to stop ..."

Gesture:
Claire
brings her
hands into
her chest
and slowly
raises
them up
as she
breathes
in.

Speech:
Claire "...
breathe ..."

Gesture:
Claire puts her
hands to her
head.

Speech:
Claire – "...
and think."

Video time: 17.37

Performing in role suggests an ability to decouple pretence from reality. The incorporation of other modes of communication to flesh out a role and communicate to relevant audiences within the scene and in the auditorium similarly implies an ability to shift between perspectives. I expand upon these implications in the following chapter (see p231).

As well as improvising around the script in non-verbal ways, Ben draws on his own experience of television chat shows to improvise words in the script saying them in a different way each time. I give an illustration in the transcript in Figure XIX which shows the words the students said during the performance in black whereas the words given in the script are printed in grey.

Video time	Speech
16.50-17.20	Ben: Bravo. That was absolutely marvellous.
	Ben: Now without further ado let's introduce Claire. Amazing ... now let's give a big hand for Claire!
	Ben: Ok, Claire it's very nice to have you here on the show tonight. Hi, Claire, it's a pleasure to have you here.
	Claire: It's a pleasure to be here. It's a pleasure to be here.
	Ben: That's great. Now tell me Claire, how long have you been in this company for? So Claire, how long have you been with the company?
	Claire: Three years. Three years.
	Ben: You've been doing quite a lot of performance so do you think teamwork can be very important. You've done a lot of performances, how important do you think team work is?
17.21-17.45	Claire: It's very important because if you don't work together it can all go wrong. It's very important because if you don't work together it can all go wrong.
	Ben: So I take it that you get really like, really like rrrh really frustrated if things don't go your way. Do you get frustrated when things don't go well?
	Claire: Yes, I get very frustrated like everybody does but you have to stop, breathe and think. Yes, I get very frustrated like everybody does but you have to stop, breathe and think.
	Ben: That's good advice for all performers. That's good advice for all performers.
	Claire: Uh-huh. Just stop, breathe and think. Uh-huh. Just stop, breathe and think.

Figure XIX: Ben improvises with the script (24/07/08)

Whereas Claire says the line in exactly the way it is written in the script, Ben retains the sense of the line but is more flexible in how he delivers it. It could be argued that Claire demonstrates flexibility in a different way by showing that she can appropriately deliver her lines even when her cue from Ben is slightly different. Indeed in rehearsals and performances, Ben rarely says a line in the same way twice and often delivers lines in a different order. This, however, does not disrupt Claire's performance.

In this example, Ben and Claire engage in make-believe by taking on roles and communicating these to each other and the audience using a combination of modes which integrate body, mind and emotion. Their engagement with make-believe and the spontaneity they demonstrate through improvised gestures and lines also show how they make meaning in the drama by drawing on their own experiences of watching television chat shows to create their own version.

4.1.2.6 Reciprocating emotionally

Of perspective taking instances contained in the data, 5.38% concern reciprocating emotionally. Out of all aspects of perspective taking, it is reciprocating emotionally which I observed least. By reciprocating emotionally, I refer to students expressing feelings or opinions and showing interest in or awareness of the feelings or opinions of others.

I observed eight students reciprocating emotionally in drama sessions as I illustrate in Table VIII. As with other aspects of perspective taking, there are quantitative differences in the number of instances that I captured across students. According to field note data, Claire and Ben show the most instances of reciprocating emotionally whereas I did not observe Gina and Isy reciprocating emotionally during drama sessions. These findings mirror social skills composite scores, as measured as part of this research, where Claire and Ben score highly and Gina and Isy score lowest out of the group (see p88).

Table VIII: Number and percentage of instances of reciprocating emotionally captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Reciprocating emotionally	Number	Percentage
Claire	27	39.71
Ben	13	19.12
Deborah	9	13.24
Alice	8	11.76
Fran	5	7.34
Jacob	4	5.88
Eddie	1	1.47
Harry	1	1.47
Gina	0	0
Isy	0	0
Total	68	100.00

Students typically reciprocate emotionally when rehearsing for a performance (39 or 68 instances) when they express feelings or opinions in response to their own performance or show interest in or awareness of the feelings or opinions of others.

The example I give in Figure XX typifies Claire reciprocating emotionally during a rehearsal. The session has focused on a solo dance that **Simon** is building with Claire for the *Summer Revue*. It has been a long session for Claire, almost one hour, demanding physical endurance and concentration. Towards the end of the rehearsal as **Simon** continues to perfect the dance, Claire begins to share her frustration.

Video time	Action	Speech
56.36-57.06	<p>Claire brings her dance to an end.</p> <p>Simon turns the music off. The students clap.</p> <p>Simon moves to the centre of the room and shows Claire how she can improve on one of her moves. As soon as Simon starts speaking, Claire puts her head in the air and expresses her frustration. She paces to the other end of the room shaking her head.</p> <p>Simon motions her to watch and continues to demonstrate. Claire walks back towards Simon. She takes the stance that Simon wants her to take.</p> <p>Simon moves over to respond to another student.</p>	<p>Alice: Bravo</p> <p>Simon: You go down.</p> <p>Claire: Rrrh ...</p> <p>Claire: Oh, it's no use. I'll never getting it right. Oh.</p> <p>Simon: You go down.</p> <p>Claire: You can't make me. Don't make me do it.</p>
57.07-57.37	<p>Simon moves back towards Claire. Claire looks at him as he walks. Simon takes the stance he wants to work on.</p> <p>He looks at Claire and she returns his gaze.</p> <p>Simon strides towards the door. Claire looks towards him and immediately beckons him back.</p> <p>From the door, Simon gestures to Claire.</p> <p>Simon walks back from the door. He takes second position. Claire copies him.</p> <p>Simon puts his hands on his heart and looks at Claire.</p>	<p>Claire: Stop it. Please stop it (Claire's voice goes up in tone).</p> <p>Simon: That's it. I quit.</p> <p>Claire: No. Simon, don't.</p> <p>Simon: Shall we do dancing, Claire?</p> <p>Claire: Yes.</p> <p>Simon: Ok then ... second position.</p> <p>Claire: You're a great dancer.</p> <p>Simon: It's a long time I've ever heard that ... Ok, and down.</p>

Figure XX: Reciprocating emotionally (16/06/08)

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Speech: Simon – You go down.		Movement/stance: Claire lifts her head in the air and paces away from Simon .
Gaze: Simon looks toward Claire.		Speech: Claire – “Rrrh.”

Video time: 56.47

As **Simon** moves into the rehearsal space and starts to show Claire how to improve on a move, she lets out her frustration by lifting her head in the air and vocalising, “rrrh”. She then paces passed **Simon** to the corner of the room shaking her head and continuing to show her concern with not getting the dance right. **Simon** gestures her into the rehearsal space and encourages her to watch him. Some students start talking to **Simon** and he moves towards them to respond to them. Meanwhile, Claire continues to show her frustration with the rehearsal.

Speech: Claire – “No Simon, don’t.”	Gaze: Simon looks away from Claire and towards the door.
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Gaze: Claire looks towards Simon .	Movement/stance: Simon strides away from the rehearsal space and towards the door.
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Video time: 57.14

Simon returns to the task at hand. He looks at Claire, and on seeing that she is still frustrated, he pretends to quit by striding away from the rehearsal space and towards the door. He keeps his gaze firmly on the door. Claire immediately tries to prevent him from leaving by shouting at him and following his gaze. **Simon** turns around and gently asks her if she wants to dance and Claire agrees.

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<p>Gaze: Claire watches in the mirror.</p>		<p>Speech: Simon – “It’s a long time I’ve ever heard that ...”</p>
<p>Movement/stance: Claire stays in the pose Simon has just shown her.</p>		<p>Gesture: Simon moves his hands to over his heart.</p>

Video time: 57.27

Simon returns to the rehearsal space and starts to show Claire the move he wants to work on. Almost as a demonstration of her appreciation for **Simon’s** teaching, Claire tells him that he is a great dancer. **Simon** immediately shows that he is touched by putting his hands on his heart and telling Claire that he has not been told that for a long time. They move on with the rehearsal.

In this example, Claire shares her frustration clearly expressing how she is feeling through vocalisations, movement/stance and gestures. In responding to the teacher’s handling of her frustration by attempting to leave the room, Claire calls him back and on starting the rehearsal again Claire shows that she is able to give her opinion about someone by praising the teacher. This comment suggests that Claire is motivated to dance because she knows she has a good teacher whom she wants to learn from.

4.1.2.7 Forming peer relationships

In the five sections above, I analysed aspects of perspective taking with adults and peers. When I examined separately perspective taking with peers, it comprised almost a quarter of all perspective taking instances that I captured (24.13%). I observed perspective taking with

peers across all students and all five aspects of perspective taking that I investigate as part of this research.

I show in Table IX and the accompanying bar chart, Figure XXI, that perspective taking with peers is less frequent than perspective taking with adults overall and within each aspect of perspective taking. With peers, reciprocating socially remains the most dominant aspect of perspective taking but engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe is the least.

Table IX: Number and percentage of instances of perspective taking with peers shown by students captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by aspect of perspective taking

Aspects of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	213	69.84
Initiating interaction	40	13.11
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	34	11.15
Reciprocating emotionally	11	3.61
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	7	2.30
Total	305	100

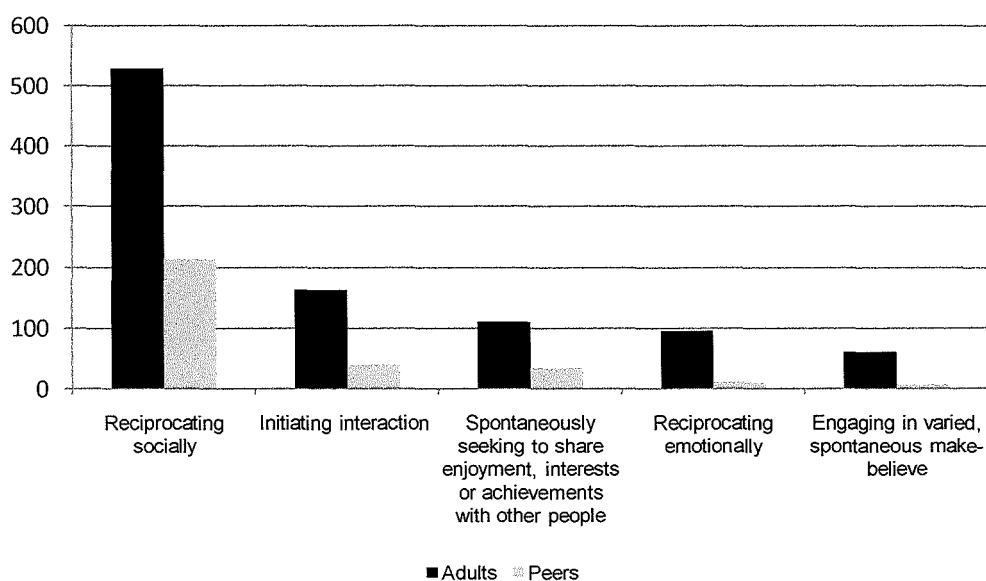


Figure XXI: A comparison between the number of instances of perspective taking with adults and the number of instances of perspective taking with peers shown by students in 56 hours of drama sessions, by aspect of perspective taking

Although I observed instances of perspective taking with peers across all ten students there are quantitative differences as shown in Table X on the following page. Field note data suggest that Alice shows the most instances of perspective taking with peers and Isy the least.

Table X: Cumulative number and percentage of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	95	31.15
Claire	46	15.08
Fran	38	12.46
Deborah	33	10.82
Gina	31	10.16
Ben	22	7.21
Harry	12	3.93
Jacob	11	3.61
Eddie	9	2.95
Isy	8	2.62
Total	305	100

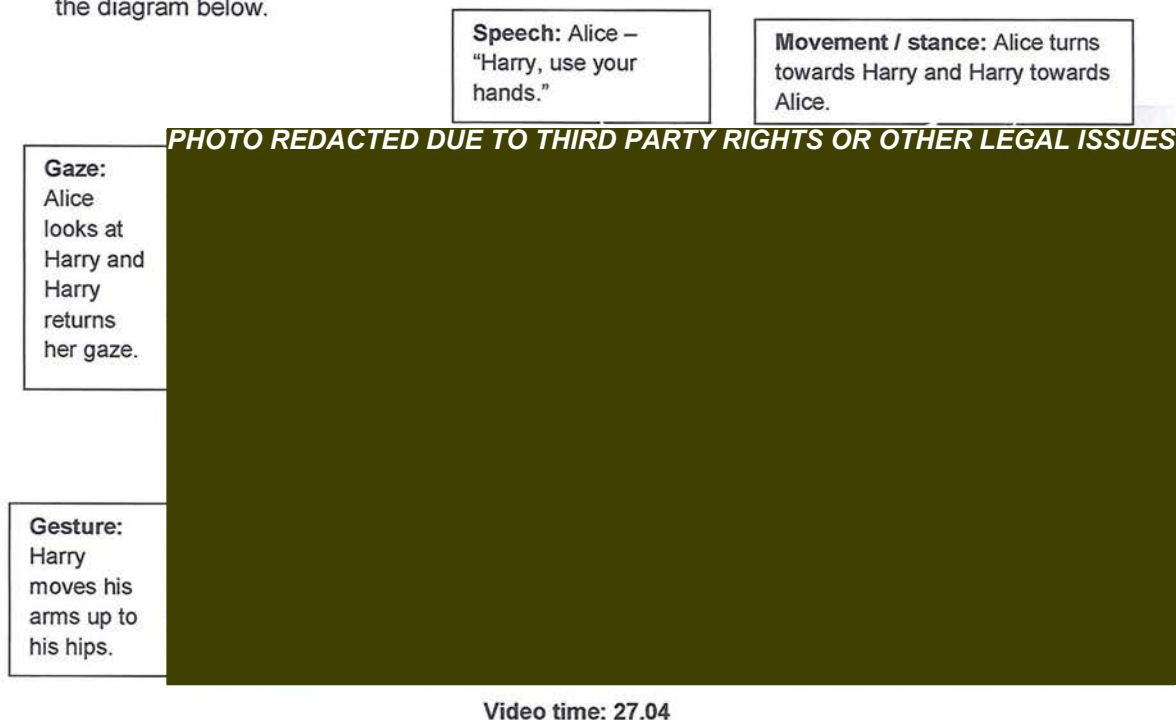
The example that I give shows two peers reciprocating socially. I take it from a session where a magician has performed magic tricks to students in the drama group and, following the magician's performance, Alice asks to "do magic" and gives a performance to the group. She then nominates in turn each student in the group to perform a magic trick. Harry is the final student she calls and, on calling him, he walks confidently to the performance space and I describe what happened next in Figure XXII.

Video time	Action	Speech
26.42 – 27.12	<p>Harry walks confidently to the performance space created by Alice, turns to face the audience and stands.</p> <p>Harry lifts his hands up to his hips copying Alice.</p> <p>Alice puts her hands out. Harry puts his hands out. Clapping.</p>	<p>Alice: Harry</p> <p>Alice: Magic words.</p> <p>Assistant 2: Take the balls.</p> <p>Alice: Take the balls.</p> <p>Assistant 3: Abracadabra</p> <p>Assistant 2: Do you have the balls into your hand?</p> <p>Alice: Harry, use your hands.</p> <p>Alice: Use your hands.</p> <p>Alice: (Tone of voice goes up). Yeah (into a cheer).</p>

Figure XXII: Reciprocating socially with peers (17/01/08)

Harry stands for a few seconds and does not appear to be doing anything. Alice prompts him to do something by saying his name, "Harry". He remains still. A few moments later she gives a simple instruction, "Magic words". Again, Harry remains silent and still. A teaching assistant suggests Harry "take the balls" in his hands by which he is suggesting that Harry simulates a trick using magic balls. Alice reinforces the teaching assistant's suggestion. Harry remains silent and still. Another teaching assistant suggests a magic word to Harry. Harry does not respond. The first teaching assistant, returns to encouraging Harry to put magic balls in his hand. Harry remains silent and still. Alice then takes a different approach

to engage Harry and the modes of communication they use to interact are separated out in the diagram below.



Alice turns towards Harry, looks at him and says his name. On hearing his name, Harry turns towards Alice and returns her gaze. Alice breaks the task down. Rather than asking him to simulate carrying magic balls in his hands or say a magic word, she asks him to simply use his hands. Harry responds to this instruction by moving his hands to his hips which is where Alice has her hands.



Having gained and maintained Harry's attention, Alice reinforces what Harry is doing by repeating the instruction, "use your hands" and she moves her hands to each side of her with palms up showing that there is nothing there. Harry keeps his gaze on Alice and moves his hands to the same position. When he has done this, Alice marks the end of the performance with, "yeah" and starts to cheer. The audience claps and Harry moves to sit down.

In the example, Alice watches how Harry is responding to instructions and seems to recognise that he thinks differently and needs a different approach. As a result, she adapts the task and draws on multiple modes of communication to support Harry so that he can meaningfully engage with the task.

4.1.2.8 Summary of perspective taking shown in drama

Do students with autism show perspective taking in drama?

- Students with autism show perspective taking in drama.
- The most instances of perspective taking captured are in the form of reciprocating socially with the least in the form of reciprocating emotionally.
- There are quantitative differences across students in terms of the number of instances of perspective taking shown with Alice and Claire showing the most instances of perspective taking and Jacob and Eddie showing the least. Quantitative differences only vaguely reflect characteristics of the students involved as measured by standardised tests suggesting that these do not give a holistic picture of interactions in real world social contexts.
- Students show more perspective taking with adults than with peers at a ratio of four to one.
- The most instances of perspective taking with peers that are captured are in the form of reciprocating socially with the least in the form of engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe.
- There are quantitative differences across students in terms of the number of instances of perspective taking with peers shown. Alice and Claire show the most instances of perspective taking with peers and Eddie and Isy the least.
- Perspective taking with adults and peers manifests in multimodal ways through gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech.

- Over one third of instances of perspective taking are captured when students are rehearsing for a performance.

In the next section, I focus on perspective taking shown by these same students in curricular areas apart from drama to ascertain whether the perspective taking shown in drama is typical for these students.

4.1.3 If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, do they also show it in other curricular areas and does it manifest in the same way?

4.1.3.1 An overview of perspective taking shown in other curricular areas compared with drama

When I analysed data relating to the same students in curricular areas apart from drama over a similar number of sessions and period of time (58 sessions; 53 hours), they revealed that the same aspects of perspective taking were manifest in both drama and other curricular areas but that there were distinct quantitative and qualitative differences in their manifestation.

Table XI shows the number of instances of each aspect of perspective taking that I identified in field note data pertaining to areas of the curriculum apart from drama. I also give the proportion of instances of each aspect of perspective taking in relation to total instances of perspective taking captured.

Table XI: Number and percentage of instances of perspective taking shown by students captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	352	65.67
Initiating interaction with others	135	25.19
Reciprocating emotionally	27	5.04
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	17	3.17
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	5	0.93
Total	536	100

The total number of instances of perspective taking captured in curricular areas apart from drama over a comparable period of time is less than half the number captured in drama (536 compared with 1,262). As I illustrate in Figure XXIII, quantitative differences can be observed across all aspects of perspective taking but are particularly notable in relation to spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others (17 compared with 145) and engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe (5 compared with

106). Given that sharing with others and engagement with make-believe are central components of drama education, this finding suggests that drama is a context for eliciting and/or enabling these aspects of perspective taking in individuals with autism. Factors within drama will be explored in more detail in the next section (see p178).

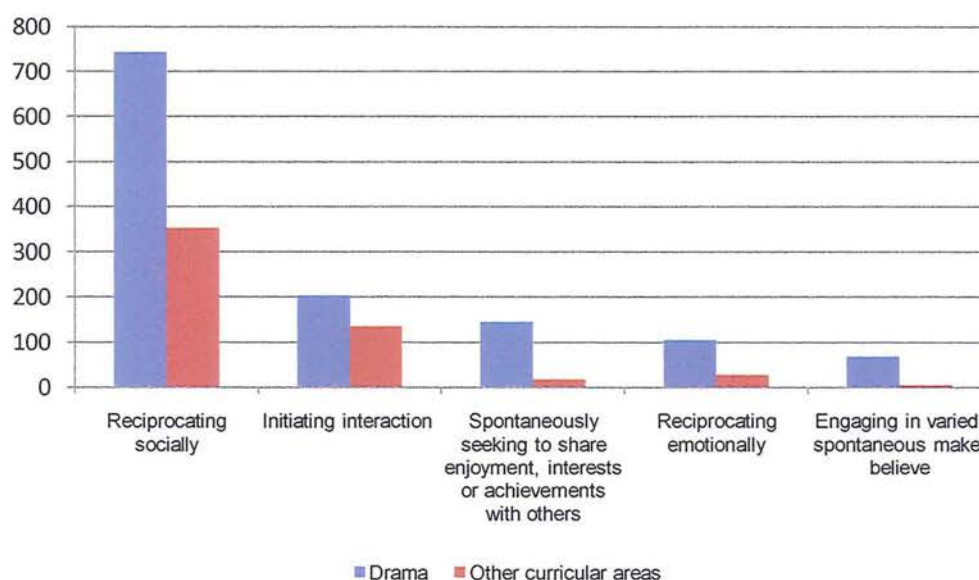


Figure XXIII: A comparison between the number of instances of perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by aspect of perspective taking

When I examined data at an individual student level, there were quantitative differences in the number of instances of perspective taking that I captured across students and I show these in Table XII.

Table XII: Cumulative number and percentage of instances of perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	86	16.04
Deborah	80	14.92
Claire	75	13.99
Fran	64	11.94
Gina	63	11.75
Jacob	45	8.40
Isy	44	8.21
Harry	38	7.09
Eddie	33	6.16
Ben	8	1.49
Total	536	100.00

All ten students showed more instances of perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas as I illustrate in Figure XXIV. Similar to drama sessions, Alice, Claire and Deborah showed the most instances of perspective taking and Eddie showed the least. This finding suggests that drama is a more engaging activity than other curricular areas which

offers more opportunities for students to show aspects of perspective taking. A particular difference is notable in the number of instances captured for Ben where 119 instances are captured in drama sessions and eight in other curricular areas. I can give two explanations. First, as Ben spends three days per week at a mainstream college, there were fewer opportunities to observe him in curricular areas apart from drama (Appendix 7.1: 354). Secondly, Ben aligns himself with his mainstream peers and mainstream environment rather than his peers at the school. As a result, unless he is encouraged to do so, Ben prefers not to interact with his peers during sessions and regularly asks to spend time on his mainstream work commitments rather than participate in sessions with his peers at school.

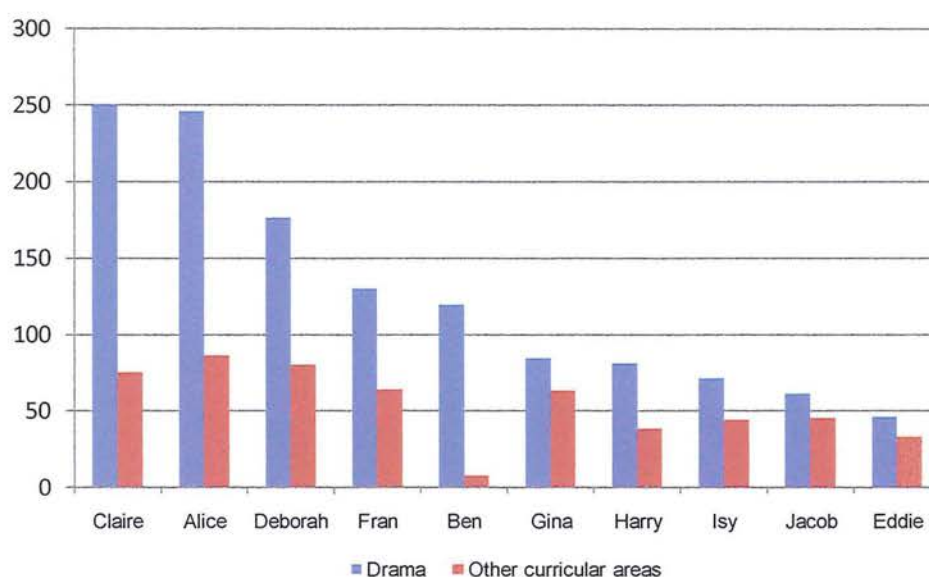


Figure XXIV: A comparison between the number of instances of perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Turning specifically to instances of perspective taking with peers, these account for almost one tenth of total perspective taking instances in curricular areas apart from drama (8.77%) which contrasts with almost one quarter (24.13%) of total perspective taking instances captured in drama sessions. I provide a summary of the number and percentage of instances of perspective taking shown by students with peers in curricular areas apart from drama in Table XIII.

Table XIII: Number and percentage of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	38	80.85
Initiating interaction with others	9	19.15
Total	47	100

The total number of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in curricular areas apart from drama is considerably less than the total number captured in drama (47 compared with 305). As I show in Figure XXV, I observed these instances in two aspects of perspective taking – reciprocating socially and initiating interaction with others – which contrasts with drama where I observed instances of perspective taking with peers across five aspects of perspective taking.

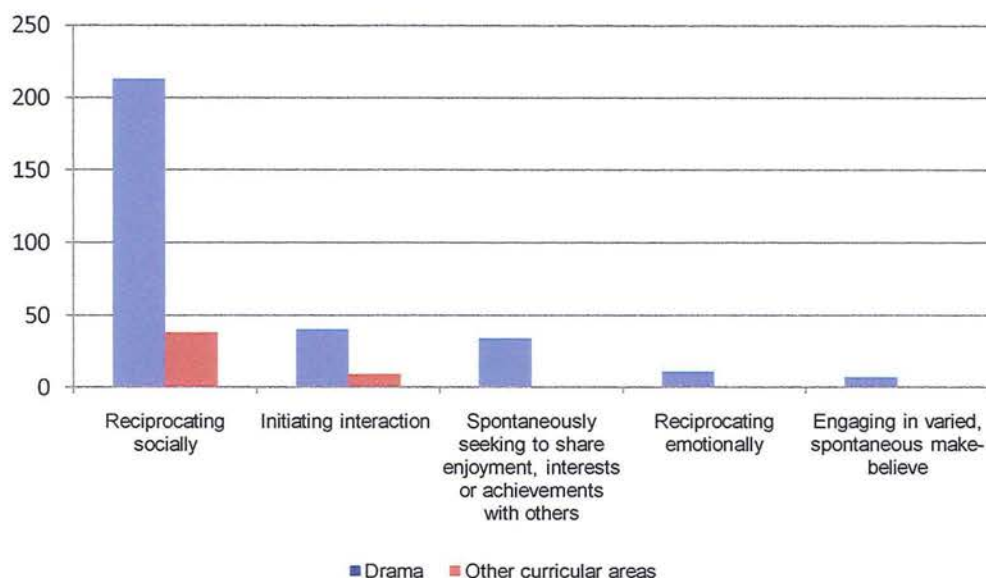


Figure XXV: A comparison between the number of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by aspect of perspective taking

Differences in perspective taking with peers in curricular areas apart from drama were reinforced when I examined data at an individual student level where I observed all students showing more instances of perspective taking with peers in drama than in other curricular areas. I illustrate this in Figure XXVI.

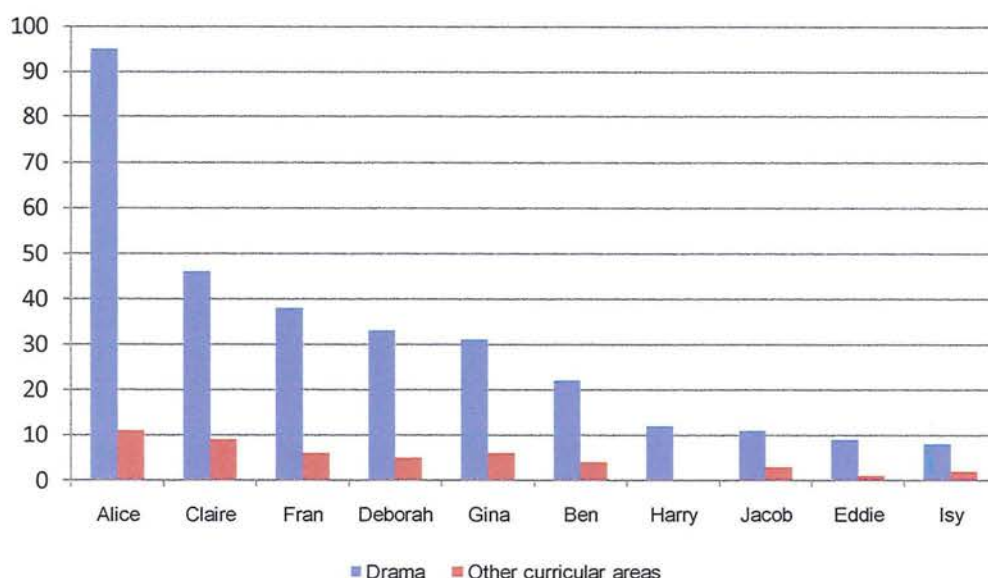


Figure XXVI: A comparison between the number of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Comparable to instances of perspective taking with peers in drama, Alice showed the most instances of perspective taking as I detail in Table XIV. In contrast, however, Harry showed the least with no instances of perspective taking with peers recorded in other curricular areas compared with 12 in drama.

Table XIV: Cumulative number and percentage of instances of perspective taking with peers captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	11	23.40
Claire	9	19.15
Fran	6	12.77
Gina	6	12.77
Deborah	5	10.64
Ben	4	8.51
Jacob	3	6.38
Isy	2	4.26
Eddie	1	2.13
Harry	0	0
Total	47	100.00

In order to analyse differences in quality, I put instances of perspective taking in drama sessions and other curricular areas alongside each other and noted similarities and differences. I noted qualitative differences in relation to four aspects of perspective taking – all except where students initiate interaction. I give examples of these qualitative differences in the following sections.

4.1.3.2 Reciprocating socially

The most notable differences in relation to reciprocating socially concerned the abilities of all students to follow instructions. These differences were primarily rooted in teacher instruction which I examine in more detail later in this chapter (see p182). In curricular areas apart from drama, instructions either contained a single step such as, "Claire, get the register." (Field note 28/04/08) or required sequencing in response such as the teacher saying, "Time for food intake" (Field note: 25/03/08) and the student filling in their food intake form in response. I observed single-step instructions and those requiring sequencing in response in drama. Exclusive to drama, however, were students following instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component. These were particularly common in creating work for performances where students followed instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component to build scenes and movement sequences.

The example I give in Figure XXVII involves Claire following an instruction with multiple steps from **Simon** when creating a dance for performance.

Video time	Action	Speech
16.46-1716	Simon runs from one side of the room to the middle of the room and starts to hopscotch to the end of the room. He turns around when he reaches the end and hop scotches back to the middle.	Simon: Actually you run here. You stop and you hopscotch. Ok.
	Simon moves back to the side of the room and Claire follows. He runs to the middle of the room and then starts to hopscotch. Claire imitates.	Simon: Shall we try? Claire, so what you do is this. Run and then you go.
	Claire moves back to the starting point. She starts when Simon asks running to the middle of the room and then starting to hopscotch.	Simon: Ok, try it ... ready ... go.

Figure XXVII: Following instructions with multiple steps (16/06/08)

Simon gives Claire three instructions. She needs to run to one point, stop and then hopscotch. Simon models the steps *for* her; he models the steps *with* her and then instructs her to do them on her own which she does.

I take the example in Figure XXVIII from a session focused on creating movement from shapes. It portrays Deborah following an instruction with an abstract component.

Video time	Action	Speech
10.45-11.15	Deborah is in the centre of the room and Simon is alongside her looking at her. Deborah closes her eyes and puts her finger out ready to trace a shape. Deborah moves forwards a couple of steps. Deborah closes her eyes and moves the top part of her body in the shape of a triangle.	Simon: Deborah, I want you to close your eyes ... and Simon: Not yet. Simon: Close your eyes and move your ... wait, wait. Simon: Close your eyes and move your tummy in triangle shape. Tummy. Triangle. Tummy. Tummy.
11.16 - 11.46	Deborah continues to move the top part of her body in the shape of a triangle.	Simon: Close your eyes. Tummy. Triangle shape. Simon: Perfect, thank you very much.

Figure XXVIII: Following instructions with an abstract component (02/10/07)

In this example, **Simon** asks Deborah to close her eyes and move her tummy in the shape of a triangle. **Simon** is standing behind Deborah with the shape and so Deborah cannot see what the shape looks like or seek concrete prompts from **Simon**. She has to imagine the shape and then show it with her tummy.



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**Movement/
stance:**

Deborah
moves her
head and
body down
towards the
left showing
the left
corner of
the triangle.

**Movement/
stance:**

Deborah
moves her
head and
body across
to the right

Video time: 11.23

The images above illustrate Deborah reproducing clearly the shape of a triangle starting upright, moving down to the left, then to the right before returning to the upright position. Deborah's engagement with this exercise suggests decoupling an abstract picture of a triangle from a concrete picture of a triangle in two respects. First, the word 'triangle' is sufficient stimulus for Deborah to imagine the shape and reproduce it with her tummy. Secondly, with the shape in mind, Deborah can communicate that shape in different ways. She can do it with her finger as she initially tries to do but she can also do it with her tummy as per **Simon's** instruction.

4.1.3.3 Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people

In curricular areas apart from drama, instances of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people concerned isolated instances of attracting attention to what a student can see or do at a given moment. For example, in a library session Jacob spontaneously pointed out pictures he liked in a book to a teacher sitting next to him (Field note: 08/07/08), Alice showed her teacher her new socks (Field

note: 18/03/08) and Claire asked the music teacher to look at what she could do on the piano (Field note: 09/05/08). In contrast, I observed lengthier and more complex instances of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people in drama.

Without a prompt, students spontaneously shared what they enjoyed or learnt in drama as in the example given in relation to Alice and her magic trick (see p133). Towards the end of the school year, Harry started to mark his entry into the drama room with a pirouette learnt during drama sessions and commented, "Watch Harry" (Field note: 03/07/08). Claire practised dance routines for performances and drew **Simon's** attention to them with the words, "I'm trying to practise" (Field note: 20/11/07).

With an initial general prompt to show an improvised movement piece or scene as part of the session or to practise for a main performance, students could share what they could do for several minutes at a time. Ben and Claire, for example, could "memorise a ten-page script" (Ben and Claire's annual review 2008) for performance with accompanying songs and dances and perform without prompting for over 40 minutes. Indeed, in the example I gave which illustrated engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe (see p138), Ben and Claire were not always simply reproducing what was in the script or what they had rehearsed. They were active in the performance, adding in different words and gestures to the script and co-ordinating with each other on stage. The relationship they had with each other and the audience was influencing their performance.

In relation to movement work, all students could be given parameters comprising numbers, shapes, material and/or music and use these parameters to improvise movement sequences or scenes to share with others. In drama, students also responded to the work of others by clapping and cheering at the end of work they showed. This show of appreciation for the work of others engendered a sense of achievement in performance on both the part of those students performing and those students watching. I did not observe either working within a set of parameters or responding to the work of others in curricular areas apart from drama.

4.1.3.4 Reciprocating emotionally

The main qualitative difference in relation to how students reciprocated emotionally in drama compared with other curricular areas concerned showing interest in or awareness of other people's opinions and feelings. Although students sought approval from teachers, apologised for wrongdoing or showed concern for others in both drama and other curricular areas, I only observed explicitly considering how others may think or feel in drama. This finding has particular relevance for students with autism where experimental studies

consistently find a deficit in 'theory of mind' manifest in an inability to explicitly demonstrate an understanding of other people's mental states.

The example I give below describes Ben seeking to explain the behaviour of other students to others.

1135: **Simon** asks Ben to think about the music. He replies, "For the music, I might have a few ideas". **Simon** asks Ben to compose some music. He replies, "To be honest, I don't have much experience. I would need a music production programme. I might need to ask **Ed** [*the music teacher*]." **Simon** suggests that this is a good idea. Claire suggests, "I wish it could be Christmas every day". She sings it. Gina starts to sing too so **Simon** asks Gina to sing another song. Gina is silent and Ben interjects, "I think she was joining in". (Field note: 16/10/07)

In this example, Gina starts to sing the song Claire is singing. **Simon** interprets Gina's singing as Gina enjoying singing and possibly having a suggestion for another song to incorporate into the performance but when he asks her to sing another song she is silent. Ben explains that he thinks Gina liked the song Claire was singing and was simply joining in. Ben considers how Gina is thinking.

In a similar vein, Claire shows interest in how people will respond to the performances she is performing in. When she receives the script for the Christmas performance one of her first questions is, "Is this show going to be funny?" (Field note: 16/10/07). She expresses a similar comment prior to a performance for the head of the school, "If the boss doesn't like it, it will be over" (Field note: 12/03/08). The concept of a performance which is in front of an audience is very clear for Claire and appears to prompt her to consider how an audience will respond to the performance.

The findings in relation to showing interest in or awareness of how others think and feel in drama can also be compared with students' responses to simple theory of mind tests. Five students pass the simple theory of mind tests asked as part of the feedback sessions with students (Appendix 8.7: 376). These results are consistent with my observations of these students showing some interest in or awareness of how others think and feel. For two students who failed simple theory of mind tests, the finding is in keeping with observations and feedback from parents. In contrast Claire and Deborah consistently failed simple theory of mind tests which contradicted the observations in this research, interviews with teachers and feedback from parents. This finding is particularly important for the research at hand and suggests two points. First, that perspective taking manifests in different ways and that theory of mind tests only capture a small part of perspective taking in everyday life. Secondly, that social context and factors within it may influence both perspective taking abilities and the way in which perspective taking can manifest. I explore factors associated with perspective taking in more detail in the next section.

4.1.3.5 Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe

I observed isolated instances of substituting one object for another, either real or imaginary, and talking about pretence acts in curricular areas apart from drama. Alice, for example, placed a CD on her teacher's head while he was sitting next to her and noted, "It's a hat" (Field note: 31/03/08) and Jacob mimed what he saw in books to share their content with others (Field note: 25/03/08). These instances, however, were not developed into sequences or improvisations and did not fully engage or require a response from other people. I am aware, however, that the age of these students and a notion of what is deemed appropriate in other curricular areas limited opportunities for students to engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe in curricular areas apart from drama.

4.1.3.6 Summary of perspective taking in other curricular areas compared with drama

If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, do they also show it in other curricular areas and does it manifest in the same way?

- The same aspects of perspective taking are manifest in drama and other curricular areas but there are important quantitative and qualitative differences.
- The total number of instances of perspective taking captured in drama is more than double the number captured in other curricular areas (1,264 compared with 536).
- All ten students show more instances of perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas but there are quantitative differences between students.
- Perspective taking with peers is more common in drama accounting for one in four instances of perspective taking in drama compared with one in eleven in other curricular areas.
- All ten students show more instances of perspective taking with peers in drama than in other curricular areas but there are quantitative differences between students.
- Students show more aspects of perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas with nine students showing five aspects of perspective taking in drama compared with three students in other curricular areas.

- The most striking quantitative differences concern spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others and engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe.
- Qualitative differences in perspective taking are observed in relation to four aspects of perspective taking – reciprocating socially, reciprocating emotionally, spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others and engaging in spontaneous make-believe.

There are distinct quantitative and qualitative differences in the perspective taking shown in drama compared with other curricular areas. In order to interrogate why this may be the case, I investigated the circumstances under which perspective taking is shown so that I could identify factors associated with perspective taking.

4.2 Factors associated with perspective taking

4.2.1 How were factors associated with perspective taking uncovered and examined?

4.2.1.1 *Examining the circumstances under which instances of perspective taking are shown to uncover occurrences of associated factors*

After identifying instances of perspective taking and analysing them, I undertook a second phase of analysis whereby I reviewed the circumstances under which perspective taking is shown in order to uncover and examine factors associated with them. The aim of this phase of analysis was to code an occurrence of a factor that appeared to be associated with a specific instance of perspective taking. A **factor** refers to a component or ingredient that contributes to particular outcomes. Factors in this thesis can refer to general principles as well as specific strategies. An implicit assumption that I make within the approach to uncovering factors associated with perspective taking is that a factor is chronologically prior to the instance of perspective taking in question.

In an initial analysis of the context of perspective taking, I found that instances of perspective taking could be sorted into two categories:

1. Perspective taking shown in order to respond to the context, following direct stimulus
2. Perspective taking shown in order to spontaneously participate in the context, following indirect stimulus

In both cases, I found that instances of perspective taking related to the social context. Students were showing aspects of perspective taking when:

1. Responding directly to the speech and/or action of teachers and peers
2. Participating in the social context in order to spontaneously feed back to teachers and peers or to gain knowledge from a teacher or peer

However, I needed to develop a consistent coding framework to describe factors associated with perspective taking. As in the case of devising the coding framework for perspective taking, I used a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (see p118) which I describe along with steps to enhance trustworthiness of the codes and coding process. Together these aim to strengthen auditability and an understanding of how I reached conclusions.

4.2.1.2 Describing factors associated with perspective taking

Given the social nature of factors associated with instances of perspective taking, I sought a coding frame that could characterise the speech and/or action of teachers and peers when engaging with students. I returned to the work of Tharp and Gallimore (1988) who provide a detailed framework for defining the nature of assistance in learning (see p45). Having already inductively coded the ways in which teachers and peers were engaging with students, I found this framework which identifies seven 'means of assistance' appropriately encapsulated the inductive codes. The seven means of assistance include:

1. Instructing: this involves requesting a specific action. Instructing assists a student in selecting the correct response or providing parameters in which to respond to a task.
2. Questioning: this is a request for a response that would not necessarily be produced without assistance. The response to a question helps a teacher/peer assess a student's level of understanding.
3. Modelling: this is offering behaviour for imitation. Modelling helps a student by providing a remembered image of a desired way in which the task can be performed.
4. Giving explanations: this is providing clarification. Explaining helps a student by giving an explanatory structure to organise or justify approaches to learning.
5. Breaking down tasks: this involves simplifying tasks and sequencing them. Breaking down tasks helps a student by adapting tasks in order for them to be achieved.
6. Encouraging positively or negatively: this concerns approaches used to strengthen or weaken a student's response. Encouraging positively or negatively is important in helping a student to approach a task in the right way.
7. Giving feedback: this is the process of providing an opinion on a student's performance of a task and often relates to a standard. It is important in raising a student's awareness about their ability in performing a task and opening up the opportunity for them to correct themselves.

Tharp and Gallimore use these 'means of assistance' as a way to describe working in the zone of proximal development with a group of individuals in a formal setting. I defined the zone of proximal development earlier and it refers to the distance between what an individual can do with the help of a more experienced adult or peer and what s/he can do independently (see p44). I use the term '**means of assistance**' in a broader sense by relating it to ways in which teachers and peers appear to directly elicit and/or enable perspective taking in students. Perspective taking shown in relation to means of assistance concerns perspective taking shown in order to respond to the context, following direct stimulus.

There remained, however, a large number of instances of perspective taking which did not appear to be related to means of assistance. These concern perspective taking shown in order to spontaneously participate in the context, following indirect stimulus. In order to identify indirect stimuli, I coded the means by which students participate in the social context. Following an overview of these means, I noted that the ways in which students participated in the social context drew on similar approaches to means of assistance identified above. I used the same codes, therefore, for the students themselves in order to understand how they were participating and uncover why this was the case. I refer to the ways in which students participate in the social context as '**means of participation**' and I define them below:

1. Giving feedback: this is the process of providing an opinion on the social context. Students give feedback to participate in the social context by sharing with others observations about the immediate environment, including the speech and action of teachers/peers, or an activity they are currently or have recently been engaged in.
2. Questioning: this is a request for a response. Students question to participate in the social context to gain information from teachers or peers in the immediate context or seek support or clarification from a teacher on an activity they are currently engaged with.
3. Instructing: this involves requesting a specific action. Students instruct to participate in the social context to try and stop a teacher or peer from doing something because it disrupts what the student is doing or to encourage a teacher or peer to do something to enable what the student is doing.
4. Giving explanations: this is providing clarification. Students provide explanations to participate in the social context as a way of helping a peer participate in or complete a task.
5. Modelling: this is offering behaviour for imitation. Students model to participate in the social context as a way of helping a peer participate in or complete a task.
6. Encouraging positively or negatively: this concerns approaches used to strengthen or weaken a student's response. Students encourage positively or negatively to participate in the social context to encourage a peer to do something or prevent her/him from doing something.

Using Figure XXIX, I clarify how means of assistance are linked to aspects of perspective taking. The example illustrates that the means of assistance **Simon** is using is questioning. This means of assistance is linked to an instance of Eddie reciprocating socially in the form of responding to questions.

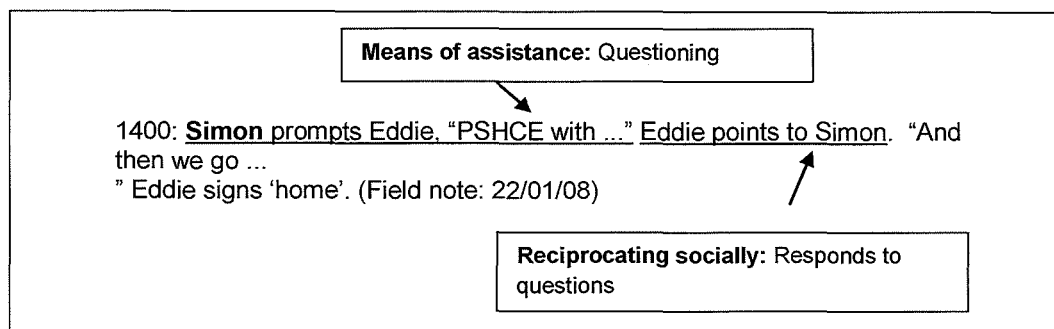


Figure XXIX: Uncovering means of assistance within field notes (22/01/08)

In Figure XXX, I show how a student participates in the social context and uncover why this is the case. The example illustrates Alice giving feedback on the performance of her fellow students. It is their finishing of the opening scene which cues Alice to give her feedback. In doing so, she spontaneously seeks to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others by responding to their work and she engages in varied, spontaneous make-believe by substituting a microphone for the end of a piece of rope.

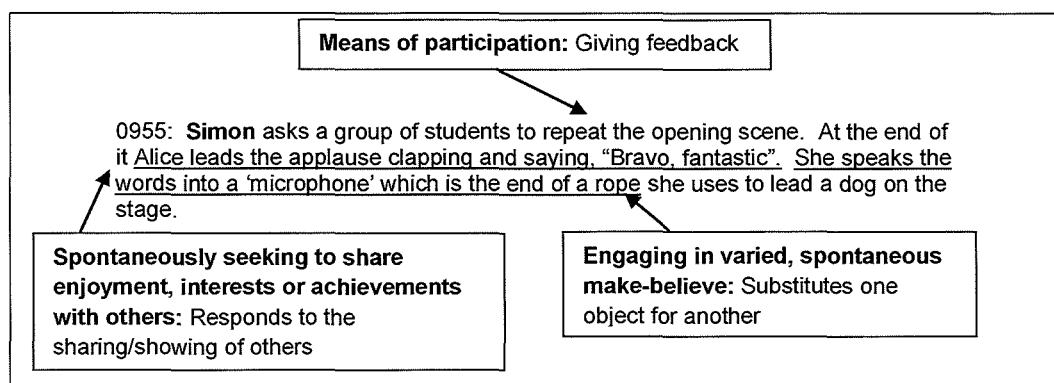


Figure XXX: Uncovering means of participation within field notes (01/07/08)

4.2.1.3 Enhancing the trustworthiness of the codes and coding process for uncovering and examining factors associated with perspective taking

Comparable to identifying and analysing perspective taking, I adopted three approaches to enhance the trustworthiness of the codes used to uncover and examine factors associated with perspective taking.

1. I examined each code in terms of its theoretical relevance to the questions at hand by reviewing codes used to uncover means of assistance and means of participation in relation to sociocultural theories of learning (Tharp, 1993; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

2. I considered the practical relevance of detailed codes in relation to peer-reviewed research which draws on the application of Tharp and Gallimore's means of assistance in evaluating the instruction of teachers and peers (Colby & Atkinson, 2004; Gnadinger, 2008; Watt, 2002).
3. I presented the categories and codes at three peer debriefing workshops where their interpretation was discussed – two with a group of six academic peers and a third with a group of three professionals working outside of an academic context. In these workshops, I asked the participants to describe what they understood by each code and their responses were synthesised and incorporated into the definition I use for each code in this research (Appendix 11: 411).

I adopted three approaches to enhance the trustworthiness of the coding process.

1. I showed three excerpts of video footage to participants in the peer debriefing workshops and asked the participants to talk about these excerpts with reference to the codes. The exercise gave an insight into how other people may interpret and apply the given codes and consensus was reached on the application of codes.
2. I gave participants in the peer debriefing workshops a short section of field notes to code using the prescribed codes as a second exercise to ascertain how others may apply the codes. In general, the participants agreed with each other and with me on the application of codes.
3. Following manual coding and peer debriefing workshops, I coded all information collected a second time employing the computer programme NVivo allowing for further data immersion. Computerising the coding had an added benefit of bringing all the information collected into one place and enabling me to retrieve it by student, means of assistance, means of participation and by detailed code.

4.2.2 If students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do they show it?

4.2.2.1 *An overview of factors associated with perspective taking in response to the social context in curricular areas apart from drama*

This overview concerns means of assistance associated with perspective taking in response to the social context in curricular areas apart from drama. In Table XV, I show means of assistance by teachers and peers in curricular areas apart from drama that elicit and/or enable perspective taking. I give the number of occurrences of particular means of assistance and the proportion in relation to total occurrences of means of assistance captured in field note data pertaining to 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama. For example, I identified 156 occurrences of instructing by teachers and peers. This number accounts for 47.85% of total occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking captured in the data.

Table XV: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	156	47.85
Questioning	129	39.57
Instructing-modelling	33	10.12
Modelling	7	2.15
Instructing-modelling-task structuring	1	0.31
Total	326	100

In the table, I show that means of assistance by teachers and peers that are associated with perspective taking take five different forms. Three of these forms use single means of assistance whereas two simultaneously combine means of assistance as in the case of instructing-modelling. In curricular areas apart from drama, instructing and questioning are the most dominant means of assistance and this applies across all ten students involved in the research (Appendix 12.2: 422).

Of the ten students, I observed the highest number of occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking with Gina and the lowest with Ben as I illustrate in Table XVI. In the previous section, I highlighted that I observed few instances of Ben showing perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama and gave two reasons as to why this may be the case (see p151). First, that Ben spends much of his time during the week at a mainstream college and secondly that, when he is at the further education unit, he prefers to spend time on his mainstream work and not interact with peers. The two points may also account for the few occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking that I observed and reported above.

Table XVI: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Gina	47	14.42
Deborah	43	13.19
Claire	42	12.88
Isy	36	11.04
Eddie	33	10.12
Harry	32	9.82
Alice	31	9.51
Fran	31	9.51
Jacob	29	8.90
Ben	2	0.61
Total	326	100

Teachers and peers, however, are not equally accountable in eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking in students. When I analysed means of assistance by peers in relation to perspective taking, they account for 3.37% of total means of assistance by teachers and peers and take only one form, that of instructing. In Table XVII, I indicate that four students show perspective taking associated with means of assistance by peers.

Table XVII: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by peers associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing		
Eddie	4	36.36
Gina	3	27.27
Deborah	3	27.27
Fran	1	2.78
Total	11	100

In the following sections, I examine means of assistance in curricular areas apart from drama in more detail to illustrate how a particular means of assistance is associated with perspective taking in context. As instances of perspective taking are associated primarily with instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling, my examples focus on these three means of assistance. I chose representative examples following analysis of the whole data set and they are taken from field notes. I reserve discussion of implications for the following chapter (see p243).

4.2.2.2 Instructing in curricular areas apart from drama

Instructing accounts for 47.85% of total occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking that I captured in data pertaining to curricular areas apart from drama. I found it to be associated with perspective taking across nine of the ten students involved in this research as shown in Table XVIII.

Table XVIII: Number and percentage of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Instructing	Number	Percentage
Deborah	28	17.95
Gina	24	15.38
Isy	23	14.74
Claire	17	10.90
Alice	15	9.62
Jacob	15	9.62
Fran	12	7.69
Harry	12	7.69
Eddie	10	6.41
Ben	0	0
Total	156	100

I did not observe perspective taking associated with instructing with Ben. Quantitative differences in instructing do not seem to be associated with level of autism or adaptive behaviour, according to assessment measures that I used. Instructing is the only means of assistance associated with perspective taking which I observed with peers with 11 occurrences captured, accounting for 3.37% of total occurrences.

Instructing is associated with instances of reciprocating socially and spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests and achievements with others. I observed it in all curricular areas apart from drama where observations took place but found it to be more prevalent in taught activities such as music and PSHCE than community activities such as going out to a café or library. I observed instructing most frequently at the beginning of taught activities either during transition or in the period before a session started (Appendix 12.2: 422).

In curricular areas apart from drama, instructions either contained a single step or required sequencing in response. I provide an example of each.

First, a teacher gives an instruction with a single step to request a student to do one action immediately.

1340: **Adam** turns to Isy and asks her for an "outing form". He gives her the key to his stationery cupboard. Isy goes to the cupboard, gets the outing form and gives it to **Adam**. (Field note: 15/01/08)

Adam gives a verbal instruction with a single step accompanied by gaze which Isy follows without further prompting. **Adam's** instruction is linked with Isy's ability to reciprocate socially and follow his instruction.

Secondly, a teacher gives an instruction requiring sequencing a familiar task which in the example is a routine stretching exercise.

1420: **Carina** says to a student, "You are going to stay here and help Gina". **Carina** says to Gina, "Gina, bring your yoga mat". Gina picks up her yoga mat and rolls it out on her own. She lines up the mat so that it is parallel to Carina's mat and that of the other student. **Carina** asks the students to start the yoga stretch which is the Sun Salutation⁸. Gina leads the stretch, counting to five and ten appropriately in poses she has been taught to hold. She does not need prompting during the stretch. **Carina** remarks "Wow". At the end **Carina** says to Gina, "Give me five" and Gina does. (Field note: 07/02/08)

The first instruction given by **Carina** is a single-step instruction for Gina to bring her yoga mat to the centre of the room. Gina follows this instruction and puts her mat next to the other mats. **Carina** then asks the students to start the Sun Salutation yoga stretch which is a sequence of poses that the students in Carina's class do on a daily basis. The instruction to do the yoga stretch is enough guidance for Gina to show the full sequence of the stretch to **Carina**. **Carina** encourages Gina while she is doing the stretch by saying "Wow" and shows her pride in Gina at the end with "Give me five". In this example, **Carina's** instruction to do the yoga sequence is associated with Gina sharing her achievement of being able to do the yoga sequence to **Carina**.

4.2.2.3 Questioning in curricular areas apart from drama

Of total means of assistance associated with perspective taking captured in the data, questioning comprises 39.57%.

I linked questioning to four aspects of perspective taking. These include reciprocating socially, reciprocating emotionally, initiating interaction with others and engaging in spontaneous, varied make-believe. Comparable to instructing, I observed questioning in all curricular areas outside of drama but did not observe it as frequently as instructing (129 occurrences of questioning compared with 156 of instructing). Within sessions, I found questioning to be particularly common at the beginning of a session when students were asked how they were feeling and the activities for the session were being organised.

I found questioning to be associated with perspective taking across the ten students involved in this research. There were, however, quantitative differences between amounts of questioning associated with perspective taking across students as shown in Table XIX.

⁸ The Sun Salutation is a sequence from Hatha yoga.

Table XIX: Number and percentage of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Questioning	Number	Percentage
Claire	24	18.60
Fran	18	13.95
Gina	17	13.18
Alice	16	12.40
Harry	13	10.08
Jacob	12	9.30
Eddie	11	8.53
Isy	9	6.98
Deborah	7	5.43
Ben	2	1.55
Total	129	100

With the exception of Ben, for reasons possibly related to those discussed earlier (see p151), the amount of questioning associated with perspective taking closely mirrors communication skills as measured by VABS (see p88). This finding suggests that students with better communication abilities show more instances of perspective taking in response to questions.

In curricular areas apart from drama, questioning usually took the form of a closed question or a choice. I give two examples to illustrate each of these and show questioning associated with reciprocating socially and reciprocating emotionally respectively.

In the example below, **Simon** questions Eddie about his timetable using a sentence format which encourages Eddie (who does not use verbal communication) to respond using gesture.

1400: **Simon** prompts Eddie, "PSHCE with ..." Eddie points to **Simon**. "And then we go ..." Eddie signs 'home'. (Field note: 22/01/08)

The question posed by **Simon**, in the form of a sentence with a gap in it, presents an opportunity for Eddie to reciprocate socially and respond to the question by filling the gap in the sentence.

In a registration session, **Carina** asks her students how they feel with the support of a feelings board containing symbols of five different feelings.

1340: Then **Carina** passed around the feelings board and asked one student, "How do you feel?" After answering this student would have to ask the student to her/his right, "How do you feel?" When it was Gina's turn, she said, "I am happy". (Field note: 03/10/07)

In response to the question and with the support of visual aids, Gina is able to reciprocate emotionally and tell the class how she feels.

4.2.2.4 Instructing-modelling in curricular areas apart from drama

Instructing-modelling comprises 10.12% of total occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking.

I connected the simultaneous use of instructing-modelling with instances within one aspect of perspective taking; reciprocating socially. I observed instructing-modelling less frequently than the single form of instructing or questioning and usually observed it in taught activities such as music and PSHCE rather than in community activities such as visiting the library or going to the café (Appendix 12.2: 422).

I found instructing-modelling to be associated with perspective taking in eight students as I show in Table XX. There were clear quantitative differences which appear to be inversely associated with communication skills as measured by VABS. I observed instructing-modelling, for example, most often with Eddie who scores lowest according to the VABS communication skills composite and I did not observe it with Ben who scores highest on this measure.

Table XX: Number and percentage of occurrences of instructing-modelling associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Instructing-modelling	Number	Percentage
Eddie	11	33.33
Deborah	7	21.21
Gina	4	12.12
Harry	4	12.12
Isy	3	9.09
Jacob	2	6.06
Claire	1	3.03
Fran	1	3.03
Alice	0	0
Ben	0	0
Total	33	100

As an example, in a PSHCE session, **Simon** helps Eddie with a work sheet task by instructing-modelling.

0950: **Simon** shows Eddie how to do the dot-to-dot task. He leans next to Eddie on the desk, takes Eddie's pen and does one of the dot-to-dot tasks for him talking the task through at the same time. With a second task, **Simon** takes Eddie through the task with his finger. **Simon** then asks Eddie to do this second and a third task along the same principles independently. Eddie does the task. (Field note: 09/10/07)

This example illustrates how **Simon** assists Eddie to do a task. First, **Simon** models the task using a pen and talks through the steps in order to complete the task. Secondly, **Simon** quickly demonstrates the task again using his finger and talks through the steps Eddie needs

to take. Thirdly, **Simon** gives a simple verbal instruction requesting Eddie to do the second and third tasks on his own.

4.2.2.5 Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in response to the social context in curricular areas apart from drama

In curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do students show perspective taking in response to the social context?

- All ten students predominantly show perspective taking in response to instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling by teachers.
- Four students show perspective taking in response to instructing by peers.
- Means of assistance associated with perspective taking are observed primarily during taught activities.
- Questioning is observed most frequently with students with stronger communication skills whereas instructing-modelling is observed most with students with weaker communication skills, according to assessment measures that I used.

4.2.2.6 An overview of factors associated with perspective taking in order to spontaneously participate in the social context in curricular areas apart from drama

In this section, I give an overview of ways in which students spontaneously participate in the social context in curricular areas apart from drama. I refer to these ways as 'means of participation' as described earlier (see p163). I analysed means of participation to provide an indirect route to uncover why students are participating in the social context.

I identified four means by which students participate in the social context in curricular areas apart from drama and these are shown in Table XXI. In the table, I give the number of occurrences of particular means of participation and the percentage of total occurrences of means of participation captured in the data.

Table XXI: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	140	66.67
Questioning	58	27.62
Instructing	8	3.81
Modelling	4	1.90
Total	210	100

Overall students show perspective taking in response to direct assistance from teachers and peers slightly more than they do when spontaneously participating in the social context (326 occurrences compared with 210). Of means of participation associated with perspective taking, giving feedback is the most dominant and modelling is the least dominant. Of all occurrences of means of participation, 17.14% concern the speech and/or action of peers.

I observed nine students spontaneously participating in the social context as shown in Table XXII. I observed the most occurrences of means of participation in relation to Alice. It is only Eddie who I did not observe spontaneously participating in the social context.

Table XXII: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	58	27.62
Deborah	35	16.67
Fran	34	16.19
Claire	33	15.71
Gina	19	9.05
Jacob	14	6.67
Isy	8	3.81
Ben	5	2.38
Harry	4	1.90
Eddie	0	0
Total	210	100

In the ensuing sections, I scrutinise means of participation in curricular areas apart from drama to illustrate how a particular means of participation is associated with perspective taking in context and suggest why a student is participating. Means of participation are predominantly in the form of giving feedback and questioning, as such, my examples centre on these two means of participation. I take these examples from field notes.

4.2.2.7 Giving feedback in curricular areas apart from drama

Of total occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in the data, giving feedback comprises 66.67% and I link it to five aspects of perspective taking. Of all occurrences of giving feedback in curricular areas apart from drama, 20% (28 occurrences) concern the speech and/or action of peers. Students give feedback by sharing

with others observations about the immediate environment or an activity they are currently or have recently been engaged in.

I found giving feedback to be associated with perspective taking across nine students involved in this research as shown in Table XXIII. I did not capture any occurrences of Eddie giving feedback.

Table XXIII: Number and percentage of occurrences of giving feedback associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	45	32.14
Fran	29	20.71
Claire	18	12.86
Deborah	14	10.00
Gina	13	9.29
Jacob	7	5.00
Isy	6	4.29
Ben	5	3.57
Harry	3	2.14
Eddie	0	0
Total	140	100

I found giving feedback to be associated with perspective taking in all curricular areas apart from drama where observations took place. I found it to be more common in taught activities such as music, art and PSHCE than community activities such as visiting the library and café (Appendix 12.3: 429). I observed giving feedback primarily during unstructured time at the beginning and end of sessions such as Alice commenting to her class teacher **Mark** as she entered the classroom, "I had a wonderful weekend" (Field note: 31/03/08) and Deborah seeing a new person in the room and responding by welcoming the visitor using the familiar name for the school, "Welcome to Woodlands college" (Field note: 13/11/07).

I take an example of giving feedback from a music session where students are practising a piece for performance with **Ed**, the music teacher.

1055: All the students play their tune independently of each other. Gina is playing the drums and she stands up and shouts, "We are in the band". Claire is playing the guitar and says to **Ed**, "Look what I can do." **Ed** replies that she is playing the tune perfectly.

1100: Gina shouts, "Too loud". **Ed** puts the volume of the drums down. The students practise their tune independently. Claire shouts, "**Ed**, there is a problem. I play the guitar slowly, can you help me?" **Ed** replies, "There's a few people to help." Claire is silent.

1105: Claire shouts, "**Ed**". She plays a tune on the guitar and looks at him. **Ed** silences the students and counts them in to start the piece from the beginning.

1110: Harry is prompted to come in. All the students are playing the piece. Claire remarks, "Look **Ed**, I'm doing great." **Ed** replies, "See how practise works. You're not even looking anymore". (Field note: 09/05/08)

After the students have played the piece through, Gina feeds back to the group that they are all in the band. Later on, she comments that the drums are "too loud" and **Ed** solves the problem for her. In both occurrences, giving feedback is associated with initiating interaction with others. In the first occurrence, Gina gives feedback to the group that in playing instruments together they make up the "band". Indeed, "the band" plays the songs they are practising in this session as part of the *Summer Revue* in July 2008. In the second occurrence, Gina lets it be known that she finds the music too loud. She is asking for help and **Ed** responds to her request by turning the volume down.

On four occasions in the example, Claire gives feedback on her guitar playing. She draws the teacher's attention to her guitar playing phrasing her sentence in such a way that suggests she is pleased with her performance, "Look what I can do". In giving feedback on her performance, Claire spontaneously shares her achievement of playing with **Ed**. A few moments later, she highlights a concern that she is playing the guitar too slowly and requests **Ed's** help on two occasions in resolving this concern. These occurrences of giving feedback reflect Claire reciprocating emotionally. She shares her own opinion on her guitar playing but also seeks **Ed's** opinion. What he thinks about her guitar playing seems to be important to her. When playing the piece again, Claire comments to **Ed** on how well she is doing. **Ed** responds to three occurrences of Claire's feedback. He concurs with her positive feedback and builds in an explanation for why Claire is playing well. **Ed** explains that Claire is playing well because she has been practising and adds that the fact she does not have to look at the guitar strings any more shows that she is doing particularly well. Similarly, he explains that he is not able to help with her concern straight away because there are other students to help.

4.2.2.8 Questioning in curricular areas apart from drama

Questioning comprises 27.62% of total means of participation and I link it to three aspects of perspective taking; reciprocating emotionally, initiating interaction and spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others. Of all occurrences of questioning, 3.45% concern the speech and/or action of peers. Students question as a means of participation to gain information from teachers or peers in the immediate context or to seek support or clarification from a teacher on an activity they are currently engaged with.

I found questioning to be associated with perspective taking across eight students participating in this research shown in Table XXIV. I observed Deborah asking questions as

a means of participation most often whereas I did not observe Ben and Eddie asking questions as a means of participation.

Table XXIV: Number and percentage of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in 53 hours of sessions in curricular areas apart from drama, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Deborah	17	29.31
Alice	12	20.69
Claire	11	18.97
Jacob	7	12.07
Gina	5	8.62
Fran	4	6.90
Harry	1	1.72
Isy	1	1.72
Ben	0	0
Eddie	0	0
Total	140	100

I linked questioning with aspects of perspective taking in all curricular areas outside of drama where observations took place. I found it to be less common than giving feedback but, similar to giving feedback, it was more prevalent in taught activities such as music, art and PSHCE than community activities such as visiting the library or local café. Within sessions, questioning was common during unstructured time before a session started. During this time, students asked about subjects of interest such as Deborah asking teachers and students about names related to them or fellow students, "Joshua Wani grandma's name?" (Field note: 22/04/08).

I take an excerpt from a field note to illustrate questioning as a means of participation in the social context. It is taken from a work experience session in the college kitchen where Deborah is making cups of tea for the students.

1400: **Ed** has asked Deborah to make tea for the group. She turns the kettle on at the wall but not the switch and when the light on the kettle does not turn on she asks **Ed**, "I need help please". **Ed** shows her how to turn the switch on and Deborah switches the kettle on. As she waits for the kettle to boil, Deborah gets the cups out and asks **Ed** for tea bags which she puts into the cups. She does not like the sound of the kettle boiling and moves away from it. When the kettle switches off, Deborah moves towards the kettle again and pours boiling water into the cups.

1410: Deborah needs milk for the tea and she looks in the fridge. As she looks she says, "**Ed**, milk in fridge?" She is telling him that there is no milk in the fridge. **Ed** suggests they look in the staffroom and she goes to the staffroom with him to get milk. She puts milk in the tea and sits on a stool in the kitchen sipping her tea. Meanwhile, **Ed** gets sugar out for another student. Deborah stands up and says to **Ed**, "Sugar?" **Ed** passes the sugar to her and she puts some in her tea. (Field note: 03/12/07)

In this excerpt, Deborah asks questions in response to the activity she is engaged in. When Deborah needs help, she asks **Ed** for it. **Ed** is her class teacher and, as such, is the relevant adult in the room who can help her with the information she needs to complete the task. At the end of the excerpt, seeing **Ed** put sugar in another student's tea spurs her to ask for some sugar for her own tea. All of these occurrences of questioning in order to participate in the social context reflect perspective taking in the form of initiating interaction and show that Deborah recognises that **Ed** has knowledge that she does not have.

4.2.2.9 Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in order to participate in the social context in curricular areas apart from drama

In curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do students show perspective taking in order to spontaneously participate in the social context?

- Nine students show perspective taking in order to spontaneously participate in the social context.
- Means of participation are predominantly in the form of giving feedback or questioning.
- Giving feedback and questioning are observed most frequently during taught activities and within sessions they are most common during unstructured time at the beginning or end of the session.

4.2.2.10 Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama

If students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do they show it?

- Students with autism show perspective taking in order to respond to or to spontaneously participate in the social context.
- There are more instances of students showing perspective taking in response to the social context than in order to spontaneously participate in the social context (326 compared with 210).
- There are quantitative differences in means of assistance and means of participation associated with perspective taking across the students.
- Means of assistance and means of participation are most common during taught activities rather than community activities.

- Means of assistance typically associated with perspective taking include instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling with instructing being the most prevalent.
- Instructing is the only means of assistance observed in peers and instructing by peers comprises 3.37% of total occurrences of means of assistance.
- Means of participation typically associated with perspective taking include giving feedback to others about the immediate environment or current activity and questioning teachers and peers in order to gain information or support on a current activity. Giving feedback is the most prevalent means of participation.
- Of all means of participation, 17.14% concern the speech and/or action of peers.

4.2.3 If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it and are these circumstances the same as in other curricular areas?

4.2.3.1 An overview of factors associated with perspective taking in response to the social context in drama

When I analysed data relating to the same students in drama, quantitative and qualitative differences in means of assistance associated with perspective taking emerged.

I show in Table XXV means of assistance captured in field notes from 56 hours of drama sessions. I give the number of occurrences of particular means of assistance and the proportion in relation to total occurrences of means of assistance.

Table XXV: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	407	51.07
Questioning	181	22.71
Instructing-modelling	129	16.19
Modelling	48	6.02
Instructing-explaining	10	1.25
Instructing-breaking down tasks	5	0.63
Questioning-encouraging	4	0.50
Instructing-encouraging	3	0.38
Instructing-modelling-breaking down tasks	3	0.38
Instructing-giving feedback	3	0.38
Explaining	2	0.25
Instructing-questioning	1	0.13
Encouraging, positively or negatively	1	0.13
Total	797	100

The number of occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking that I captured in data from drama sessions is more than double that captured in other curricular areas (797 compared with 326). There is also a wider range of means of assistance that I found to be associated with perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas (13 compared with five) as illustrated in Figure XXXI. The most dominant means of assistance, however, are the same – instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling.

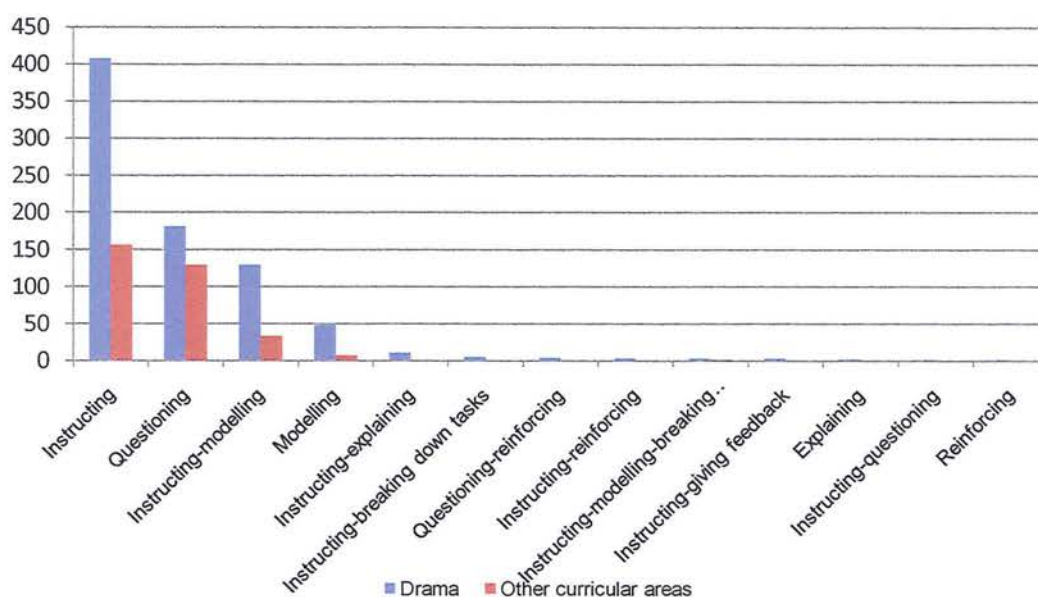


Figure XXXI: A comparison between the number of occurrences of means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas

In Table XXVI, I show the number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking, by student.

Table XXVI: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	145	18.19
Deborah	112	14.05
Alice	92	11.54
Ben	88	11.04
Harry	76	9.54
Fran	73	9.16
Gina	61	7.65
Isy	61	7.65
Eddie	45	5.65
Jacob	44	5.52
Total	797	100

As I illustrate in Figure XXXII, there are more means of assistance by teachers and peers associated with perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas for all ten students. It is notable that quantitative differences can also be observed amongst three students – Eddie, Jacob and Gina – who have a drama teacher as their class teacher which suggests teachers may be more engaging in drama than in other curricular areas. I interrogate this point in more detail throughout the response to this question. It is also visible that there are many more means of assistance associated with perspective taking for Ben in drama than in other curricular areas. The reasons may relate to those already discussed (see p151).

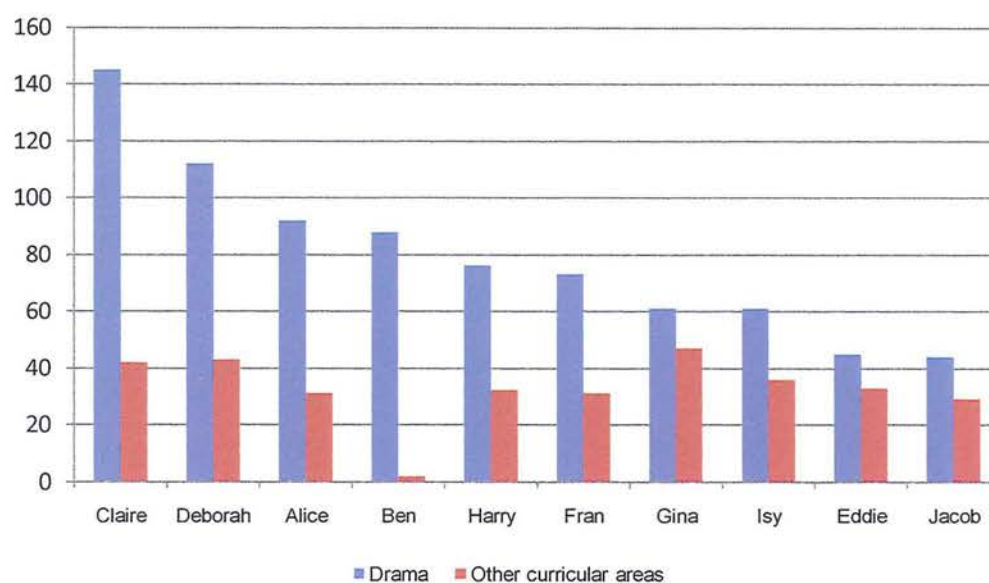


Figure XXXII: A comparison between the number of occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Comparable to other curricular areas, teachers and peers are not equally accountable in eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking in students with more occurrences of means of assistance by teachers associated with perspective taking than by peers (710 compared with 87). I show the number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by peers associated with perspective taking in Table XXVII.

Table XXVII: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of assistance by peers associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	65	74.71
Modelling	8	9.20
Questioning	7	8.05
Instructing-modelling	5	5.75
Instructing-explaining	2	2.30
Total	87	100

There are, however, three differences between means of assistance by peers in drama compared with other curricular areas.

1. There are more occurrences of means of assistance by peers associated with perspective taking, 87 occurrences in drama compared with 11 in other curricular areas.
2. The proportion of means of assistance by peers in relation to total means of assistance is greater, 10.92% of all occurrences of means of assistance in drama compared with 3.37% in other curricular areas.
3. Peers use a wider range of means of assistance with occurrences of instructing, modelling, questioning, instructing-modelling and instructing-explaining in drama compared with only instructing in other curricular areas. I illustrate this in Figure XXXIII.

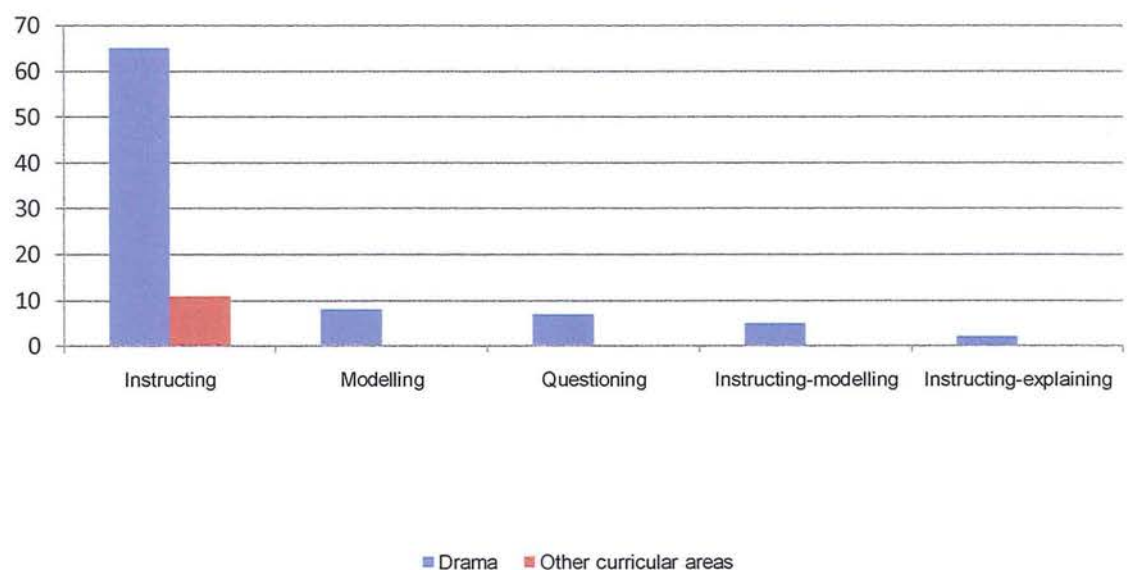


Figure XXXIII: A comparison between the number of occurrences of means of assistance by peers associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas

These findings about occurrences of means of assistance by peers correlate with findings about perspective taking with peers where I observed a greater number of instances and a broader range of aspects of perspective taking in drama compared with other curricular areas.

As instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling are the most dominant means of assistance in drama and other curricular areas, these form the focus of a more detailed examination which aims to illustrate how these manifest in drama and to draw out

quantitative and qualitative differences between their manifestation in drama compared with other curricular areas. I take the examples from field notes and video data.

4.2.3.2 Instructing in drama

Of means of assistance captured in field note data from drama, instructing accounts for 51.07%. The number of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking is higher in drama than in other curricular areas (407 and 156). Given that I collected data from drama and other curricular areas over a comparable period of time, this finding suggests that teachers give more instructions to students during drama than in other curricular areas.

In drama, I found sole occurrences of instructing⁹ to be associated with instances of reciprocating socially, spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others, reciprocating emotionally and engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe whereas in other curricular areas it is only associated with the first two aspects of perspective taking. This finding suggests that instructing in drama is associated with a wider range of perspective taking than in other curricular areas.

Within drama sessions, instructing is most common when rehearsing for a performance (129 of 407 occurrences), learning drama and dance skills (111 of 407 occurrences) and playing drama and movement games (82 of 407 occurrences). Peers typically instruct when rehearsing for a performance (20 of 65 occurrences) or during warm up activities (11 occurrences).

I found instructing to be associated with perspective taking across the ten students involved in this research as illustrated in Table XXVIII.

Table: XXVIII: Number and percentage of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	74	18.18
Deborah	52	12.78
Ben	50	12.29
Alice	44	10.81
Isy	37	9.09
Fran	34	8.35
Gina	34	8.35
Jacob	30	7.37
Harry	28	6.88
Eddie	24	5.90
Total	407	100

⁹ Sole occurrences of instructing distinguish instructing on its own from instructing used simultaneously with other means of assistance e.g. instructing-modelling.

When I compared the number of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in drama with the number captured in other curricular areas as shown in Figure XXXIV, I observed more occurrences in drama than in other curricular areas across all ten students. This finding includes the three students – Eddie, Jacob and Gina – who have a drama teacher as their class teacher.

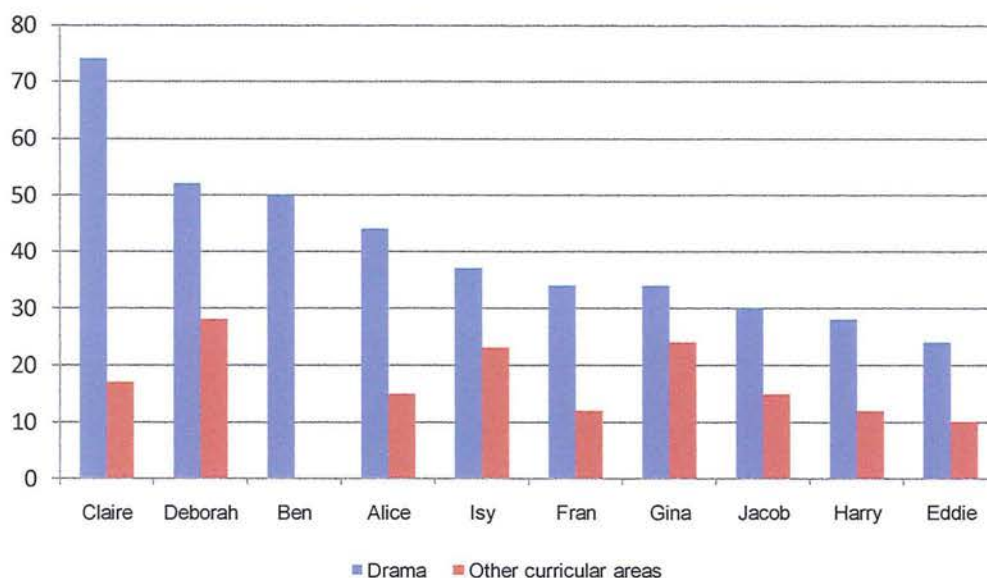


Figure XXXIV: A comparison between the number of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Earlier in this chapter, I highlighted qualitative differences in the way students follow instructions in drama compared with other curricular areas. I noted that these differences were primarily rooted in the different ways teachers instruct (see p154). Indeed, data suggest that although instructions with a single step and instructions that require sequencing in response are visible in drama and other curricular areas, instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component are only used in drama even when the same teachers are observed across drama and other curricular areas (see p154-155 for examples of each). Instructions with an abstract component are important in relation to perspective taking because they present opportunities to think flexibly and engage in make-believe.

The excerpt below combines an instruction with multiple steps and instructions containing an abstract component. I take it from a session based on marriage in which students were first shown pictures from a wedding and the teacher then instructed one student to direct a short scene based on marriage with a couple of other students. Following the excerpt, I highlight the instruction and associated aspects of perspective taking.

1130: Once all of the students have seen the photographs, **Simon** asks Ben to direct a four-minute scene based on marriage with Claire and Eddie. Ben

is concerned and replies, "I'm nervous, I find it nerve wracking". **Simon** suggests that a teaching assistant could help and Ben agrees. **Simon** gives the three students and the teaching assistant five minutes to create a short scene based on a wedding.

Students leave the room for about five minutes.

1140: After five minutes the three students return to perform their scene. The scene starts with Eddie as the bridegroom and Ben as the priest on the left side of the room. Ben starts the scene by humming traditional bridal entrance music. This music cues Claire to enter the scene from the middle of the right side of the room. Claire mimes holding a bouquet and walks slowly towards Eddie and Ben while Ben continues to hum. When she arrives, Eddie turns towards Claire and Ben brings the tune to a close. Claire turns towards Eddie. Ben continues to face Claire and Eddie and recites a large chunk from the Christian wedding service. When he reaches responses in the wedding service, Claire responds verbally and Eddie non-verbally to Ben's questions. At the end of the responses, Ben announces "You may now kiss the bride". Claire kisses Eddie and they exit the scene together taking the same route by which Claire entered. Ben hums traditional wedding recessional music and leaves the scene behind them. Teachers and students clap in response. (Field note: 15/01/08)

Simon instructs Ben to direct a scene based on marriage. **Simon's** instruction is general requiring the students to draw on their own experiences in creating the scene. Aside from the time limit and the stimulus of the photographs, **Simon** does not give Ben other parameters to work with. Ben appears to find the task challenging visible in telling **Simon** how the instruction makes him feel, "I'm nervous, I find it nerve wracking". **Simon** acknowledges Ben's feelings and offers to Ben the help of a teaching assistant which Ben accepts. After a few minutes, the students return and they perform a five-minute scene which they have briefly rehearsed¹⁰. The students show awareness of the audience by orienting the scene towards them. They share with others their interpretation of salient aspects of a wedding service which appears to draw on their experience of weddings either in real life or through television and films. In sharing the scene, the three students engage in make-believe. They each adopt a role and communicate their role through where they are standing, through substituted actions and improvised words based on their experience. Ben, as the priest, faces Claire and Eddie. Eddie, as the groom, starts the scene next to Ben. Claire starts the scene at the other end of the room ready to make her entrance. The music, hummed by Ben, prompts her to start walking slowly towards Eddie and Ben and she substitutes a real bouquet with an imaginary one. Ben improvises the words from the wedding service and Claire and Eddie respond to the questions he asks and instructions he gives as part of this service. Teachers and students give feedback and share their enjoyment in the performance by clapping at the end of the scene.

¹⁰ Although the extent of support from the teaching assistant is unclear, rehearsing in a different setting and performing for longer than the time they had to rehearse suggests the students are largely improvising.

From the initial instruction given by **Simon**, five aspects of perspective taking investigated in this research are manifested. The three students spontaneously share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others in performing to others a five-minute, improvised scene drawing on their own experiences of a wedding service. They reciprocate socially by following the instruction given at the outset and relating to each other as performers within the scene. Ben reciprocates emotionally by expressing how he feels in response to the instruction. The students engage in varied make-believe with all students able to draw on a variety of modes to communicate their role to each other within the scene and to the audience. They form relationships with peers by working together to rehearse and perform the scene visible in the negotiation of roles and co-operation with each other during the scene. Teacher instructions which challenge students to work together and produce the fruits of their work in a short space of time are not observed in other curricular areas. The presence of such examples in drama suggests students are given the opportunity to engage in more challenging tasks within this context. I discuss the implications of this finding in the next chapter (see p246).

I have already noted quantitative differences between instructions given by peers in drama compared with other curricular areas but there are subtle qualitative differences that also emerge. I observed peers giving instructions with a single step to students in drama and in other curricular areas. It is only in drama, however, that I observed peers giving instructions to a group of students and giving a sequence of instructions without prompting. I give an example of peers giving instructions to a group of students in the section on instructing-modelling (see p191). The following example illustrates Ben giving a sequence of instructions to Claire following the teacher asking him to be the director.

1140: **Simon** says, "Ben, you be director". Claire reads the script. Ben makes suggestions as to what she can do ... Ben gives suggestions and **Simon** goes with some and questions others ... Ben corrects Claire with some of her lines and she takes his suggestions on board. (Field note: 16/10/07)

In this example, following an initial instruction from **Simon** for Ben to be the director, Ben gives instructions for Claire which she follows. Ben is able to come up with and sequence instructions without prompting from **Simon**. **Simon**, however, does give feedback on Ben's instructions to encourage Ben to rationalise the instructions he is giving. Ben also corrects Claire with her lines and she follows these instructions. The example illustrates Ben instructing Claire and Claire reciprocating socially in response by following his instructions.

4.2.3.3 Questioning in drama

Questioning accounts for 22.71% of total means of assistance that I captured in data from drama. I recorded more questions associated with perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas in data over a comparable period of time (181 compared with 129). Unlike

other curricular areas, I recorded a small number of occurrences of questioning by peers in field notes pertaining to drama (7 occurrences).

I found questioning to be associated with perspective taking across the ten students involved in this research as shown in Table XXIX.

Table: XXIX: Number and percentage of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	32	17.68
Alice	28	15.47
Fran	28	15.47
Ben	27	14.92
Deborah	25	13.81
Harry	15	8.29
Gina	11	6.08
Isy	7	3.87
Eddie	5	2.76
Jacob	3	1.66
Total	181	100

Comparable to other curricular areas, there are more occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking with students with higher communication skills scores as measured by VABS (see p88). Nevertheless, in drama there are a greater number of occurrences of questioning for these students than in other curricular areas as shown in Figure XXXV. There are less occurrences of questioning in drama for less verbal students, however, suggesting that teachers use other means of assistance in drama sessions.

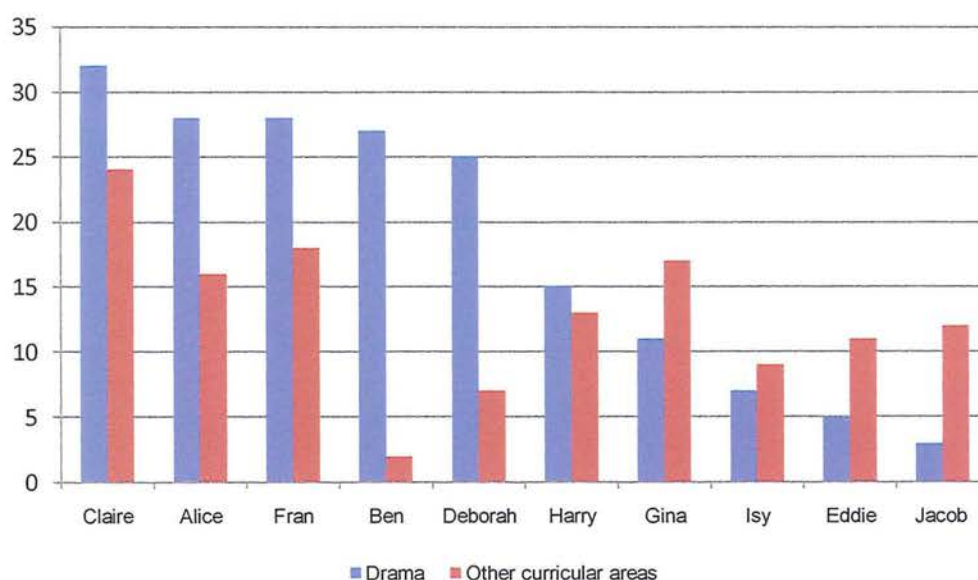


Figure XXXV: A comparison between the number of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Questioning is most frequent during the greeting at the beginning of drama sessions (45 of 181) or when playing drama and movement games (43 of 181).

Qualitative differences in questioning by teachers between drama and other curricular areas are most visible when playing drama and movement games and rehearsing for performances. Whereas in drama and other curricular areas, closed questions or questions incorporating a choice are common, in drama questions are used in a more open fashion to encourage students to draw on their own ideas and think flexibly. I observed these qualitative differences even when the same teachers worked with the same students in other curricular areas.

In the example below **Carina** asks the teaching assistant to strike a pose with a piece of material and then asks the students what they think it is.

1125: **Carina** asks the teaching assistant to put the scarf on and do something with it. The teaching assistant wraps the scarf around her head and body. She kneels on the floor with her head in her knees so the scarf covers her. Once the teaching assistant is in position, **Carina** says to Ben, "Who could that be?" He says, "That could be a boy crying". **Carina** similarly asks Harry, "What is that?" She asks Gina the same question and then says, "Pretending to be..." Gina says, "Pretending to be a ghost." She asks Harry again and he repeats Gina's response, "Pretending to be a ghost". (Field note: 12/02/08)

In this example, **Carina** uses questions with each of the students. With Ben, she asks who the teaching assistant could be and Ben gives an answer. **Carina** gives a more open question to Harry and he does not answer so she moves on to Gina who is similarly silent. **Carina** adopts a different strategy with Gina changing the format of the question to a sentence for Gina to complete. Gina uses the format of the sentence to give her answer to what the teaching assistant could be pretending to be. When **Carina** returns to Harry and asks the question again he repeats Gina's response. Neither Ben nor Gina give a literal response to the questions which demonstrates some understanding that the teaching assistant is pretending to do something with the scarf. Together the example shows how questioning from the teacher can be associated both with reciprocating socially by responding to the question asked and engaging in make-believe in the non-literal responses to the question.

Fran is the only student to use the same open questioning approach when working with her peers. I take the example from a session based on mirroring movement.

1140: **Simon** returns from being outside of the classroom and says, "Who is next?" Fran replies, "Us" referring to herself and Gina. **Simon** asks Fran to copy Gina. Fran supports Gina in the exercise by saying, "What next?" and Gina responds with a movement. (Field note: 28/04/08)

In this excerpt, Fran recognises **Simon** has asked Gina to be the leader and so supports Gina in fulfilling the task by using the question, “What next?” to encourage Gina to think about and initiate new and different movements. Gina responds appropriately. The example illustrates how questioning from Fran appears to be associated with Gina reciprocating socially in responding to the question by creating a different movement.

4.2.3.4 Instructing-modelling in drama

Instructing-modelling forms 16.19% of total occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking. The number of occurrences of instructing-modelling is higher in drama than in other curricular areas (129 compared with 33).

I linked instructing-modelling to perspective taking across the ten students involved in this research as shown in Table XXX.

Table XXX: Number and percentage of occurrences of instructing-modelling associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Harry	24	18.60
Deborah	22	17.05
Alice	16	12.40
Claire	15	11.63
Gina	11	8.53
Isy	11	6.08
Ben	10	7.75
Eddie	7	5.43
Fran	7	5.43
Jacob	6	4.65
Total	129	100

Unlike in other curricular areas, I did not observe occurrences of instructing-modelling to be more prevalent with students scoring lower on the communications skills profile of VABs. It is notable, however, that I observed instructing-modelling across all ten students in drama compared with eight in other curricular areas and that I observed it more frequently across all students except Eddie as illustrated in Figure XXXVI.

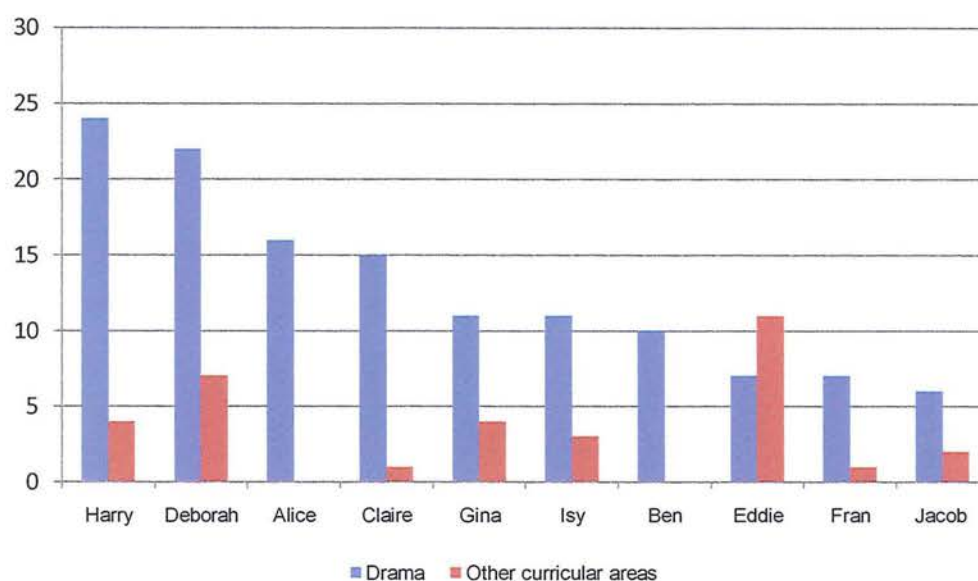


Figure XXXVI: A comparison between the number of occurrences of instructing-modelling associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Comparable to curricular areas apart from drama, I found instructing-modelling to be associated with reciprocating socially in drama. In addition, however, I found it to be associated with engaging in make-believe and reciprocating emotionally. I observed instructing-modelling most frequently in warm up exercises which usually involve all students following a teacher or peer (61 of 129 occurrences). It is also an important pedagogical tool in teaching drama and movement skills (23 of 129 occurrences) and developing work for performance (23 of 129 occurrences). Instructing-modelling in drama follows a similar course compared to other curricular areas but as befits an activity which involves the whole body, the modelling tends to use the whole body and thus draw on a broader range of modes of communication.

I give an example of instructing-modelling in Figure XXXVII. The example illustrates Claire following instructions from **Simon** in order to build a dance. I give images relating to this example below. **Simon** models the steps *for* Claire giving a commentary on what he is doing; he models the steps *with* Claire and then instructs Claire to do the steps on her own which she does.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

**Movement/
stance:**
Simon
shows Claire
how to
hopscotch.

Speech:
Simon – “You
stop and you
hopscotch.”

Gaze: Claire is
looking into
the mirror
watching
Simon.

**Movement/
stance:**
Simon is in
front of Claire
and shows her
the first few
steps of the
dance.
Claire imitates
Simon’s
movements.

Speech:
Simon – “Run
and then you
go ...”

Gaze: Claire
follows
Simon’s
movements
closely.

**Movement/
stance:** Claire
does the
movements
Simon has
shown her on
her own.

Video time: 17.16

Claire does the steps on her own after Simon asks

Figure XXXVII: Simon instructing-modelling in building Claire’s dance (16/06/08)

The course of the teaching is similar to the approach used by **Simon** with Eddie in a PSHCE task described earlier (see p171). There are three steps, two of which involve **Simon** showing the task and the third concerns **Simon** asking the student to show the task independently. In this example, however, there is an opportunity for Claire to do the task simultaneously with **Simon** and in close proximity before doing the task on her own. The instructing-modelling is associated with Claire reciprocating socially in the form of following instructions and imitating.

Teachers in drama also use instructing-modelling to demonstrate a task which has particular parameters but can be interpreted by students in their own way. In a drama session with **Carina**, for example, **Carina** models an exercise which involves choosing a piece of material, a song and then performing a scene to the group.

1145: **Carina** brings the group together and they sit on the floor. She says, "Alice is going to show a performance with a song and one of those fabric. One colour". Alice shouts out, "Red". **Carina** explains that she will demonstrate before Alice has her go. **Carina** chooses some music she likes; she chooses a piece of fabric and then performs to the group using the fabric. She spins around and wafts the fabric over the students.

1150: **Carina** finishes her performance when the song finishes and asks Alice to go. She explains that Alice is going to choose one song and piece of fabric. Alice chooses red material and directs **Carina** to a song she likes called, "I'm a vampire". When the song starts Alice sings the words of the song and wafts the material over the students. She brings the material close to her and then opens it out saying, "I'm a witch" and cackling. She moves around the room with the material swaying behind her. The song finishes and Alice opens the material behind her. There is clapping from the teacher, teaching assistant and some students. (Field note: 06/03/08)

In the example, **Carina** gives parameters for the task she wants the students to participate in and she demonstrates how these parameters can be used. Each student has a turn. It is visible from the example of Alice that she is able to reciprocate socially in the form of following the instructions given and use the parameters to create her own performance for the group which involves engagement in varied, spontaneous make-believe.

Peers typically instruct-model when assigned by the teacher to lead the group as part of a warm up exercise; an excerpt of such an occurrence is given below where **Simon** has tasked Claire with being the teacher.

1000: Claire says, "Everyone on toes ... That's it". Deborah follows. Claire says, "Walk on heels". Deborah remained on her toes and only moved to her heels when **Simon** prompted. Claire then says, "Run". **Simon** encourages the other students to do the same by saying, "Running, running, running." Claire then says, "Now put your knees up." Then "Kick heels ups". During this period, Deborah continues to run normally. Claire then says, "And walk again". After a couple of walks, she stops and turns to the centre. She moves her body from one side to the other saying, "And side to side." She then moves her body forward and backwards saying, "The other

side". She stops and lifts her knees up saying "Reach your chest with your legs". Deborah follows each of these. (Field note: 02/10/07)

Simon has asked Claire to be the teacher. She draws on her experience of **Simon** leading the warm up and is able to sequence her instructions without prompting. She instructs the group whilst showing the exercise at the same time and she monitors the response of students involved. Deborah, for example, can be seen to reciprocate socially in following some of the instructions. I did not observe examples where students instruct the group and give a sequence of instructions without prompting in other curricular areas.

4.2.3.5 Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in response to the social context in drama

If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it in response to the social context and are factors identified the same as in other curricular areas?

- Some factors are the same with instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling being the most predominant factors but there are important quantitative and qualitative differences.
- The number of occurrences of means of assistance associated with perspective taking captured in data about drama is more than double the number captured in other curricular areas over a comparable period (797 compared with 326).
- The range of means of assistance in drama is wider than in other curricular areas (13 compared with five).
- There are more occurrences of means of assistance for all ten students participating in the research, even those who have a drama teacher as their class teacher.
- The number of means of assistance by peers captured in data about drama is significantly greater (87 compared with 11) and spread across five means of assistance compared with one.
- All ten students respond to means of assistance by peers in drama compared with four in other curricular areas.
- There are more occurrences of means of assistance captured when students are rehearsing for a performance than in other parts of drama sessions.

- Instructing in drama involves instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component which are not observed in other areas of the curriculum.
- Questioning in drama is more open encouraging students to draw on their own ideas and think flexibly.
- Instructing-modelling involves the whole body with opportunities to imitate simultaneously and provides parameters for students to use and interpret in their own way.

4.2.3.6 An overview of factors associated with perspective taking in order to spontaneously participate in the social context in drama

I give an overview of ways in which students spontaneously participate in the social context in drama and their relationship with aspects of perspective taking in this section and draw comparisons with other curricular areas.

In Table XXXI, I show the number and percentage of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking in drama.

Table XXXI: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions

Means participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	284	60.81
Questioning	94	20.13
Instructing	68	14.56
Explaining	13	2.78
Modelling	3	0.64
Instructing-explaining	2	0.43
Giving feedback-modelling-instructing	2	0.43
Encouraging positively or negatively	1	0.21
Total	467	100

The number of occurrences of means participation I found in data pertaining to drama is more than double the number found in data pertaining to other curricular areas (467 compared with 215). This finding suggests that students spontaneously participate in the social context more often in drama sessions than in other curricular areas. Reviewing the ways in which students spontaneously participate in the social context reveals that students draw on broader means to participate in the social context in drama than in other curricular areas (eight compared with four) as shown in Figure XXXVIII. The most dominant means of participation, 'giving feedback' and 'questioning', are the same in drama and in other curricula areas. 'Instructing' as a means of participation, however, is much more prevalent and 'explaining' also features notably where it does not in curricular areas apart from drama.

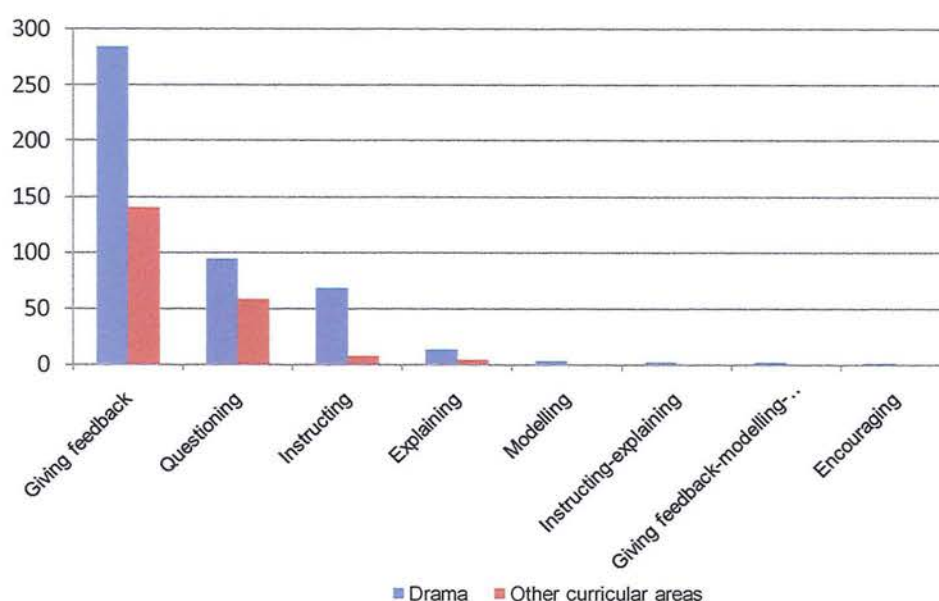


Figure XXXVIII: A comparison between the number of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas

Of all occurrences of means of participation in drama, 46.68% concern the speech and/or action of peers which is a much greater proportion than in curricular areas apart from drama (17.14%).

As in curricular areas apart from drama, I observed nine students spontaneously participating in the social context as shown in Table XXXII. Alice participates in the social context the most and it is only Eddie who I did not observe spontaneously participating in the social context.

Table XXXII: Number and percentage of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	156	33.40
Claire	110	23.55
Deborah	57	12.21
Fran	55	11.78
Ben	29	6.21
Gina	26	5.57
Jacob	16	3.43
Isy	13	2.78
Harry	5	1.07
Eddie	0	0
Total	467	100

I observed all nine students spontaneously participating in the social context more in drama than in other curricular areas, as illustrated in Figure XXXIX. This is the case for Gina and Jacob who also have a drama teacher as their class teacher. Together, this finding suggests

that there are more opportunities and more motivation to spontaneously participate in the social context in drama than in other curricular areas.

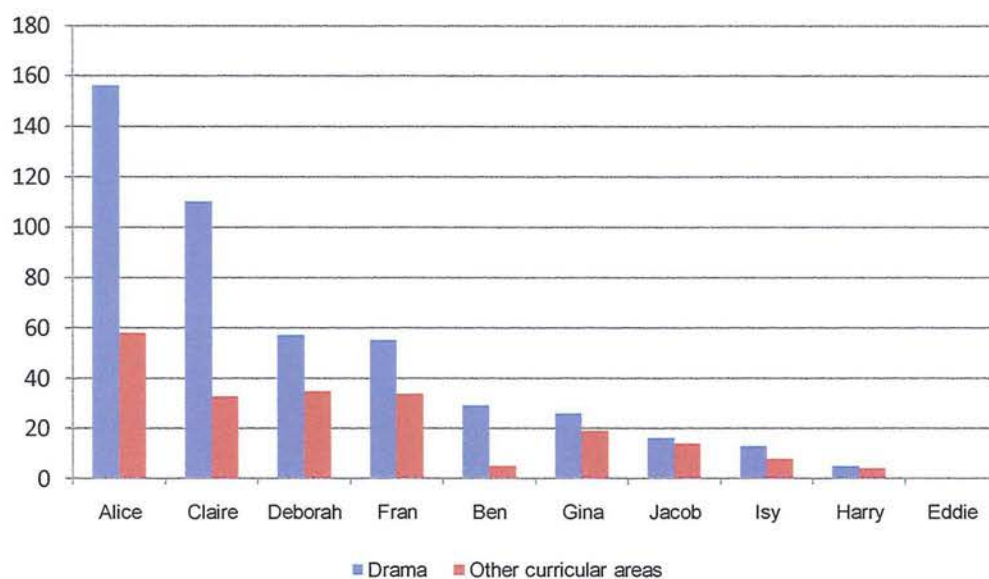


Figure XXXIX: A comparison between the number of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

In the following sections, I focus on the most dominant means of participation in more detail – giving feedback and questioning – and draw a comparison with their manifestation in other curricular areas. Given the notable presence of instructing and explaining in drama, I also examine these means of participation.

4.2.3.7 Giving feedback in drama

Giving feedback by sharing with others observations about the immediate environment or an activity students are currently or have recently been engaged in accounts for 60.81% of total occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking. The number of occurrences of giving feedback over a similar period of time is over double in drama than in other curricular areas (284 compared with 140). A greater number and proportion of occurrences of giving feedback concern the speech and/or action of peers in drama, 42% (129 occurrences) compared with 20% (28 occurrences) in other curricular areas.

As in other curricular areas, I observed occurrences of spontaneously giving feedback across nine students, all except Eddie, and occurrences were most prevalent with Alice. I illustrate these findings in Table XXXIII.

Table XXXIII: Number and percentage of occurrences of giving feedback associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	106	37.32
Claire	72	25.35
Deborah	31	10.92
Fran	26	9.15
Gina	16	5.63
Ben	12	4.23
Jacob	10	3.52
Isy	7	2.46
Harry	4	1.41
Eddie	0	0
Total	284	100

In drama, I observed a greater number of occurrences of giving feedback across eight students with one student, Fran, spontaneously giving feedback more in other curricular areas than in drama. I provide an overview in Figure XL.

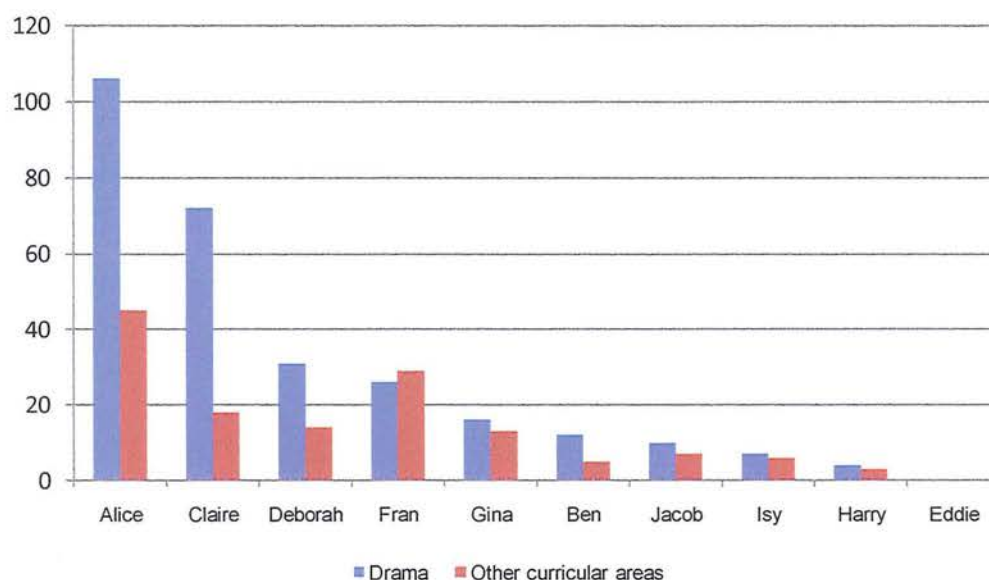


Figure XL: A comparison between the number of occurrences of giving feedback associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

I found giving feedback to be associated with perspective taking in all parts of drama sessions but noted that it was most prevalent when rehearsing for a performance (106 occurrences of 284) and at the beginning of the session (84 of 284). I have already given examples of Deborah giving feedback on the time it is taking Eddie to turn on the music and initiating interaction by asking **Simon** to help Eddie in response (see p130); in Alice giving feedback on the magic tricks she has seen and spontaneously sharing her enjoyment in them with the group through her own performance (see p133) and in Alice giving feedback on Harry's difficulty performing a magic trick and helping him with this task (see p146).

I take the example below from a rehearsal.

0955: **Simon** asks a group of students to repeat the opening scene. At the end of it Alice leads the applause clapping and saying, "Bravo, fantastic". She speaks the words into a 'microphone' which is the end of a rope she uses to lead a dog on the stage. (Field note 01/07/08)

In this example, Alice gives feedback on the performance of her fellow students. It is their finishing of the opening scene which cues Alice to give her feedback. In doing so, she substitutes one item for another using a rope as a microphone in which she praises the students, "Bravo, fantastic". In giving feedback, Alice shows cultural awareness. She shares her enjoyment in the performance work of others and engages in make-believe using language and actions typical of responding to theatrical performances.

4.2.3.8 Questioning in drama

Questioning comprises 20.13% of total occurrences of means of participation that I captured in data pertaining to drama. There are over one third more occurrences of questioning in drama than in other curricular areas (94 compared with 58).

I found questioning to be associated with the same three aspects of perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas which comprise spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others, initiating interaction and reciprocating emotionally. One in five occurrences of questioning in drama (21.28%) concern the speech and/or action of peers compared with in other curricular areas where the proportion is one in 31 (3.45%).

In drama, as in other curricular areas, eight students spontaneously ask questions as a means of participating socially as I show in Table XXXIV.

Table XXXIV: Number and percentage of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	32	34.04
Alice	22	23.40
Deborah	14	14.89
Ben	6	6.38
Fran	6	6.38
Gina	5	5.32
Jacob	5	5.32
Isy	4	4.26
Eddie	0	0
Harry	0	0
Total	94	100

As shown in Figure XLI, five students ask more questions in drama than in other curricular areas. There are particularly notable differences in the number of observed questions asked by Claire and Alice in drama compared with other curricular areas.

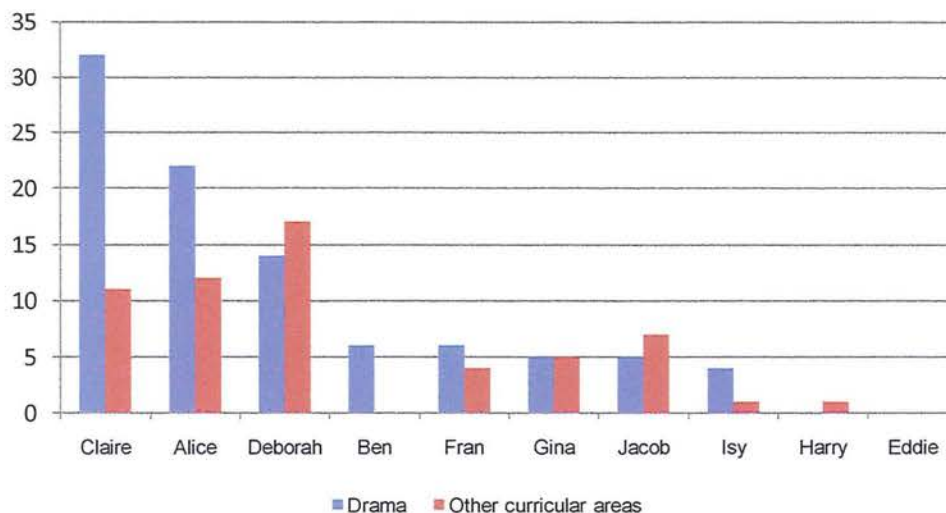


Figure XLI: A comparison between the number of occurrences of questioning associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

Questioning as a means of participation is most common during rehearsals (34 of 94 occurrences) when students seek clarification on what themselves or others are doing and at the beginning of drama sessions (25 of 94 occurrences) when students ask questions about the session. I give examples of both types of questions below. I take the first example from a rehearsal. **Simon** has decided to show the head teacher and a visitor a dance from the musical of *Grease* which the students performed in the summer of 2007. I take the excerpt from 15 minutes into the first rehearsal of this dance since the summer performance.

1055: The manager of the further education unit walks into the hall and Claire says to her, "I can't remember the dance moves". Claire looks to Deborah who is sitting on the floor in the audience space when she is part of the dance and she says to **Simon**, "What's wrong with Deborah?" Claire repeats her question and **Simon** explains that Isy is going to play Deborah's role. Claire, Fran and Isy start the dance and Claire removes Isy's handkerchief from Isy's hand part way through. Deborah continues to sit out of the rehearsal and Claire asks **Simon**, "**Simon**, why doesn't Deborah want to perform? But she's the ..." She mimes lighting a cigarette. (Field note: 12/03/08)

Three students were involved in the original dance – Claire, Fran and Deborah. Fran has remembered most of the steps but Claire needs reminding and this concerns her. Claire expresses her concern to staff passing through the rehearsal, including the manager of the further education unit. She gives feedback to staff about the activity she is engaged in. Claire is also concerned because Deborah is sitting out of the rehearsal and yet is needed for the dance. Deborah is needed for a particular part of the song which Claire took from the

film where Deborah pretends to light Claire's cigarette. In expressing to **Simon** why Deborah is needed, Claire engages spontaneously with make-believe and mimes this action. She gives feedback to staff about the actions (or inaction in this case) of other students and is able to explain why this feedback is important.

The second example illustrates a student asking a question in order to participate in the social context at the beginning of a session.

0950: Gina says, "Drama with?" She points to an unfamiliar adult in the room. (Field note 15/01/08)

A new assistant has joined the school and on seeing him, Gina points towards him and says "Drama with?" It is the presence of a new person in the context which stimulates Gina to participate socially by asking a question. The assistant introduces himself to Gina in response.

Together the examples illustrate how questioning as a means of social participation associates with students initiating interaction and engaging in make-believe.

4.2.3.9 Instructing in drama

Instructing as a means of participation accounts for 14.56% of total occurrences of means of participation captured in data pertaining to drama. There is a quantitative difference between actual numbers of occurrences of instructing in drama and instructing in other curricular areas within a similar time period (68 occurrences in drama compared with 8 in other curricular areas).

I observed nine students instructing in drama as a means of participation as illustrated in Table XXXV.

Table XXXV: Number and percentage of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Alice	22	32.35
Fran	18	26.47
Deborah	12	17.65
Ben	7	10.29
Gina	5	7.35
Claire	1	1.47
Harry	1	1.47
Isy	1	1.47
Jacob	1	1.47
Eddie	0	0
Total	68	100

I observed more occurrences of giving instructions as a means of participation in drama and more students spontaneously giving instructions in drama than in other curricular areas. I illustrate these differences in Figure XLII.

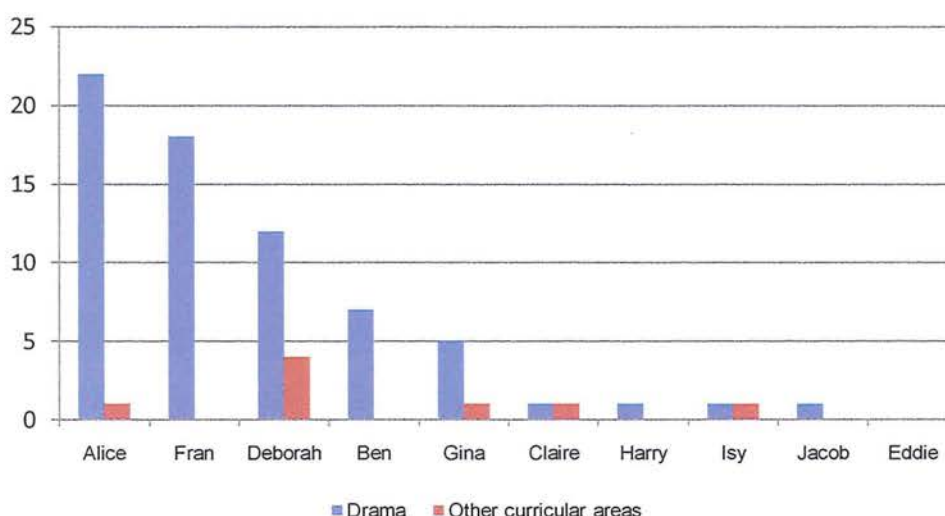


Figure XLII: A comparison between the number of occurrences of instructing associated with perspective taking captured in drama and the number captured in other curricular areas, by student

I observed instructing, as a means of participation, across all areas of drama sessions. I found it to be less prevalent during unstructured parts of the session than structured parts. It is most notable during warm up activities (26 of 68 occurrences) and playing drama and movement games (13 of 68 occurrences) with the majority of occurrences of instructing concerning the speech and/or action of peers (73.53%). Before showing a movement sequence to the group, for example, Jacob asks Claire to sit down.

1150: **Simon** asks Jacob to show his movement piece to the group. Claire stands up and starts moving from one end of the room to the other. Before Jacob starts his performance he says to her "Claire, sit down, thanks". **Simon** reinforces Jacob's instructions and Claire sits down. (Field note: 07/02/08)

Claire's actions appear to prompt Jacob's instruction to her. He shows his understanding of a performance by wanting her to sit down and be part of the audience while he performs.

4.2.3.10 Giving explanations in drama

When students are spontaneously giving explanations in drama, they are providing an explanation for the speech and/or action of others, usually peers. As shown in Table XXXVI, I identified 13 occurrences of students giving explanations in data pertaining to drama and this number accounts for 2.78% of total occurrences of means of participation that I captured in the data. There are no occurrences of students giving explanations in data pertaining to other curricular areas. I observed occurrences in drama primarily during rehearsals for a

performance (10 of 13 occurrences) when students provided support to their peers. The students who give explanations are those with the lowest scores in terms of autism characteristics and the highest scores in terms of adaptive behaviour and communication skills, according to measures that I used. This finding has implications in terms of the relevance of sociocultural theory to individuals with autism and I discuss this point in the next chapter (see p246).

Table XXXVI: Number and percentage of occurrences of giving explanations associated with perspective taking captured in 56 hours of drama sessions, by student

Student	Number	Percentage
Claire	4	30.77
Alice	3	23.08
Ben	3	23.08
Fran	3	23.08
Total	13	100

I take an example of giving an explanation as a means of participation from a rehearsal of a movement sequence.

0955: Claire gets upset when the steps go wrong and she blames Isy for it. **Simon** corrects Claire explaining that it is Claire who got the steps wrong. This upsets Claire even more. Fran intervenes telling Claire to "Stop, breathe and think". Claire follows these instructions and they practise the movements again. Fran talks through the routine while doing it. At the end of the sequence, **Simon** praises Fran saying, "You remember everything, you're amazing". Fran notes to Claire, "This is discipline now, Claire." **Simon** requests the students to practise the sequence again and says, "Shall we do it?" Fran replies, "Yes". Simon says, "This is the best". Fran replies, "Yes". (Field note: 26/06/08)

Fran appears to recognise that Claire is upset and draws on a strategy **Simon** uses with Claire to explain to her what she needs to do in order to calm down, "Stop, breathe and think". Fran reciprocates socially and emotionally showing awareness of how Claire is feeling and giving an instruction for Claire to draw on a strategy to calm her down. Claire takes this strategy on board. After rehearsing the routine several times and on being asked to run through it again, Fran initiates interaction by explaining to Claire that this intensive rehearsing represents "discipline". **Simon** talks about discipline regularly in sessions as an important characteristic in practising drama and dance skills and rehearsing for performances. Fran's appropriate use of **Simon's** advice suggests that she understands what it means and can apply it independently. As such, this instance of giving an explanation could be seen as an example of 'internalisation' (see p43).

4.2.3.11 *Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in order to spontaneously participate in the social context in drama*

If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it in order to spontaneously participate in the social context and are these circumstances the same as in other curricular areas?

- Some means of participation are the same with giving feedback being the most dominant. There are important quantitative differences.
- The number of occurrences of means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in data about drama is more than double the number captured in other curricular areas over a comparable period (467 compared with 210).
- The range of means of participation in drama is wider than in other curricular areas (eight compared with four).
- Nine students show perspective taking in order to participate in the social context in drama and other curricular areas but there are more means of participation observed across all nine students in drama, even in students who have a drama teacher as their class teacher.
- There are more occurrences of means of participation concerning the speech and/or action of peers in drama than in other curricular areas.
- Nine students spontaneously participate in order to comment on the speech and/or action of peers compared with four in other curricular areas.
- Occurrences of means of participation are predominantly observed when students are rehearsing for a performance compared with other areas of drama.
- The presence of giving explanations as a means of participation features in drama whereas it does not in curricular areas apart from drama.

4.2.3.12 *Summary of factors associated with perspective taking in drama compared with other areas of the curriculum*

If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it and are these the same circumstances as in other curricular areas?

- There are similarities in the circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas but there are also important quantitative and qualitative differences.
- Students show perspective taking in order to respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context in drama and other curricular areas.
- The number of occurrences of means of assistance and means of participation associated with perspective taking captured in data about drama is more than double the number captured in other curricular areas over a comparable period (797 compared with 326 and 467 compared with 210 respectively).
- There are quantitative differences across students in terms of the number of occurrences of means of assistance and means of participation in drama and other curricular areas but more occurrences are observed in drama across all students, even in students with a drama teacher as their class teacher.
- The range of means of assistance and means of participation is wider in drama than in other curricular areas (13 compared with five and eight compared with four respectively).
- The number of occurrences of means of assistance by peers captured in data about drama is significantly greater (87 compared with 11) and spread across five means of assistance compared with one.
- The number of occurrences of means of participation concerning peers captured in data about drama is significantly greater (218 compared with 36).
- Perspective taking is associated with assistance by teachers and peers in all ten students taking part in this research and with spontaneous participation in nine students.
- Occurrences of means of assistance are concentrated in instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling in drama and other curricular areas but there are notable qualitative differences in relation to each even when a drama teacher is observed working with students in other curricular areas.

- Occurrences of means of participation are concentrated in giving feedback and questioning in drama and other curricular areas but instructing and explaining also feature notably in drama where they do not in other areas of the curriculum.

4.3 Differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas

4.3.1 How were differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas interrogated?

Having established that there are quantitative and qualitative differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas and noted that these occur even when drama teachers are observed working with students in other curricular areas, I address this question by stepping back from the findings of the previous section to interrogate why there are differences. Through the interrogation I seek to establish two points:

1. Whether differences can be explained by successful factors associated with perspective taking in interactive approaches, as outlined in the literature review (see p52).
2. Whether there are distinctive factors associated with perspective taking in drama.

I carried out the analysis in two steps. First, with interviews coded using the same codes adopted to identify and analyse perspective taking (see p118) and uncover and examine factors associated with it (see p161), I cross-referenced data from field notes and interviews with drama teachers, the school psychologist, head teacher and manager of the further education unit with the seven successful factors identified as being associated with perspective taking in interactive approaches. As I have already explained, these seven factors are not an exhaustive list (see p52). The aim of this part of the analysis was to ascertain whether differences could be explained purely by the interactive nature of drama. Secondly, I highlighted different factors or distinctive elements within a factor to indicate how drama differs from other interactive approaches. This part of the analysis had the potential to identify a teaching style in drama which elicits and/or enables perspective taking.

I enhanced the trustworthiness of the analysis by comparing and contrasting data across sources and discussing interpretations in peer debriefing workshops. I organised the response to the question under headings of the seven successful factors that I identified as being associated with perspective taking in interactive approaches. These include:

- Allowing for flexibility within structure
- Teaching through action
- Employing multiple modes of communication
- Engaging with student interests and competencies
- Basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and students
- Supporting students in their learning
- Building a trusting relationship with students

I discuss implications of these findings in the next chapter (see p253).

4.3.2 If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, why are there differences?

4.3.2.1 Allowing for flexibility within structure

Interactive approaches are valued because they incorporate within them structure which is known to support individuals with autism but there is flexibility within this structure which offsets more rigid characteristics of the condition. Indeed, elements of flexibility have been found to encourage engagement and reciprocal social interaction.

The drama sessions that I report in this research are structured but there is flexibility within the structure which allows teachers to alter the course of the lesson depending on student input and response. Indeed, findings have already shown that there are more occurrences of students spontaneously participating in drama sessions than in other curricular areas (see p193). Students may be more motivated to spontaneously participate because they know teachers will recognise and respond to their contribution. Alice, for example, may spontaneously start to lead the timetable session or suggest exercises for the warm up and be allowed to continue (see p209). **Simon** may request a student to lead a warm up session as in the case of Claire in the example given earlier where Claire continues by spontaneously initiating a series of different warm up exercises (see p191). **Carina** may give students broad parameters with which to create something new as in the case of her instructing the students to create a scene to show to the group with material and music (see p191). I did not observe such flexibility in other curricular areas where there is less room for completing a task in a different way, for the teacher to use a student's contribution and where the role of the audience – in the form of the teacher, class and / or visitors – does not have the same impact. In the case of PSHCE, for example, activities tend to focus on predefined worksheets which need to be completed in one particular way and where there

are defined right and wrong answers. The task tends to be carried out by a student independently with occasional support from the teacher who is directing the task. In contrast, in drama tasks are performed either independently or in a group to an audience and the response of that audience can influence a student's performance just as a student's performance can influence an audience's response.

Both **Simon** and **Carina** make reference to the flexible direction of drama sessions. **Simon** explains:

I tend to not think too much because I do not want to; I just tend to work on a day to day basis and see how it goes and see what we can do. (Simon, drama teacher interview, September 2007)

Similarly **Carina** comments:

In the end, you take a risk and you have to do what you feel like, what is appropriate for the level. Even if you think that's going to be really hard, let's see what happens because you might be surprised as I have been many times. (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Both teachers have an idea of what they want to work on in particular drama sessions but they do not set specific targets for what they want the group to achieve during those sessions. In contrast with sessions in other curricular areas but similar to interactive approaches, the course a drama session takes depends on how students respond to the work presented and the teachers then adapt how they develop the work according to student response. The impact of audience on a student's performance and her/his response brings an additional element of flexibility to drama.

4.3.2.2 Teaching through action

Interactive approaches concern the active participation of all involved. Similarly, drama is active and involves using the whole body to participate. When **Simon** is basing activities around shapes, he wants the students to use their bodies to show that shape to him and to others in the room (see p155). Before starting an activity, **Carina** explains, "We are going to do rather than talk about" (Field note: 12/02/08). In other areas of the curriculum, the emphasis on learning through doing is not as explicit and would not always be appropriate. This is visible in findings which reveal more occurrences of instructing-modelling and modelling in drama than in other curricular areas (129 compared with 33 and 48 compared with 8 respectively). The use of the whole body also sets drama apart from other interactive approaches which do not necessarily depend on the whole body in order to participate.

Carina builds on the importance of practical experience in an interview where she highlights the need to approach difficult concepts with the students in different ways.

The actual practical experience changes your concepts. What do you think is to imagine? It's a very abstract concept. If you think about, ok, I want to work on pretending and doing something that doesn't really exist and it is not material. But there is so many ways of doing that without using the word, 'Well, now you're going to pretend or you're going to imagine ...' Or you can work with the sensorial memory. Ok so, a pencil, 'What do you do with your hands to hold a pencil?' So it's very practical, it's very objective and the students here are good at following gestures or in quality and in speed and when you talk about movements. So it's the way you get there but the result can be exactly the same ... so now I believe you can do anything actually but you just need to find a way. (Carina, drama teacher interview, October 2008)

Like other interactive approaches, drama is active but it differs from some interactive approaches and activity in other curricular areas in this research by placing emphasis on working with the whole body and using the body to engage with tasks. This leads on to and ties in with my next point about the range of modes of communication in drama.

4.3.2.3 *Employing multiple modes of communication*

In interactive approaches, teachers/carers employ multiple modes of communication with speech, in many cases, playing a marginal role. Similarly, drama employs a variety of modes of communication. In the example given earlier where **Simon** is creating a new dance with Claire (see p189-190), he models the steps for her; with her so she can copy simultaneously and in close proximity; and then asks her to do the dance on her own. The first time, **Simon** talks through the steps in detail as he models, "Actually, you run here. You stop and you hopscotch. Ok." He emphasises the word "here", stops and meets her gaze in the mirror where she is watching him. He reinforces the action with the words, "you stop" and then he gives the next action as he starts to hopscotch, "you hopscotch" and says these words quickly. "Ok" marks the end of the sequence. The second time, he asks Claire to do the steps simultaneously and in close proximity with him. Simon reduces the verbal support encouraging her to copy him, "Claire, so what you do is this" and he uses a couple of words to emphasise key points in the sequence. Claire remains in close proximity to **Simon** and imitates his movements. The third time, **Simon** prompts Claire to start, "ok, try it ... ready ... go" but does not bring in any other support. In the teaching process, **Simon** has used gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech which at times have worked together and separately to communicate different aspects of the exercise. The use of different modes of communication opens up the opportunity for Claire to access and engage with the task in a way that suits her best. These multiple modes of communication in the teaching and learning process are not used to the same degree in other curricular areas. This is reflected clearly in finding that there are many more occurrences of instructing-modelling in drama than in other curricular areas (see p188). As Simon explains:

There is also a variety of teaching methods with dance, movement and drama so students can work in different ways. (Simon, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Drama, like other interactive approaches, does not depend on speech but it differs from other curricular areas in this research and some interactive approaches in the variety of modes of communication available and employed.

4.3.2.4 Engaging with student interests and competencies

In interactive approaches, teachers/carers engage with student interests and competencies by following an individual's initiations. Similarly, in drama, student interests and competencies take centre stage. However, whereas the majority of interactive approaches are one-to-one, in drama the teachers need to maintain a fine balance between the needs of the students as a group and the students as individuals. The performances, for example, are not imposed on to the students but are developed with the students. The central theme draws on a combination of individual student interests; the script is tailored to the students in the production and inspired by their own words as in the case of the interview recorded earlier (see p138) and incorporates words and vocalisations that students typically use; the performance draws on music chosen by students; and teachers continuously acknowledge and use student suggestions or responses to the script and movement routines. When the focus in drama is not on working towards a performance, it is often engagement with student interests and competencies which adds the element of flexibility to drama. It is their input that drives the lesson forwards. The example below illustrates how a teacher engages with student interests and uses it as a tool for the session.

0950: Alice is shouting out different types of food. **Simon** draws on this for the warm up suggesting and leading exercises for the students to follow. Students "move like a sweet machine" as they move side to side. They stretch forwards and backwards like "pepper" and "salt". They then stretch from side to side like "olive oil" and "vinegar". Then they stretch forward and lift up a "big scoop of ice cream". The majority of these **Simon** uses after Alice shouts them out. He uses others because he knows they are foods Alice likes. Alice then says, "How about chocolate biscuits?" **Simon** asks the students to mix chocolate biscuits with their toes. To turn feet the other way he says, "How about stir white chocolate sauce?" He encourages the students to work harder. (Field note: 16/10/07)

In this warm up activity **Simon** acknowledges and values Alice's interest in food. He uses her interest in two ways; first, as an approach to maintain Alice's engagement in and motivation for the warm up activity and secondly, as a tool for creating and involving the group in different warm up exercises. Achieving this balance is challenging, as **Carina** notes it requires being different people at the same time "because there's a different way to reach each one of them" (Carina, drama teacher interview, October 2007). In sessions that I observed as part of this research, I found that activities within curricular areas apart from

drama are rarely based on or fuelled by student interests and there is less evidence of teachers struggling to balance individual with group interests. Indeed, it tends to be either one or the other which takes precedence. In drama, however, individuals are valued as part of the group and their input is valued and acted upon. As I have already suggested, this may explain why students spontaneously participate more in drama than in other curricular areas. Indeed, **Simon** argues that drama is one of the few sessions where students can really put themselves into their work and both **Simon** and **Carina** concur that performance work is much better when it “comes from them”.

And that's what I think is quite nice about it is you never be able to, I think they put so much of themselves into it that you don't really get that anywhere else. I would say 70% about their personalities and 30% about work whereas normally it's the other way around. (Simon, drama teacher interview, September 2007)

Such an approach differs starkly from learning discrete skills where there is little space for personality as the school psychologist explains:

It is almost to try to discover what talents and what competencies the students have got and then to try to develop those further by guiding them, by supporting them, by encouraging them rather than this ready-made meal and there you are. (School psychologist, September 2007)

Comparable to interactive approaches, teachers engage with student interests and competencies where they may not in other curricular areas. Engagement with student interests and competencies in drama, however, differs from other interactive approaches and activities in other curricular areas in this research because teachers need to balance both the interests of individual students and the group.

4.3.2.5 Basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and students

In interactive approaches the process of learning/interaction is based on initiation and response between teachers/carers and individuals. Similarly, in developing student abilities in drama, initiating and responding is critical. As identified earlier, a core aspect of both the process and product of drama is performing to an audience and responding to the performance of others as part of an audience. After watching a magic performance, Alice shares her own magic with the group and they respond (see p133). She shares her interest in food with **Simon** and he responds by using this interest as part of a warm up exercise (see p209). As a means of assistance, teachers simultaneously give verbal instructions combined with modelling and request students to imitate in response either at the same time as in the case of building Claire's dance (see p189-190) or afterwards as in the case of Carina demonstrating the creation of a scene with particular parameters (see p191). Indeed, even the layout of the drama room, a mirror lining the room gives students constant

feedback on what they are doing. In other curricular areas, the flow of initiation and response between teachers and students is not as common. This is evident in my analysis as a whole where I observed students showing less perspective taking in other curricular areas than in drama (536 compared with 1,264); teachers using less means of assistance in other curricular areas than in drama (326 compared with 797) and students spontaneously participating in the social context less in other curricular areas than in drama (210 compared with 467). These findings suggest that, compared with other curricular areas, drama offers more opportunities for students to look out, show what they can do and respond to others. The notion of performance is central in this respect. Indeed, **Simon** notes that “the knowledge of the concept of performing” is profound within the group and **Carina** highlights that developing a concept of performance is one of the main goals of her sessions.

I think for me, without having planned actually, I tend to work building group awareness ... so the basis is group work, trying to understand what is coming from others and trying to respond. It's something really I think for me is the most important thing. (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Indeed, findings indicate that over one third of occurrences of students spontaneously participating in drama sessions are when they are rehearsing for a performance (160 of 467). By sharing with others and responding to the contribution of others, the students are learning skills for everyday life in a way which is “de-personalised” and this presents an opportunity to reflect back on what they or others are doing and recognise it (Head teacher interview, May 2008).

Whereas initiating and responding is central in all interactive approaches, it is the notion of performance that sets drama apart from other interactive approaches and from other curricular areas in this research.

4.3.2.6 Challenging students and supporting them in their learning

In interactive approaches, teachers/carers challenge individuals and support them in their learning/interaction through assistance, which facilitates participation. This assistance is gradually removed as the individual learns to participate independently. In comparing the nature of assistance between drama sessions and other curricular areas there are clear qualitative differences. In drama sessions teachers challenge students with instructions with multiple steps, instructions with an abstract component, open questions, and instructing-modelling which involves the whole body and provides parameters for students to use and interpret in their own way. These approaches, which require the students to draw on their own ideas, think flexibly and sometimes engage in pretence, I did not observe in other curricular areas even when the same teachers were involved. These means of assistance, however, are not without support. The example below provides an illustration:

1350: **Simon** says, "What we're going to do Eddie is you dance with Deborah. **Simon** going to help you". **Simon** shows Eddie the stance he would like him to have to start the dance. Eddie copies. (Field note: 23/11/07)

Simon presents Eddie with the challenge of dancing with Deborah. However, he reassures Eddie that he is going to help him and supports him in developing the dance through instructing-modelling. The example that I gave earlier where **Simon** supports Claire in creating a dance similarly describes how he supports her in her learning, enabling her to show a dance sequence in three steps (see p189-190). First, he models the steps for her while she watches and gives a verbal commentary. Secondly, he does the steps with her encouraging her to copy simultaneously and in close proximity and he uses key words to support what they are doing. Thirdly, he asks her to do the steps on her own. In both examples, appropriate support is put in place so the student can meaningfully participate and work towards accomplishing the task independently.

As in interactive approaches, teachers support the students in their learning in drama. Compared with other curricular areas in this research, however, the support challenges the students and encourages them to draw on their own ideas and think flexibly.

4.3.2.7 Building a trusting relationship with the students

In interactive approaches, teachers/carers build a trusting relationship with the individuals they are working with. A trusting relationship forms the basis of work in drama sessions and links closely with the idea of teachers encouraging, responding to and valuing the contribution of individual students. **Simon** assures his students, "Simon going to help you" (see p212); he responds to their concerns such as offering Ben the support of a teaching assistant to help him direct a marriage scene (see p184); he praises them, "You remember everything, you're amazing" (see p201); and he thanks them for their work, "Perfect, thank you very much" (see p155). In turn the students show their enthusiasm for drama as in the case of Alice spontaneously sharing her enjoyment of the magician's performance with the group "Simon, I'm going to do magic." (see p133) and feel comfortable telling **Simon** about concerns they have as in the case of Ben expressing his concern about the task of directing a marriage scene "I'm nervous, I find it nerve wracking" (see p184). In this research, I did not observe comparable manifestations of trust as frequently in curricular areas apart from drama.

The relationship in drama appears to be based on mutual respect. Teachers hold a genuine enthusiasm and expertise for the subject they teach which the students respect. The manager of the further education unit explains that teachers "have to have that knowledge and that passion" in order to break their subject down and make it accessible and engaging

for the students. The students recognise this genuine enthusiasm and expertise and admire it as Claire's comment on **Simon** illustrates, "You're a great dancer" (see p142). **Simon** notes in this regard:

If I had a teacher that I knew was a better dancer, I had this sense of admiration and respect towards him and it didn't only last for the time we were working in something in the dance room. I think certainly looking at Claire, looking at Isy, I think they have the same towards me. (Simon, drama teacher interview, September 2007)

In turn, teachers hold a positive but non-judgemental attitude about student abilities throughout drama sessions challenging the students and not "lowering standards" because they happen to have autism.

I want to develop their technical side because I do think that also counts, if you force yourself into hard work that is a step forward as well because so many times in dance session you find yourself thinking about, well I think sometimes we are openly protective in the sense that we allow ... we lower the standards because of autism but sometimes there is no need for it specially if we positively motivate them. (Simon, drama teacher interview, September 2007).

The positive attitude is not empty. It is based on teachers knowing the students individually and being able to challenge them appropriately and appreciate their hard work. This positive attitude is part of the ethos of the school which the head teacher explains "focuses on these children as children" and appreciates that with the right support, "there are no limits for children with autism". Drama provides a forum in which the contribution of the students with autism can be valued and through it the students involved can develop as people. The relationship of trust, however, is not immediate but takes time to develop and needs continual harnessing. As **Carina** explains:

I'm talking about the need to take the initiative. To create an atmosphere where they feel confident and they also want to show something but it needs to be something they create and for that to happen, it's time. You need time. You can't have too much limits ... I like to create that atmosphere of trust because group awareness is very much about trust. I trust these people who are here and I trust that it's going to be a positive experience. I can do something but someone else is going to do something else and we're going to add and build something together. In this context, it can be very difficult but it's not impossible. I see it's very much possible in many different levels. (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

The mixed year groups, however, support the development of trust because it means it does not have to be created anew each year. Where the majority of students already have a relationship with the teacher and an understanding of how drama is practised, the minority appear to follow. **Simon** notes, "I think it is very difficult to create and is something that is passed from generation to generation" (Simon, drama teacher interview, July 2008). In an earlier interview he clarified:

As I said, you know this peer pressure is there so there are students that have been there for longer, they take the lead and the new ones they learn and they follow so that has been the case now for four years. (Simon, drama teacher interview September 2007)

This point highlights the value of having a class group comprising different age groups so that students of different ages and experiences can work with each other and learn from each other.

As in interactive approaches, trust is central in drama. Manifestations of trust between teachers and students, however, are not as evident in other curricular areas in this research. In addition, trust between students and the support of more experienced students in developing trust within the group does not play the same role in other interactive approaches or other curricular areas.

4.3.2.8 *Summary of why there are differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama compared with other curricular areas*

If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, why are there differences?

- Differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas can be explained in part by the interactive nature of drama but there are also distinctive elements within factors pertaining to drama in the research reported in this thesis.
- Distinctive elements within factors pertaining to drama include:
 - Sessions are structured but there is flexibility in the structure which results from both teachers adapting how they develop the work according to student response and the impact that an audience – in the form of teachers, peers and/or visitors – has on student performance and response.
 - Teaching is active with learning taking place through doing in a safe and secure environment but a key factor in the action is that it involves working with and learning through the whole body.
 - Communication during sessions does not depend on speech but employs a wide variety of different modes which allow students to access and interpret the curriculum in their own way.
 - Teachers engage with student interests and competencies balancing those of individual students and the group to shape warm up activities, drama and movement games and performances.
 - The process of learning is based on initiation and response between teachers and students with the notion of performance adding another dimension where

there is initiation and response between the student as a performer, the performance and the audience.

- Teachers challenge students and support them in their learning by setting challenges and supporting them in ways that encourage students to think flexibly and draw on their own ideas.
 - There is trust between teachers and students as well as within the group. Group trust is harnessed by more experienced students setting an example and supporting less experienced students.
- All of these distinctive elements are visible in all drama sessions in this research suggesting that together they form a teaching style which contributes towards eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking. Particular to this teaching style in drama is the notion of performance which brings together many of the distinctive elements about drama in this research and creates a dynamic between performer, performance and audience.

4.4 Perspective taking in drama over time and across contexts

4.4.1 How was perspective taking in drama over time and across contexts investigated?

I have demonstrated that there are a greater number of instances of perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas and that there are qualitative distinctions, but what suggestions can be made from data about the perspective taking the students show in drama over time or across contexts?

In this research, I set out to investigate perspective taking in drama compared with other curricular areas in order to identify whether there were differences and, if there were, to interrogate why this may be the case. As such, I did not set out to research drama as a specific intervention or to measure the development of specific skills over time. However, from data collected through observations over a school year; interviews with class and drama teachers at the beginning and end of the year; documentation from annual reviews at the beginning and end of the year and parent questionnaires at the beginning and end of year, I can make suggestions about the maintenance and development of perspective taking over time and generalisation to other contexts. Similarly, I can use data from interviews with students to ascertain student understanding of activities in drama and as evidence of another form of generalisation - 'internalisation' – where students demonstrate their understanding of different aspects of perspective taking. Internalisation is a complex term and one which should not be used lightly. I use the term deliberately in this thesis to refer to evidence of students showing independent use or understanding of aspects of perspective taking.

I used the coding process that I described earlier to identify and analyse perspective taking across data collected (see p118) and enhanced the trustworthiness of the analysis through comparison and contrast of data sources about individual students and across students. The three peer debriefing workshops that I have already described (see p123) presented an opportunity to discuss data interpretation. In some instances, data from parents contrasted significantly with other sources of data. I discussed this contrast with class teachers and the school psychologist and drew two conclusions. First, as some of the students were residential students, parents did not see them on a day-to-day basis so had less knowledge about how their child behaved in drama and performances. Secondly, some parents did not observe their child in the school context and were not aware of how their child's behaviour may have differed across contexts. These conclusions do not serve to devalue the opinion of parents but highlight a difficulty in involving the opinion of parents in research focusing on an aspect of school life with which they are not involved.

4.4.2 If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, does it maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts?

4.4.2.1 *Reciprocating socially*

I noted earlier in this chapter that the number of instances of reciprocating socially that I captured in data from drama sessions is over double the number captured in data from other curricular areas over a similar period of time (742 compared with 352). I also identified qualitative differences, particularly in relation to following instructions. In drama and other curricular areas students followed instructions with a single step and those requiring sequencing in response. However, I observed instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component only in drama. It is in these areas where maintenance, development and generalisation were noted by teachers across all ten students participating in this research.

Ben, Claire and Fran, who scored highest in terms of adaptive behaviour according to assessment measures that I used (see p88), became increasingly sophisticated in the work that they were able to prepare independently for performances over the course of the year. Ben and Fran were able to be given an instruction to choreograph their own material based on stimuli. For the Christmas performance, Ben created a three-minute dance based on the dance technique of tracing. The technique involves tracing lines in the room with different parts of the body and is a useful movement improvisation technique. Similarly, Fran created a thirty-second dance based on connecting different parts of the body. In order to create a sequence, **Simon** drew a picture of the human body, numbered different joints on the body and then wrote down a sequence of numbers which Fran had to use to create a dance.

Alice, Deborah and Eddie, whose adaptive behaviour scores were in the middle of the group according to the assessment measures, followed instructions for longer movement sequences over the course of the year. In relation to Deborah, **Simon** explains:

Deborah definitely surprised me with her ability to follow movement sequences. (Simon, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Over the year, Eddie, Harry and Jacob moved from following instructions as part of a group where they could copy peers in the group to following instructions independently for their own solo performance. As **Simon** notes in relation to Eddie:

Well he progressed definitely from copying to being able to do solo stuff on stage ... I always used to sign, stand in front of him and he would copy and now I don't need to do that. I show him two or three times and he just does it. So really good understanding of sequence. (Simon, drama teacher interview July 2008)

Similarly Alice, Ben and Claire, who were in their third and final year at the further education unit, became more independent in their ability to lead warm up sessions (see p191) and direct short pieces for performance with other students (see p184).

In terms of whether student abilities to follow instructions generalise, class teacher interviews and annual reviews at the end of the school year suggest that two students were better at attending to instructions and that seven students were better at independently following instructions with single and multiple steps across contexts. It was only Ben, who scored highest in terms of adaptive behaviour according to assessment measures, whose ability to follow instructions over time was not remarked upon. Eddie's annual review, for example, highlights that he has "made good progress following instructions independently". Similarly Claire's annual review notes that her:

Listening skills have continued to develop well and she has demonstrated that she can listen to increasingly complex and unfamiliar requests and follow these through more consistently. (Claire's annual review 2008)

Although I cannot definitively correlate generalisation with what the students did in drama, the fact that listening to and independently following increasingly complex instructions formed such a major part of drama sessions suggests that these sessions are a contributing factor to general developments in this ability.

4.4.2.2 Initiating interaction

In terms of initiating interaction, I identified a substantial quantitative difference between initiating interaction in drama and other curricular areas (203 compared with 135) but did not identify distinctive qualitative differences. Primary factors behind the quantitative difference between drama and other curricular areas are the engaging environment and the fact that the performance provides students with something tangible to talk about. Indeed, there is evidence of this latter point outside of the drama context where students spontaneously talk about performance work. As examples, Claire introduces herself to new people at the school as an "actress at Woodlands" (Field note: 20/09/07) and, as a performance approaches, Alice likes to talk about "performance with Simon" (Field note: 22/04/08). Claire and Alice scored relatively highly in terms of communication skills according to the assessment measures, but differences were visible in students who did not score as highly on this measure. Deborah and Harry's annual review and Jacob's annual review and parent

feedback suggest they initiate interaction and communicate more. It is not possible, however, to link these developments back to drama with certainty.

4.4.2.3 *Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people*

Increased spontaneity is one of the main differences that I noted between instances of perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas manifest predominantly in spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people (145 instances in drama compared with 17 in other curricular areas).

Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people is manifest across all ten students throughout the observation period. As the students are individuals, they share in different ways. The spontaneity of student sharing varies between those who share in drama without any prompts from the teacher to those who share with an initial prompt from the teacher but continue without further prompting. Similarly, the length and complexity of student sharing also varies and this is one of the key areas in which sharing in drama can be differentiated from sharing in other areas of the curriculum. In relation to both of these areas, data from interviews with drama teachers and documentation suggest students grow in confidence in drama sessions over the year and cope with increasingly challenging scenes and sequences which they remember and perform.

Harry, for example, scored highest in terms of the number of autistic characteristics and had one of the lowest adaptive behaviour scores out of the students participating in the research, according to assessment measures. In July 2008, as the end of the observation period approached, Harry started to mark his entry to the drama room with a spin in the centre of the room which was preceded with an instruction to "Watch Harry". These instances were some of the first examples of Harry spontaneously showing to others that had been witnessed by teachers as **Carina** remarks, "It's amazing to see how he is now, he's quite enjoying showing something" (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008). These instances of Harry spontaneously showing to others, which also demonstrate understanding of the notion of performance discussed earlier, coincided with his first solo dance performance which formed part of the *Summer Revue* performed at the end of July 2008. In relation to this solo performance, **Simon** remarks:

The most important thing for Harry is that in last performance he was part of a group and now he is individual and I think that is something he will pick up on and we will develop that next year ... Jacob is very similar. (Simon, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Evidence of internalisation and generalisation of drama can be suggested in three ways: first in student understanding of drama as a forum in which to share to others; secondly in

students practising and performing in other contexts; thirdly in reports of growth in self-confidence in other curricular areas which are linked back to drama. These three ways are detailed below.

1. Data from interviews with students indicate that students understand drama as a forum in which to share achievements with others. On being asked to complete the sentence "In the performance, I can ...", eight students chose "show new dances", "say my lines" and/or "entertain people". These responses suggest an awareness of drama as a forum in which to share achievements with others. Ben and Jacob provided different answers and chose to focus on working with others during a performance rather than performing to others. I develop this aspect in due course (see p225).
2. Class teachers and parents comment on Ben, Claire, Deborah and Fran practising lines and movement sequences in their tutor group sessions or at home. Aside from Deborah, these students scored higher than other students in the group in terms of adaptive behaviour which may suggest that they find it easier to generalise skills from one context to another. Similarly students were given opportunities to demonstrate that they could perform in different contexts. For example, Claire, Deborah, Fran and Isy performed a dance from the May 2007 production of *Grease* with a few hours rehearsal for a visitor to the school in March 2008. With equally limited rehearsal, Ben and Claire performed a dance from the same production at a school summer social in July 2008. Ben and Claire's performance was at another campus of the school on a stage where the students had not previously performed. Ben, Claire, Deborah and Fran performed scenes from the *Summer Revue* at an international conference in London in September 2008. This performance was in front of 600 people in a completely new setting in which the student had minimal rehearsal. Deborah, Eddie and Fran performed at an international conference on a similar scale in Poland in March 2009. These opportunities, which involve students with different levels of ability and experience, support with generalising performance skills and learning to cope with new and different situations.
3. Indeed teachers and parents link abilities to perform to a growth in self-confidence which can manifest itself in improved behaviour, reduced anxiety or an ability to engage in other activities. The head teacher explains that over the year Alice became "much more in control over herself" (Head teacher interview, May 2008) and **Simon** highlights that Fran's stereotypical clicking which heightened when she was nervous or anxious was "90 per cent reduced" by the end of the year (Simon, drama teacher interview, July 2008). The head teacher regards drama as a "forum for learning skills for life" where the students are "doing something that is real within the

safety of the context". This experience is regarded by staff at the school as boosting students' confidence in participating in other activities. The manager of the further education unit explains that "if they [students] want to perform and they do, it just seems to help them gain confidence" (February 2008). She refers to Eddie as an example:

And I think for instance Eddie is an example where gradually as he took on more responsibility on the stage then when he went to work experience he had just that bit more confidence and now he loves going out to work but I think had he gone straight out to work without feeling that he could do something in front of people he didn't know I doubt if he would have been able to. (Manager of the further education unit interview, February 2008)

The school psychologist makes a similar point in relation to Fran:

... she enjoys very much the work experience she is doing but I think that the performing arts are helping her to be less anxious about things, to be more open with people, to be able to express verbally her anxieties ... (School psychologist interview, September 2007)

In different ways, drama is regarded as a contributing factor to growth in confidence in other areas of the curriculum.

4.4.2.4 Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe

Given the nature of drama, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are more instances of engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe in drama sessions than in other curricular areas (106 compared with 5). Drama provides an opportunity for the students to engage in flexible thinking and pretence where other areas of curriculum do not. As is noted in Alice's annual review:

She has been given opportunities to develop her awareness of the need for dramatic conventions such as movement, pause, sound and silence and the awareness of a variety of dramatic techniques to express ideas and feelings, for example mime and movement. Her favourite activity is, "can you guess what I am eating?" (Alice's annual review 2008)

Developing the ability to improvise is one of the targets for students in drama and their abilities to improvise develop during the students' time at the further education unit. Annual reviews for Deborah, Eddie, Isy, Harry and Jacob refer to these students as being more willing to participate in creatively demanding tasks and more confident in their abilities to improvise. Deborah's annual review, for example, notes:

Deborah has progressed positively in the area of improvisation. She has participated in a variety of exercises in which she performed dance moves following visual cues or rules. She has been able to carry out various tasks

in the creative improvisational process with less support. (Deborah's annual review 2008)

For Ben and Claire, who are already competent improvisers, they became better at controlling their abilities to improvise and at adding their own personality to their performances.

He has learnt to add his own personality into his acting and dancing and that makes his performing very unique and individual. (Ben's annual review 2008)

In terms of internalisation of pretence two students – Alice and Jacob – substituted one object or attribute for another outside of the drama classroom and six students – Alice, Ben, Claire, Deborah, Fran and Gina – were able to talk about substitution and the roles they played beyond the drama classroom. In the interview with Claire, for example, she explains what a prop is in a scene:

Interviewer: Which performance is this Claire?

Claire: Christmas outerspace

Interviewer: What are you doing now?

Claire: Pointing at an Intergalactic Christmas tree.

Interviewer: And what is an intergalactic Christmas tree? Where is it?

Claire: It's over there.

Interviewer: And what did it do?

Claire: It looks like a rocket ship. Like a tree. From outerspace. From Christmas land. Makes Christmas tree as rocket.

Claire is aware of the dual role of the Christmas tree. It is a Christmas tree and it is a rocket ship. Similarly, in explaining an improvisation as part of an interview with Ben, for example, he says:

... the customer was having her breakfast and the waiter, which was me, was, well, sleepy, yeah, he could like fall asleep instantly without even knowing.

The words "which was me" show clear understanding from Ben that he is playing a role.

Class teachers comment on student abilities to engage with pretence with **Carina** noting of Gina that "It's clear the notion of pretend to her" (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008) and **Ed** explaining in relation to Fran performing:

I was quite surprised by the way she told like if she made a statement she would put her foot down and give a little attitude and that was quite funny to see because she's not really like that. (Ed, Fran's class teacher interview, September 2007)

These findings suggest that students across age and abilities, as scored by assessment measures, can engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe and that

their abilities to engage develop over time with some students able to articulate their understanding of what it means to pretend.

4.4.2.5 Reciprocating emotionally

The number of instances of reciprocating emotionally in drama is more than double the number captured in data pertaining to other curricular areas over a similar period of time (68 compared with 27). The main qualitative difference concerns students showing interest in or awareness of other people's opinions and feelings.

Throughout the year, there were examples of students expressing positive feelings about drama. Isy, who had one of the lowest communications skills scores according to assessment measures, claps on hearing that she is going to be dancing as part of the session. From observations in drama and other sessions, this is an indication that she enjoys the activity.

1115: Isy comes in to the classroom. John introduces her and puts the mats out. Isy moves a mat towards Alice. John asks for the steps. Isy puts step number one up. After John mentions that they will be doing dance, Isy laughs and claps. (Field note: 26/06/08)

Outside of the drama context, I observed several students spontaneously talking about drama, particularly the performance as in the case of Claire and Alice noted earlier (see p218). Data from interviews with students demonstrate that all students, regardless of communication ability, are able to express their feelings about drama outside of the drama context. Students are able to communicate aspects of drama that they enjoy and do not enjoy. Alice, for example, enjoys "performance" but does not like "stretching" and these responses correlate with her talk and engagement during drama sessions. Fran explains that she likes drama but she does not like rehearsals because "it take out too much space" relating to the amount of time spent on rehearsals which sometimes conflicts with her work experience commitments. This response links with Fran's conversations during drama sessions and with her class teacher where she talks about having to miss work experience because of a rehearsal. Indeed, her class teacher notes that Fran "just wanted to let everyone know that work experience is very important to her" (Ed, Fran's class teacher interview, July 2008). The interviews were particularly enlightening for students who do not use language to communicate. Eddie, for example who scored lowest in terms of communication skills according to assessment measures that I used, was able to show his preference for "movement games" over "walking" and "rehearsals" highlighting his growing ability to communicate his likes and dislikes to others. His class teacher notes:

with confidence comes a bit of rebellion with Eddie. So he won't say yes all the time I ask something. He will say no to things. He will actually negotiate so if he doesn't want to do something he will say, "No". But if I really want

him to do it, I say well if you want to do this you have to do this, or if you want to do that then you have to do this and he will understand and he will do it. (Simon, Eddie's class teacher interview July 2008).

In response to a question about how students feel in the performance, nine students chose "happy" out of a selection of options. Three students, who scored highest in terms of communication skills, volunteered to clarify how they felt when they were performing. Claire remarks, "I'm not nervous, excited". She reflects that she "feels good" when she is performing and takes pride in her performance. In contrast, Fran acknowledges that in the performance, "I would feel nervous, I would" but afterwards she feels "proud" and "happy". Ben gives more detail:

To be able to well enjoy it as well and naturally, I don't get stage frights you know which is great ... I just feel psyched up and ready to go you know and when I'm on stage I, when I'm on stage I just focus on what I have to do you know ... I feel great you know.

These feelings of enjoyment, excitement and pride given by students are reinforced by class teachers and parents with whom these students share their feelings. In relation to enjoyment, Claire's class teacher remarks:

Well I think she loves performing, singing, dancing and performing. And like it's the summer social tomorrow and this week and last week we've been really busy ... well the head teacher said that perhaps Ben and Claire could do something tomorrow but I didn't have time ... so what I thought is perhaps they could do one of the songs from *Grease* and they are going to do that tomorrow and actually I told them this morning and Claire, she was absolutely fine and said, "Oh yes, I will look forward to it" and they practised for half an hour this afternoon. (Elaan, Claire's class teacher interview July 2008)

The parents of three students explain that their child is "excited" about the performance in the run up to it. Deborah's parents clarify that "she knows it is a special day or evening" and after the performance she is "ecstatic. Often she will say that was awesome" (Questionnaire response from Deborah's parents).

Some students were also able to show awareness that they were going to perform in front of people and referred to the impact of their performance on others. In the student interviews, for example, the three students with the highest communication skills and adaptive behaviour scores recognised that in the performance they can "entertain people". Claire expands on what she means by entertaining others in the student interview.

Interviewer: Ok, is there anything else from these that you can do in the performance.

Claire: Show new dances. Entertain people.

Interviewer: Entertain people. Because how do you feel when they watch you? What do they do?

Claire: They clap.

Interviewer: They clap, they do, they are happy when they watch you. And sometimes you can make them laugh.

Claire: Yes. I play as Alice. I play with, we did the performing Alice in Wonderland and I did the flamingo dance and I made people laugh. They think I'm funny.

Claire's awareness of her impact on other people when performing is reflected in comments from her class teacher and parents. They highlight how much Claire looks forward to family and friends coming to watch her in performances. Her class teacher and the school psychologist also highlight Claire's pride in being able to make people laugh.

I remember Claire saying she was very surprised and very proud of making people laugh when she did the *Alice* performance and to be able to say that, you know that people actually laugh, and she was really acting it marvellously, it means that she must understand that what she is doing, it's funny to the eyes of other people ... that was quite a revelation. (School psychologist interview, September 2007)

These findings contrast with Claire's performance in simple theory of mind tests which she consistently fails suggesting that drama and the notion of performance help Claire to consider how other people may think or feel.

Participation in drama appears to elicit strong emotions in all the students involved. The performance seems to be particularly important in this regard with all students able to reflect on how they feel before, during and/or after a performance and with some students able to recognise that their performance impacts on others.

4.4.2.6 Forming peer relationships

Differences in instances of perspective taking in drama compared with other curricular areas are particularly apparent when perspective taking between peers is taken into account. Of 1,264 instances of perspective taking in drama sessions, 305 are between peers (24.13%) compared with 47 of 536 in other curricular areas (8.77%). It seems that the group awareness harnessed by teachers in drama sessions and the nature of drama as a group activity leads to greater awareness between peers during sessions.

Data from interviews with drama teachers and annual reviews suggest that seven students – across ages and abilities – develop in their ability to take turns with peers over the course of the year. These highlight that Alice, Deborah and Isy are more patient and better at waiting for their turn and that Alice, Ben, Claire, Gina, Harry and Jacob have developed in their group awareness visible in their group work. Indeed, **Carina** remarks of Gina that:

The group awareness, turn taking thing has improved a lot, much more than I was expecting. (Carina, drama teacher interview, July 2008)

Data from interviews with class teachers and annual reviews indicate that developments in turn taking gained through drama generalise to outside of the drama context for four students – Alice, Claire, Deborah and Gina. I use an excerpt from Claire's annual review to illustrate:

Claire has also made good progress with her group skills which have been developed through her participation in drama activities, waiting her turn in activities, initiating and giving directions to her peers, for example, "It's your turn". (Claire's annual review, 2008)

Additionally seven parents recognised that drama presented opportunities for their children to work with peers and three parents noted that drama seemed to help them more generally with relating to others. Deborah's parents for example note that drama has helped Deborah "to better understand human behaviour" and Gina's parents explain that she "has made a friend". They are referring to Gina's friendship with Fran which developed through the drama sessions they participated in together.

Four students demonstrate awareness that working with their peers is an important part of drama and these were students with the highest adaptive behaviour and communication skills scores, according to assessment measures. Claire and Fran chose "work with friends" as something that drama helps them to do or that they can do in a performance and Claire talked about the need to "work together" in drama sessions (Field note: 22/07/08). Out of three photographs of Alice engaged in drama, Alice chose a photograph of herself with Harry as the picture she liked best.

Interviewer: Is there a photo you like?

Alice This one. That's me, Alice and Harry.

Ben took a slightly different stance explaining that the main thing he gets out of drama and the performance is "the ability to work with people I don't like".

Together these findings suggest that forming peer relationships is a core part of drama and that the emphasis on group awareness in drama can transfer to beyond the drama context and can internalise.

4.4.2.7 Summary of perspective taking observed in drama, over time and across contexts

If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, does it maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts?

- Data suggest that perspective taking shown in drama maintains and develops over time, internalises and generalises to other contexts for all students involved in this research.
- There are differences between individual students in terms of how perspective taking manifests and how different aspects of perspective taking manifest over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts.

4.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have presented findings to six questions posed by this research. I summarise these findings below.

1. Do students with autism show perspective taking in drama?

Students with autism in this research show perspective taking in drama. Perspective taking with adults and peers manifests multimodally through gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech. Overall instances of perspective taking captured are observed most in the form of reciprocating socially and least in the form of reciprocating emotionally. All students show perspective taking with peers but students show more perspective taking with adults than with peers at a ratio of four to one. There are quantitative differences across students in terms of the number of instances of perspective taking shown with adults and peers but these only vaguely reflect characteristics of the students involved. Within drama sessions, the most instances of perspective taking are observed when students are rehearsing for performances.

2. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, do they also show it in other curricular areas and does it manifest in the same way?

A comparison of perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas reveals both quantitative and qualitative differences. The total number of instances of perspective taking captured in drama is more than double the number captured in other curricular areas. There are more instances of perspective taking in drama across all ten students participating in the research but quantitative differences between students remain. Quantitative differences are particularly notable in relation to spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others, engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe and forming peer relationships. Important qualitative differences concern flexible thinking such as following instructions with an abstract component; considering how other people may think or feel; sharing longer and more complex sequences with others; and improvising with parameters.

3. If students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama, under what circumstances do they show it?

Working back from instances of perspective taking to identify factors associated with it in curricular areas apart from drama illustrates that students show perspective taking in order to respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context. They typically respond to instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling by teachers and spontaneously participate by giving feedback to others on the immediate environment or current activity and

questioning teachers and peers in order to gain information or support on a current activity. Assistance by teachers and spontaneous participation concerning the speech and action of teachers are observed more often than assistance by peers and spontaneous participation concerning the speech and action of peers. Assistance by teachers associated with perspective taking is observed across all ten students and spontaneous participation is observed across nine students, although there are quantitative differences in the number of occurrences across students.

4. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, under what circumstances do they show it and are these circumstances the same as in other curricular areas?

Students show perspective taking under the same circumstances in drama as in other curricular areas but there are notable quantitative and qualitative differences. There are more occurrences of students responding to and spontaneously participating in the social context in drama than in other curricular areas and the range of means of assistance and means of participation is wider in drama than in other curricular areas, even when the same teachers are observed working with students in drama and other curricular areas. The number of occurrences of assistance by peers and spontaneous participation concerning the speech and action of peers is also greater with the range wider in drama than in other curricular areas. Although occurrences of assistance are concentrated in instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling in drama and other curricular areas, there are notable qualitative differences observed in drama. These qualitative differences are not teacher specific as they are not observed when drama teachers are working with students in other curricular areas. Occurrences of spontaneous participation are predominantly in the form of giving feedback and questioning in drama and other curricular areas. In drama, however, instructing and giving explanations also feature notably.

5. If differences are observed between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas, why are there differences?

Differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas can be explained in part by the interactive nature of drama but there are also distinctive elements pertaining to drama in this research. These include:

- the impact an audience – in the form of the teacher, peers and/or visitors – has on student performance and response;
- teaching with the whole body;
- employing a wide variety of modes of communication;
- balancing interests and competencies of individual students and the group;
- the notion of performance;

- setting challenges for students and supporting them in ways that encourage students to think flexibly and draw on their own ideas;
- harnessing group trust by more experienced students supporting less experienced students.

All of these elements are observed in all drama sessions suggesting a teaching style which elicits and/or enables perspective taking. Central to this style is the notion of performance which brings many of the distinctive elements identified within drama together and sets drama apart from other interactive approaches and activities in other curricular areas.

6. If students with autism show perspective taking in drama, does it maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts?

An interrogation of data about perspective taking shown in drama over time and across contexts suggests that perspective taking can maintain and develop over time, internalise and generalise to other contexts for all students involved in this research regardless of their age and ability. There is variation between students, however, in the extent and nature of how perspective taking manifests over time and across contexts.

In the next chapter, I discuss these findings and highlight their theoretical, empirical, methodological and practical implications.

5. Discussion

“We are going to do rather than talk about.”
Drama teacher

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of findings to each question in relation to theory; extant empirical evidence; methodology from prior empirical research; and practical application. I follow this discussion with a consideration of the credibility of the findings and the methodological approach and methods used. I close the chapter with a summary of how this research has elucidated or extended knowledge about autism in terms of perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education.

5.1 Perspective taking

5.1.1 Perspective taking in drama

All ten students show perspective taking in drama. The majority (nine of ten) show all aspects of perspective taking investigated in the research. These aspects are: reciprocating socially; initiating interaction; reciprocating emotionally; spontaneously seeking to show enjoyment, interests or achievements with others; engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe; and forming relationships with peers. Perspective taking with adults and peers manifests in multimodal ways through gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech. Perspective taking is more common with adults than peers and its manifestation varies quantitatively and qualitatively between students. Within drama sessions, instances of perspective taking are observed most often when students are rehearsing for a performance.

5.1.1.1 Theoretical significance of students showing perspective taking in drama

I began this research with a particular understanding of autism as a difficulty in perspective taking which is juxtaposed with real world observations and experiences of individuals with autism. As such, this research differs from studies which focus solely on specified behavioural manifestations in individuals with autism (Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007: 1865). Instead through the research, I aimed to interpret how the behaviour of individuals with autism in real world social contexts relates to and informs the understanding of perspective taking in autism. From the findings of the research, I build on the understanding of perspective taking in autism in three ways.

First, by supporting a multifaceted understanding of perspective taking (Hobson, 2008; Moore, 2006). This involves understanding people as people and has affective, conative and cognitive dimensions. When Gina describes the teaching assistant as “pretending to be

a ghost" (see p187) and Claire explains that "if the boss doesn't like it, it will be over" (see p158), these students seem to be drawing on more than mental representations (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Leslie, 1987). Gina is motivated by her drama teacher **Carina** to engage in pretence. Similarly awareness that she is rehearsing for a performance to the head teacher and a visitor to the school appears to motivate Claire to consider their affective response to the performance.

Secondly, by revealing the multimodal way in which perspective taking manifests. When Alice shares her magic trick with others, she uses gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech to gain and maintain the attention of her respective audiences (see p133). Similarly, Eddie uses gaze, gesture and movement/stance to meaningfully communicate an instruction to peers (see p127). These findings show that students draw on multiple modes to communicate their point of view which contrasts with studies which place emphasis on the fact that individuals with autism do not instinctively use facial expressions, including eye gaze, to communicate and interpret mental states (Baron-Cohen, Campbell, Karmiloff-Smith, Grant, & Walker, 1995; Baron-Cohen, Jolliffe, Mortimore, & Robertson, 1997; Klin et al., 1999). The findings also conflict with studies which suggest that individuals with autism find it difficult to use body language to communicate or interpret mental states (Attwood, Frith, & Hermelin, 1988; Reed et al., 2007). The apparent contradiction may lie in the fact that the studies mentioned analyse gaze and body language in an experimental context using video whereas this research takes place in a real world social context involving people in real time. There are also studies in relation to gaze which challenge the claim that individuals with autism are impaired in reading information from the eyes (Back, Ropar, & Mitchell, 2007; Kaland, Callesen, Moller-Nielsen, Lykke Mortensen, & Smith, 2008; Roeyers, Buysse, Ponnet, & Pichal, 2001) which suggests opinion is divided. It may be that individuals with autism do use gaze and body language less effectively than typical peers but findings from this research clearly show that they are still motivated to use a range of modes to communicate their point of view.

Thirdly, by strengthening a view of perspective taking that is integrated with the social context, and manifests and develops through experience with other people (Carpendale & Lewis, 2006; Perner, Ruffman, & Leekam, 1994; Peterson, 2001; Ruffman, Perner, Naito, Parkin, & Clements, 1998). I discuss in more detail the significance of these findings in the next section (see p243).

5.1.1.2 Empirical significance of students showing perspective taking in drama

Empirically, my findings support and extend extant research about perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education with individuals with autism. They provide empirical evidence about the engagement of individuals with autism in drama, some of which is consistent with anecdotal remarks and narrative case studies (see p62). They also extend

prior knowledge about the manifestation of perspective taking in drama by demonstrating the variety of ways in which perspective taking manifests in the context of drama; the modes students draw on to communicate their point of view; and individual differences between students in the extent and nature of perspective taking manifested. In relation to the latter point, the findings show that, although there is a general correlation between adaptive behaviour according to assessment measures and cumulative instances of perspective taking shown, a student with better adaptive behaviour does not necessarily show more instances of perspective taking. This raises questions about how helpful assessment measures may be when considering individuals in particular social contexts. I discuss findings about each aspect of perspective taking in turn using the example as a focus.

- Reciprocating socially: The example illustrating reciprocating socially involves Eddie following the teacher's instructions and giving instructions to peers (see p127). In both cases, Eddie takes into account the interlocutor's perspective. This can be an area of difficulty for individuals with autism (Capps, Kehres, & Sigman, 1998; Frith, 1989) although an interpretative study of individuals with autism in family settings questions this difficulty (Kremler-Sadlik, 2004). The findings, however, build on this interpretative study by illustrating how an individual with autism without verbal language takes into account an interlocutor's perspective. Eddie gives a relevant response to the teacher by responding immediately to the instruction. He then communicates clearly to the peer he wants to choose to be part of the exercise using modes through which he can comfortably communicate – gaze, gesture and movement/stance – and in a way that his peer can understand.
- Initiating interaction: The example describing initiating interaction concerns Deborah asking for help on behalf of Eddie (see p130). The request for help is not without due thought. Deborah has observed Eddie for some time, she then moves over to investigate what he is doing and on seeing his difficulty, she asks the teacher to help Eddie. Her request involves looking at the teacher, a verbal request to help Eddie and a gesture of pointing towards Eddie. In asking the teacher, Deborah approaches the relevant person in the room who can help. The findings contrast with research which suggests individuals with autism are not always aware of who a relevant person is and of relevant information to give to that individual (Happé, 1991; Tager-Flusberg & Anderson, 1991). It is unclear from this example whether Deborah asks the teacher to help because she is not able to resolve the problem herself or because she recognises that Eddie may find asking for help difficult. In either case, she shows awareness that Eddie needs help and acts on this awareness by communicating it to a relevant person.
- Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others: The example of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with

others concerns Alice sharing her enjoyment in a magic performance by showing her version of a magic trick (see p133). Contrary to research which suggests individuals with autism find it difficult to attract and share attention through gaze and body language (Dawson, Hill, Spencer, Galpert, & Watson, 1990; Dawson, Meltzoff, Osterling, Rinaldi, & Brown, 1998; Mundy, Sigman, Ungerer, & Sherman, 1986; Phillips, Baron-Cohen, & Rutter, 1992; Willemsen-Swinkles, Buitelaar, Weijen, & van Engeland, 1998) and share experiences (Baron-Cohen, 1989b; Loveland & Landry, 1986; Wimpory, Hobson, Williams, & Nash, 2000), Alice orients towards the audience which is important to her using facial expressions and body language. She punctuates her performance with speech, facial expressions and body language to gain and maintain the attention of the audience. These findings add empirical evidence to retrospective accounts of drama which suggest drama provides the opportunity for individuals with severe learning difficulties to show to others and share their attention (Park, 1998).

Findings about spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others are important in three other ways as well. First, the ways in which Alice punctuates her performance suggest that she has some awareness of how to regulate her behaviour and of how this regulation impacts on others. It seems that the format of a performance enables Alice to consider herself objectively and think about how her behaviour may impact on others. In this sense, Alice's engagement in drama is heightening her self-awareness in a similar way that Vygotsky argues play does (Vygotsky, 1976). This finding contrasts with experimental research which suggests individuals with autism are not affected by the attitudes of those observing (Capps, Yirmiya, & Sigman, 1992; Hobson, Chidambi, Lee, & Meyer, 2006; Kasari, Chamberlain, & Bauminger, 2001). Secondly, Alice's performance of the magic trick shows how she has made sense of the magician's visit. She does not attempt to replicate a trick the magician has shown her. Instead, she draws on her own cultural resources – possibly a combination of what she has just seen and previous experiences of observing magic – to create a magic trick performance of her own. She is making meaning through drama in the sense that Neelands suggests where the drama develops and extends an individual's existing cultural resources (Neelands, 1984: 6). This may be an example of Alice creating her own ZPD through the drama situation (see p61). Thirdly, Alice's performance demonstrates the interconnectedness of mind, body and emotions (Baldwin & Fleming, 2003: 4). It is her emotional response to the magician's performance that seems to have spurred her to improvise her own trick as if she were a magician; shape the trick with awareness of the audience; and use her body to communicate the trick. Furthermore, she derives additional enjoyment from having performed the trick and from creating an emotional response in the audience.

- Engaging in varied, spontaneous, make-believe: The example focusing on engaging in varied, spontaneous, make-believe shows Ben and Claire rehearsing a scene for a performance (see p138). The example demonstrates Ben and Claire adopting roles and spontaneously bringing in gesture and facial expressions to add meaning and feeling to the words they are saying. This suggests that they do understand the communicative function of gesture and facial expressions and can appropriately use them which is contrary to much experimental research (Attwood, Frith, & Hermelin, 1988; Baron-Cohen, Campbell, Karmiloff-Smith, Grant, & Walker, 1995; Baron-Cohen, Jolliffe, Mortimore, & Robertson, 1997; Klin et al., 1999; Reed et al., 2007). The example also shows Ben and Claire either improvising around their lines or being able to respond to the improvisation of others. These findings suggest that these students can 'decouple' reality from pretence which differs from early research about individuals with autism (Leslie, 1987). The findings also indicate that these students can spontaneously vary pretence and appropriately respond to pretence through their own improvisation and their response to the improvisation of others. This flexibility in generating and responding to pretence calls into question research which suggests individuals with autism show little spontaneity or variety in their engagement with creativity or pretence (Charman & Baron-Cohen, 1997; Craig & Baron-Cohen, 1999; Jarrold, 2003; Jarrold, Boucher, & Smith, 1996; Lewis & Boucher, 1991, 1995; Turner, 1999) or that pretence can only be produced under prompted conditions (Charman & Baron-Cohen, 1997; Lewis & Boucher, 1988). The findings support a small-scale research study about creativity in individuals with autism which highlights the 'creative energy' these individuals have (Clethero, 2001) and narrative case studies from practitioners that suggest individuals with autism can participate in and, more importantly, contribute to make-believe (Peter, 2009; Sherratt, 2002a).

In relation to drama education, findings from this example have significance in three respects. First, they demonstrate that individuals with autism can make meaning through the juxtaposition of reality and pretence. They draw on their own knowledge of television chat shows to create a meaningful performance of their own. Secondly, the performance scenario, where there is awareness of both the roles each other are playing and the audience, seems to heighten the awareness of what they are doing in a way that intertwines body, mind and emotion. As Bolton clarifies, "It is both an active and passive mode, both controlling and being controlled, both making it happen and submitting to it happening" (Davis & Lawrence, 1986: 54). This is perhaps visible in the students' use of gestures and facial expressions to add meaning and feeling to what they are saying to both each other and the audience. Thirdly, in improvising around their lines and responding to each other during the scene, the students create their own ZPD where the scene evolves each time they perform it.

- Reciprocating emotionally: The example concerning reciprocating emotionally centres on Claire expressing her opinion about a drama activity (see p142). It illustrates how Claire draws on a range of modes of communication to express her frustration with the activity she is engaged in and shows her emotional responsiveness to the words and actions of **Simon** insisting that he does not leave and praising his abilities to dance when he returns. The latter expression of praise could be interpreted as Claire recognising that she upset **Simon** and wanting him to realise that she does appreciate him and wants to learn from him. Findings about reciprocating emotionally depart from research which suggests individuals with autism find it difficult to express their feelings (Howlin, 1999; Le Couteur et al., 1989) and opinions (Toichi et al., 2002); reflect on personal experiences (Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000); and interpret the emotions of others (Dawson, Webb, & McPartland, 2005; Klin et al., 1999; Reed et al., 2007). They also show that this expression does not have to be restricted to a verbal articulation. They concur with research about self-concept which suggests individuals with autism can reflect on themselves and have sufficient theory of mind in order to do this (Lee & Hobson, 1998). The findings also add to a small number of studies about interactive approaches which suggest that interactive approaches present opportunities for encouraging emotional expression and inter-affectivity where other approaches may not (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2009). A study focusing on memory and the self concludes:

The difficulties described, with self and memory, have pervasive effects, and indeed it seems likely that learning will be affected at almost every level. Specific work within a cognitive curriculum that can help the individual build up a sense of themselves experiencing events may aid individuals with autism in the development of their personal episodic memories. (Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000: 26)

It may be that the factors identified as being associated with perspective taking, which in this research are observed in drama, may present a 'specific approach' that can assist individuals with autism in building up a sense of who they are and how they experience events that they participate in. These findings align with articulations of the importance of drama as a tool for making sense of experience (Bolton, 1992: 138-141; Hornbrook, 1998: 141; Neelands, 1992: 3) and suggest that individuals with autism can engage with such an approach. I explore this point in more detail in the next section (see p246).

- Forming peer relationships: The example connected with forming relationships with peers describes Alice helping Harry to perform a magic trick (see p146). It shows a very sensitive interaction in which Alice accommodates Harry's response to instructions given by her and teaching assistants and uses it to guide how she communicates with him. Alice starts by using verbal instructions related to a magic trick and then adapts the instruction to a simplified verbal instruction which removes reference to magic. When Harry responds to the simplified verbal instruction to use his hands by imitating how the

student is using her hands, Alice notes this imitation and starts to build on it by using her own hands as a model for what she wants Harry to do. She reinforces the modelling with modulated speech which encourages Harry to continue what he is doing until Alice guides him to the end of the performance. Although overall findings in response to the first research question confirm experimental research findings that individuals with autism tend to interact with adults more than peers (Brown & Whiten, 2000; Frith, 1989; Lord, 1993; Lord & Magill, 1989), findings in relation to forming peer relationships illustrate that individuals with autism can interact very sensitively with their peers in ways that teachers may not be able to access. I discuss the role of peers in due course (see p250).

5.1.1.3 Methodological significance of students showing perspective taking in drama

The methodological approach and methods that I used to identify perspective taking shown in drama build on previous studies about individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education in five ways.

First, the interest in perspective taking in this research involves researching perspective taking as it manifests in real world social contexts using an interpretative paradigm. This approach departs from studies which concentrate on perspective taking as a discrete cognitive skill which is best measured in an experimental context with specifically designed tests (see Baron-Cohen, 2000 for a review). It also differs from studies which focus on outcome measures based on performance in theory of mind tasks (Gevers, Clifford, Mager, & Boer, 2006; Ozonoff & Miller, 1995) or change in particular skills over time such as joint attention, imitation, language or play (Tse, Strulovitch, Tagalakakis, Meng, & Fombonne, 2007; Zercher, Hunt, Schuler, & Webster, 2001). The advantage of observing perspective taking as manifested in real world social contexts is that the complexity of real life is retained and the picture of an individual's perspective taking that is produced is potentially more meaningful. As I highlight in this chapter, this real world picture challenges traditional accounts of autism and has the potential to advance understanding of autism. In this way, this research joins a small number of studies conducted within an interpretative paradigm (Bagatell, 2007; Billington, 2006; Kremler-Sadlik, 2004; Ochs, Kremler-Sadlik, Sirota, & Solomon, 2004; Solomon, 2004) which open up the opportunity to "rethink and reimagine autism from a phenomenological rather than biomedical point of view" (Solomon & Bagatell, 2010: 2).

Secondly, the participants in the research are aged 16 to 19 which is an older age range than in the majority of studies focusing on perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama. As young adults, these students have years of experience and maturity which young children do not have and this will impact on the way perspective taking manifests and on

engagement in interactive approaches including drama. However, it is important for educators and carers of young adults with autism to understand how perspective taking may manifest when they engage with interactive approaches including drama and how these manifestations may differ from those of young children with autism.

Thirdly, the participants in the research range across the autistic spectrum from those with strong verbal language abilities to those with minimal verbal language, and include those with associated learning difficulties (see p88). This range of individuals across the spectrum in the same research study contrasts with studies about drama which focus solely on those with strong verbal language abilities (Alcock & Howlin, 2003) or with very complex needs (Whitehurst, 2006). In demonstrating that perspective taking manifests in all students involved in the research, the wider applicability of approaches such as drama education for individuals across the autistic spectrum can be suggested. I discuss the wider applicability of the research in more detail towards the end of this chapter (see p272).

Fourthly, ten participants is a larger number than the majority of detailed studies focusing on interactive approaches including drama. Although ten is still a small number when the applicability of findings beyond the frame of reference is concerned, demonstrating that perspective taking manifests across all ten students does present robust foundations on which to base further research.

Fifthly, the emphasis placed on observation and capturing perspective taking in context opens up the opportunity to look at the multimodal nature of perspective taking in real world social contexts. Uncovering the multimodal nature of different aspects of perspective taking in individuals with autism through multimodal transcripts with associated images is a new trajectory in autism research. In this research, multimodal approaches to data collection and analysis have enabled me to capture the dynamic ways in which students show perspective taking and make meaning in drama. The approach has huge potential for examining competencies in individuals with autism and investigating how they interact in different contexts.

5.1.1.4 Practical significance of students showing perspective taking in drama

The findings from the first question suggest that drama is a context which elicits and/or enables perspective taking and I expand upon this argument as I progress my discussion of the research findings. At this stage, there are two points that have implications for practice:

First, acknowledging the different modes of communication that students use in drama. Indeed in discussing findings from research about the use and interpretation of body language in autism, Reed et al argue that people with autism may:

benefit from therapies that guide them to understand body configurations, as well as face configuration. Early training in learning to attend to and imitate other people's body postures might enable people with ASD to use a pivotal skill that would be relevant across many different social situations. (Reed et al., 2007: 1582)

Drama may be such a forum in which individuals with autism can develop awareness of different modes of communication. In turn, the different modes of communication that students already use suggest that teachers can benefit from recognising how individual students communicate and build on this in their teaching. As Jewitt et al clarify, a multimodal perspective on teaching and learning can “enable teachers to reflect productively on the effects of their teaching and on their response to pupils’ interests” (2001: 17).

Secondly, valuing collaborative learning with students with autism. I address this point in more detail later in this chapter (see p250).

5.1.2 Quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

There are over double the number of instances of perspective taking captured in data pertaining to drama compared with data pertaining to other curricular areas over a comparable period of time. There are also important qualitative differences. Particularly notable are data suggesting that spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements, engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe and forming relationships with peers are more common in drama compared with other curricular areas. There are also more instances of perspective taking recorded in drama than in other curricular areas for all students involved in the research. Significant qualitative differences identified concern flexible thinking such as following instructions with an abstract component; considering how other people may think or feel; sharing longer and more complex sequences with others; and improvising within parameters.

5.1.2.1 Theoretical significance of quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

The findings from this question illustrate that perspective taking does not manifest in the same way across contexts and that some contexts or teaching styles within them may facilitate perspective taking more than others. These findings are consistent with findings from research in typical development (Hughes & Dunn, 1997; Newton, Reddy, & Bull, 2000) but comparable research in relation to individuals with autism is in its infancy. There are two important implications from these findings. First, they suggest that an individual's perspective taking abilities cannot be captured by observing that individual in one context or by analysing how that individual responds to a particular scenario as in the case of a simple theory of mind test. This implication supports a multifaceted view of perspective taking in

autism and one that cannot be encapsulated by the development of false belief (Astington, 2001; Flavell, 1999; Tager-Flusberg, 2001) (see p21). Secondly, they indicate that perspective taking in individuals with autism can be influenced by the social context. These findings strengthen the view that perspective taking in autism is integrated with social experience and that a variety of positive influences can have a cumulative impact on perspective taking (Hughes et al., 2005). Such a view counters arguments which regard perspective taking as an innate difficulty in autism which is not influenced by the social context (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Leslie, 1994).

The positive quantitative and qualitative differences in drama compared with other curricular areas intimates that the interactive context of drama in this research is one in which perspective taking can be elicited and/or enabled which suggests that sociocultural approaches to human development may be appropriate for individuals with autism. I build on this point when discussing factors within the interactive context of drama that elicit and/or enable perspective taking (see p246).

5.1.2.2 Empirical significance of quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

Empirically, I add to research about individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama in four ways.

First, by revealing that perspective taking is more prevalent and qualitatively different in drama than in other curricular areas for all ten students involved in this research. At the completion of this thesis, there were only a limited number of studies which compared some of the behaviours investigated as part of this research between contexts (Kim, Wigram, & Gold, 2008). No studies were found which compared behaviours in drama with other contexts. My findings extend prior research by showing how behaviours can differ in drama from other curricular areas and by illustrating how perspective taking manifests across contexts. They pave the way for further studies examining how behaviours may differ between contexts.

Secondly, by showing that the context of drama education facilitates more interaction with peers than other areas of the curriculum. This finding adds support to small-scale case studies which suggest developments in social interaction or social skills over the course of involvement in drama (Cattanach, 1996; Lindkvist, 1977; Peach, 2003). It is also consistent with a small number of experimental studies focusing on group interventions which highlight, as an outcome, that group activities can be a positive context in which to develop meaningful peer relationships with individuals with autism (Barry et al., 2003: 697). I build on research about both drama and group activities with individuals with autism by giving a subtler picture of interaction with peers across contexts. This picture reveals that perspective taking with

peers in drama is more dynamic. In drama, students reciprocate socially with peers; initiate interaction with peers; spontaneously seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with peers; reciprocate emotionally with peers; and engage in varied, spontaneous make-believe with peers. In other curricular areas, I observed only two aspects of perspective taking with peers - reciprocating socially and initiating interaction.

Thirdly, by identifying the context of drama as being more successful than other areas of the curriculum at eliciting and/or enabling spontaneity. This spontaneity is in the form of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others and engaging in varied, spontaneous, make-believe. This finding adds to prior research about drama which does not make reference to increased spontaneity. It is particularly significant in relation to individuals with autism because it suggests that drama provides a context in which the students are motivated to share experiences with others when typically they may not be (Hobson & Lee, 1999). I discuss factors which may be associated with this increased motivation to be spontaneous in due course (see p246).

Fourthly, by indicating that the students show more awareness of the thoughts and feelings of others in drama than in other curricular areas. This finding is consistent with research about young children showing that, where interactions are characterised by positive and cooperative play, children are more likely to refer to both their own and others' thoughts and ideas (Brown, Donelan-McCall, & Dunn, 1996; Hughes & Dunn, 1997). It implies that, like play, the interactive context of drama is one which can elicit and/or enable students to consider how other people think and feel where other curricular areas or experimental contexts may not succeed. The finding may also be connected with findings from research about young children which suggest emotions have a powerful influence on understanding other people (Hughes & Leekam, 2004; Newton, Reddy, & Bull, 2000). It may be the students' motivation in drama and their emotional investment in it which heightens their sensitivity to their own feelings and those of others.

5.1.2.3 Methodological significance of quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

In using a multiple case study design to reach the findings to this question, I build on prior research about perspective taking and drama with individuals with autism by comparing the manifestation of perspective taking in the same students across contexts. As highlighted earlier, although there are studies in typical development which have noted differences in perspective taking between contexts (Hughes & Dunn, 1997; Newton, Reddy, & Bull, 2000), this is considered an area in need of greater investigation and is particularly important in relation to individuals with autism where such studies are in their infancy. A comparison of aspects of perspective taking in the same individuals with autism across contexts is valuable

because it can open up the opportunity to identify factors associated with perspective taking specific to one context. I address these specific factors in a forthcoming section (see p253).

5.1.2.4 Practical significance of quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

The findings from the second question strengthen the suggestion that I made at the end of the first question that drama may be a context which elicits and/or enables perspective taking in individuals with autism. This is particularly in terms of supporting the students to spontaneously seek to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others; engage in spontaneous, varied make-believe; form relationships with peers; and show awareness of how other people think and feel. I discuss the extent to which factors associated with perspective taking shown in drama in this research are exclusive to drama in due course (see p261).

5.2 Factors associated with perspective taking

5.2.1 Circumstances under which students show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama

Students show perspective taking in order to respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context but there are more instances of the former than the latter. In both cases, students respond or spontaneously participate more in connection with what teachers are saying or doing than peers. Students typically respond to instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling by teachers and there are a few occurrences of a peer instructing a student. Students typically spontaneously participate in the social context by giving feedback to others about the immediate environment and questioning teachers and peers in order to gain information or support on a current activity. There are, however, quantitative differences between students in terms of the extent to which they respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context.

5.2.1.1 Theoretical significance of identifying circumstances under which students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama

The findings from this question are important theoretically in two respects.

First, whereas findings from the first two questions suggest a link between perspective taking and the social context, the findings from this question add strength to that link by illustrating direct and indirect associations between perspective taking and the social context.

Secondly, and in conjunction, the findings support the relevance to individuals with autism of a theory of human development in which social interaction stimulates development. Given the social difficulties associated with autism, the appropriateness of such a learning theory for individuals with autism has previously been questioned. Whereas fundamental difficulties in perspective taking in individuals with autism have the potential to lead to serious problems in interaction, I suggest in this research that with the right support from a teacher or peer, these difficulties can be mitigated.

5.2.1.2 Empirical significance of identifying circumstances under which students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama

On an empirical level, five points illustrate how I build on research about factors associated with perspective taking.

First, identifying instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling as associated with perspective taking supports previous research which identify the same approaches as being successful for individuals with autism (Charman & Howlin, 2003; Chiang, 2009b; Dawson & Galpert, 1990; Hess, 2006; Stone & Yoder, 2001). I extend existing studies by giving a qualitative description of these approaches in context.

Secondly, revealing that teachers provide quantitatively more and qualitatively broader means of assistance than peers is consistent with findings from research in typical development which suggest that adults provide more expertise in enabling individuals to execute tasks than peers (Radziszewska & Rogoff, 1988). It also intimates that, for individuals with autism, more support leads to better outcomes.

Thirdly, highlighting ways in which students spontaneously participate in the social context (means of participation) broadens previous research. Students spontaneously participate by giving feedback on the speech and action of teachers and/or peers or by questioning in order to gain information or support from a teacher on a current activity. The means of participation illustrate the students pitching in and learning “through keen attention on ongoing activities, rather than relying on lessons out of context of using the knowledge and skills taught” (Rogoff, 2003: 9). This finding concurs with research which notes that requesting and commenting are main forms of spontaneous communication in real world social contexts for individuals with autism. It differs in suggesting that giving feedback or commenting is more frequent than requesting (Chiang, 2009a). Reasons for this disparity may lie in different research designs, observation periods (two hours of dedicated observation per individual in the Chiang study compared with an average of five hours per individual in this research); the age of the participants and/or different contexts.

Fourthly, demonstrating that individuals with autism are more likely to show aspects of perspective taking as an elicited and/or enabled response than spontaneously is in keeping with studies about imitation (Ingersoll, 2008) and communication (Loveland, Landry, Hughes, Hall, & McEvoy, 1988). It contrasts with recent research about communication where spontaneous communication is observed more frequently than elicited communication in academic contexts (Chiang, 2009a). It should be noted, however, that communication in Chiang’s study forms only part of cumulative aspects of perspective taking that I investigate and differing research designs may also prevent clear comparison between the two sets of findings.

Fifthly, pointing towards an association and potentially functional relationship between means of assistance and aspects of perspective taking extends previous studies. For example, questioning is associated with reciprocating socially, reciprocating emotionally, initiating interaction and engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe whereas instructing is associated with reciprocating socially and spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others. The relationship between means of assistance and aspects of perspective taking has the potential for further consideration as it may lend itself to an interrogation of the most suitable ways in which to elicit and/or enable particular aspects of perspective taking.

5.2.1.3 *Methodological significance of identifying circumstances under which students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama*

Methodologically, this research is similar to a small number of recent experimental studies which look behind instances of perspective taking such as communication or social interaction in an attempt to identify factors associated with them (Chiang, 2009b; Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007). The interest in such an approach seems to be linked to a limitation in intervention studies. Intervention studies are geared towards measuring the outcomes of a particular approach through pre and post-intervention assessments. Intervention studies, however, tend not to address the relationship between aspects of the intervention and particular outcomes which limits the extent to which the intervention or approach can be enhanced or learnt from (Feng, Lo, Tsai, & Cartledge, 2008; Williams White, Keonig, & Scahill, 2007: 1864). By conducting this research within an interpretative paradigm, I used a different methodological approach from the studies mentioned above and this approach aligns with a small number of studies which seek explanations for successful behaviours in real world social contexts (Kremler-Sadlik, 2004; Ochs, Kremler-Sadlik, Sirota, & Solomon, 2004; Solomon, 2004). This holistic approach to capturing what is happening in the social context enabled me to analyse perspective taking and factors associated with it in such a way as to identify how particular factors may be linked to instances of perspective taking. I adopted such an approach because I considered it to lead to a more detailed understanding of circumstances under which perspective taking can occur in real world social contexts.

Secondly, I used a different analytical approach from prior studies about interventions and approaches for individuals with autism by interrogating the speech and action of teachers, peers and students. I did this in terms of categories inspired by Tharp and Gallimore's 'means of assistance' (1988). I used Tharp and Gallimore's 'means of assistance' as a basis for identifying both how teachers and peers encourage students to respond to the social context and how students spontaneously participate in the social context. As I focused on student perspective taking and, as a result, predominantly the social aspects of learning,

there is scope for further investigation of the content or drama skills that students are learning in drama as a result of the same 'means of assistance'.

5.2.1.4 Practical significance of identifying circumstances under which students with autism show perspective taking in curricular areas apart from drama

The findings from this question have a practical application in two respects.

First, the association between means of assistance and perspective taking is empowering for teachers and carers because it suggests that they can encourage the development of perspective taking in individuals with autism. Particular strategies that are identified include instructing (see p167), questioning (see p169) and instructing-modelling (see p171).

Secondly, identification of means of participation and when they occur has practical consequences. The content of means of participation can paint a picture of an individual's understanding of what is going on around them which can be useful in structuring learning for them. Additionally, an analysis of how an individual participates in the social context can enable the creation of more opportunities for an individual to participate.

5.2.2 Quantitative and qualitative differences in circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

Students generally show perspective taking under the same circumstances in drama as in other curricular areas but there are notable quantitative and qualitative differences. There are more occurrences of students responding to and participating in the social context in drama than in other curricular areas and the range of means of assistance and means of participation is wider in drama than in other curricular areas, even when the same teachers are observed working with students in drama and other curricular areas. The number of occurrences of means of assistance by peers and means of participation concerning peers is also greater with the range wider in drama than in other curricular areas. Qualitative differences that are observed do not appear to be teacher specific as they are not observed when drama teachers are working with students in other curricular areas.

5.2.2.1 Theoretical significance of identifying quantitative and qualitative differences in circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

The findings in response to this question suggest that different teaching styles influence the quantity and quality of perspective taking. This finding has two notable theoretical implications:

First, that perspective taking is integrated with the social context and I have expanded upon this point previously (see p232, 239, 243).

Secondly, that there are distinctive factors associated with perspective taking pertaining to drama in this research. These factors are closely linked with three aspects of sociocultural approaches to human development discussed in the literature review. These include the role of social interaction in development; the role of play in development; and the course of typical and atypical development (see p42). I discuss these three points in turn in relation to factors associated with perspective taking in drama. I also consider the extent to which these factors are relevant to other educational settings.

- The role of social interaction in development: Sociocultural approaches highlight the role of others in 'scaffolding' or 'assisting' individuals in their learning. In this research, there is evidence of both teachers and peers 'scaffolding' or 'assisting' others. Within these approaches the notion of working within a zone of proximal development or ZPD is regarded as particularly important so that an individual is always building on what s/he already knows. As Vygotsky explains:

Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or awakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in development. (Vygotsky, 1987: 212)

Qualitative differences between means of assistance in drama and those in other curricular areas indicate that, in drama, teachers use instructions with multiple steps and an abstract component; open questions; instructing-modelling with parameters which students can use and interpret in their own way. These qualitative differences illustrate teachers challenging students in their learning, encouraging and supporting them to draw on their own knowledge and think flexibly. Such approaches are common in guidance about the role of the teacher in drama sessions where close parallels can be drawn with Vygotsky's notion of working within the ZPD (Neelands, 1984: 6; Wright, 2001: 230). Although in this research, I observed these approaches in drama, there is no reason why they have to be restricted to drama activities.

At the heart of learning through interaction with others is the process of 'internalisation' where an individual takes the learning into her/his own consciousness and becomes

aware of what has been learnt. As I have already explained (see p43), evidence of internalisation is extremely difficult to pinpoint but inferences about it can be made through an individual's speech and action. It may be evident, for example, in Alice using the magician's magic words when performing her trick (see p133); in Claire using **Simon's** advice to "stop, breathe and think" in her script (see p138) and following his example when leading warm up sessions (see p191); and in Fran recognising Claire's frustration and drawing on her experience of **Simon** supporting Claire by recommending her to "stop, breathe and think" (see p201).

- The role of play in development: Within sociocultural approaches pretend play is regarded as a pivotal activity on the way to abstract thinking and symbolism proper, it raises self-awareness and self-control and it opens up the opportunity for an individual to create her/his own ZPD. In drama, through means of assistance employed by teachers, students move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking as in the case of Deborah creating movement sequences through shapes (see p155). There is evidence of students showing self-awareness and self-control when they are rehearsing and performing to others as in the case of Alice modulating her magic performance for others (see p133) and Ben and Claire drawing on multiple modes to communicate their role to each other and their audience (see p138). It seems that it is the conscious relationship the student as performer has with both fellow performers and the audience that heightens awareness of the self. This is remarked upon by the head teacher and by **Simon** in interviews, specifically in relation to Alice and Fran (see p220). When students are creating scenes and responding to their own work and that of others, there is a suggestion that students are creating their own ZPD as in the case of Ben, Claire and Eddie working together to create a wedding scene (see p184) and Claire considering why Deborah is not engaging in the rehearsal (see p198). The way these students are working suggests engagement to some extent with two forms in mind at one time or 'metaxis' as Boal refers to it (1995: 45) where the real and the imagined are held in mind at one time. This is combined with the additional dimension of awareness of performing to an audience. This dynamic between performer, performance and audience sets drama apart from other curricular areas and presents distinctive opportunities to work with different aspects of perspective taking both directly and indirectly. Indeed, I have found evidence of students working in the ZPD and teachers 'scaffolding' or 'assisting' students in the original sense that Tharp and Gallimore intended (1988) in drama but not in other curricular areas. This finding may explain the positive quantitative and qualitative differences in perspective taking that I observed in drama compared with other curricular areas.

- The course of typical and atypical development: The importance of social interaction in development is the same across typical and atypical development in sociocultural approaches and in both cases it needs to be based on a mutual understanding. This involves working with a 'positive differential approach' where teachers start by working with an individual's strengths and interests and use modes of communication that are accessible and meaningful to students. The findings from this research illustrate how teachers tend to work with a 'positive differential approach' in drama as in the case of **Simon** using Alice's ideas as part of a warm up session (see p209) and this reflects teaching methods in drama education (Neelands, 1984: 6). Teachers do not, however, do so to the same extent in other curricular areas.

It seems that working in the interactive context of drama presents opportunities for students to develop 'higher mental functions'. Higher mental functions are regarded by Vygotsky as central in gaining a full understanding of oneself and other people. Smidt explains:

Vygotsky talked of the infant having immediate blind reactions to stimuli. To become fully human we have to develop higher mental processes which then mediate between us and the world. (Smidt, 2009: 48)

Findings from this research suggest that the teaching approaches in drama support the students with perspective taking, in understanding themselves and other people, and relations between them. From a theoretical perspective, factors that I identified in drama in this research that relate to the role of social interaction in development and the course of typical and atypical development are relevant across curricular areas. Factors that relate to the role of play in development lend themselves easily to drama but do not need to be restricted to drama sessions.

5.2.2.2 Empirical significance of identifying quantitative and qualitative differences in circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

In identifying quantitative and qualitative differences in factors associated with perspective taking between drama and other curricular areas, I broaden previous research about individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama in four ways.

First, identifying more occurrences of means of assistance and means of participation in drama compared with other curricular areas suggests that there are more opportunities for students in drama to show perspective taking. This finding is consistent with research showing that when adults increase their reciprocity behaviour, so do individuals with autism (Aldred, Green, & Adams, 2004; Watson & Fisher, 1997). In addition, the finding indicates that the opportunities presented in drama elicit and/or enable more spontaneous perspective

taking as well as perspective taking of a different quality to that shown in other curricular areas. Quantitative and qualitative differences between perspective taking and factors associated with it in drama and other curricular areas remain visible when the same teachers are working with the same students in curricular areas apart from drama. This suggests that teachers work in different ways in drama or that drama presents different opportunities and that these different ways and opportunities motivate students to engage.

Secondly, specific ways of assisting students in drama are associated with perspective taking. These means of assistance are the same as those identified in curricular areas apart from drama and include instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling. They are also strategies highlighted in experimental research about engaging children with autism in pretend play (Barton & Wolery, 2008; Charman & Baron-Cohen, 1997; Hobson, Lee, & Hobson, 2009). However, when these means of assistance are used in drama, they take on a different quality which relates primarily to encouraging students to draw on their own ideas and think flexibly. This reflects Neelands's view that drama can develop and extend "existing cultural resources in ways that are both familiar and also stretching" (1992: 6). This different quality between means of assistance used in drama and other curricular areas is visible even when the same teacher is involved. As explored earlier (see p247), qualitative differences in the assistance given in drama seem to present more opportunities for students to work in the ZPD. Different approaches to teaching individuals with autism in drama are documented (Peter, 2002; Sherratt & Peter, 2002). However, the strategies that I uncovered as part of this research build on the information in these books and articles in two ways: they provide a more detailed picture of the strategies in use in context highlighting their multimodal nature; they link explicitly the means of assistance with student response providing a clearer picture of the type of responses particular means of assistance may evoke.

Thirdly, peers with autism spontaneously support each other in their learning in drama. Alice adapts the approach adopted by teaching assistants and helps Harry to perform a magic trick to the group (see p146). On being asked to direct a short wedding scene, Ben works with Claire and Eddie and collaboratively creates a wedding scene (see p184). On recognising that Claire is frustrated, Fran advises her to "stop, breathe and think", using a phrase **Simon** uses to help calm Claire (see p201). All of these students show awareness of when their peers need support and employ strategies to support them. Whereas interactive approaches and peer tutoring interventions highlight ways in which typical peers successfully support individuals with autism following training (Bass & Mulick, 2007; Chan et al., 2009; Hess, 2006; Rogers, 2000: 406; Wolfberg, 1995), my findings identify spontaneous scaffolding approaches adopted by peers with autism and illustrate that peers with autism can work collaboratively. It is also notable in this research that the students who spontaneously support each other in their learning in drama are those with higher adaptive

behaviour scores, according to assessment measures. This finding links with the concept of the ZPD where a more capable peer can provide suitable assistance. It may be comparable to findings from research in typical development where older siblings rather than younger siblings have been found to help develop perspective taking, as measured by false belief (Ruffman, Perner, Naito, Parkin, & Clements, 1998). Identifying ways in which peers with autism provide support as well as when they provide support is an underexplored avenue of research and it has important practical applications which I consider below (see p251).

Fourthly, the strategies peers use with each other mirror those employed by their teachers. In curricular areas apart from drama, peers are observed instructing. Instructing is the primary means of assistance for teachers in drama and other curricular areas (see p167 and 182). Like teachers, peers use a broader range of strategies in drama compared with other curricular areas and the strategies they use in drama are similar. This finding is comparable to research about peer collaboration in a mainstream setting (Gnadinger, 2008). However, it contrasts with much advice about individuals with autism which suggests that they tend not to bring learning into their own practice without explicit guidance (Jones et al., 2008: 14; NWSENRP, 2004: 16; Sherratt & Peter, 2002:5). Observing how the students with autism in this research support their peers illustrates very clearly that they can learn incidentally and bring this learning into their own practice.

5.2.2.3 Methodological significance of identifying quantitative and qualitative differences in circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

My use of a multiple case study design enabled me to compare factors associated with perspective taking across contexts. This extends prior research which has focused solely on the drama context. Comparing factors between contexts opens up the opportunity to investigate how factors differ in quantity and quality and the implications these differences have on perspective taking associated with it. In the case of this research, the comparison also allowed me to identify specific factors associated with drama and scrutinise them quantitatively and qualitatively.

5.2.2.4 Practical significance of identifying quantitative and qualitative differences in circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

The findings from this part of the research have practical value in two respects.

First, the examples that I use illustrate practical strategies taken from the drama context. The strategies include instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling but move beyond the direct and literal use which I observed in curricular areas apart from drama to incorporate abstract components which encourage students to draw on their own ideas and think flexibly. It may be that the reason the students are more engaged in drama sessions in this research

compared with other curricular areas is because the challenges presented to them during these sessions are motivating. It could be argued, therefore, that strategies used in the context of drama in this research could be relevant for motivating students in other areas of the curriculum.

Secondly, peer scaffolding approaches that I uncover demonstrate strategies that students with autism spontaneously use. Recognising these strategies can inform a teacher's own practice in three ways. It can enable a teacher to observe incidental learning by individual students; it can highlight preferences in teaching style that a teacher can build into her/his own practice; it can allow for a teacher to create more opportunities in order to build on these strategies and expand them.

5.3 Explaining differences between circumstances under which students show perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas

5.3.1 Identifying a teaching style in the drama investigated in this research

The findings in relation to this question suggest that differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and those in other curricular areas can be explained in part by the interactive nature of drama but also by distinctive elements within drama sessions. Together these suggest a teaching style which elicits and/or enables perspective taking.

The style includes:

- flexibility within structure which is enhanced by the presence of an audience;
- teaching through the action of the whole body;
- employing a wide variety of modes of communication allowing students to access and interpret the curriculum in their own way;
- balancing interests and competencies of individual students and the group;
- the notion of performance which adds an extra dimension to learning through initiation and response;
- setting challenges for students and supporting them in ways that encourage students to think flexibly and draw on their own ideas;
- harnessing group trust by more experienced students supporting less experienced students.

5.3.1.1 Theoretical significance of the identification of a teaching style in the drama investigated in this research

The seven factors that I identified as being associated with perspective taking in interactive approaches are underpinned by a sociocultural approach to human development (see p52). They all relate to the role of social interaction in development; the role of play in development and the course of typical and atypical development which I have already discussed (see p247-249). Highlighting a correspondence between the teaching style in drama in this research and successful factors in the pedagogy of interactive approaches further strengthens the relevance and appropriateness of interactive approaches and their sociocultural underpinnings for individuals with autism.

5.3.1.2 Empirical significance of the identification of a teaching style in the drama investigated in this research

I extend research about interactive approaches and drama as an interactive approach by linking together factors associated with perspective taking as part of a teaching style. In this

way my analysis dissects the teaching style in drama; looks at it in a different light; shows that this style of working applies to moment-to-moment perspective taking and provides additional detail on what elicits and/or enables perspective taking.

- Allowing for flexibility within structure: In drama, there is flexibility within structure during sessions and in the shape of the curriculum as a whole. During sessions teachers adapt the course of the session according to student input and response as in the case of Alice suggesting exercises for a warm up activity (see p209). The shape of the curriculum is structured by performances which provide a focus for teachers and students and a rationale for learning drama and dance skills, playing drama and movement games and rehearsing for a performance. The process of how skills are learnt, games are played and performances are created, however, is elastic. In this way drama enjoys similar benefits to interactive approaches such as music therapy where flexibility and creativity can be fostered within a structured framework (Oldfield, 2006; Wigram, 2002). Such flexibility within structure is also advocated by those with autism (Grandin, 1995: 49-50).

The flexibility within structure in drama provides a safe and secure setting in which to work with, practise and advance skills traditionally associated with play (Peter, 2000, 2003). These skills are critical for development, as has already been explained (see p46), but are not necessarily engaged with naturally by individuals with autism (Jordan, 2003). The focus on performing to an audience – whether the audience is a teacher, the class or the public – also adds flexibility as the way an audience responds can influence a student's performance just as a student's performance can influence the way an audience responds. The effect an audience has on a performance is frequently referred to by drama practitioners (Fleming, 2003: 13) and performers alike (Hare, 1999: 255) but is under researched and difficult to research. The specific focus at the further education unit on performances for visitors has an additional benefit of providing an opportunity for students to legitimise their performance work publicly. This work allows them to engage with a culturally valid activity in the same way as their peers in mainstream settings (Lamb, 2009). Additionally, celebrating their work through performance focuses on the students as people with a wide variety of talents. This point, however, is controversial as I highlighted in the literature review (see p58). Although the aim of the performance from teacher and student perspectives may be to showcase drama work and the individual talents the students bring to it, audience members may not be able to look beyond the fact that these students have autism and judge the performance on these terms. From the way in which performances are constructed at the further education unit, two points deserve comment. First, the students learn drama skills in their drama sessions. The performances reflect both the skills students have learnt and the art that they have created using their skills and interests and through collaboration with their teacher (see p91). This opens up the opportunity for the performance to be judged on these terms.

Secondly, the fact it is students with autism performing directly confronts the prejudices that members of the audience may have. As Eckard and Myers argue in their article about disability arts company, Improbable Theatre Company:

By bringing disability on to the stage, it becomes more visible, more knowable, and thus gives the audience a chance to integrate the reality so they can see beyond their prejudices. (Eckard & Myers, 2009: 73)

The responses of teachers, parents and members of the public to performances by students at the further education unit tend to characterise both of these points in terms of surprise, surprise at the extent to which the students exceed expectations and to which their art is appreciated. This response is encapsulated in an online posting by a member of the public following a conference where students from the drama group performed:

The first International Conference, three years ago, began with a marvellous introduction from Lorna Wing. This year we were treated to an equally inspiring opening. Only this time it was a drama presentation, on film and live on stage, by autistic students ... They were superb! I hope the video is posted on YouTube. (Stanton, 2008)

- Teaching through action: In the drama that I reported in this research, teaching is active focusing on the students 'doing' activities with their whole bodies and their understanding emerging through participation. The teachers appreciate that 'doing' through engagement of the whole body can be a meaningful way of participating in an activity and engaging with an experience. This attitude is encapsulated in the quote at the beginning of this chapter where **Carina** explains to the group, "We are going to do rather than talk about". This point can be interpreted in two inter-related ways. First, Vygotsky argues that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978a: 88). Perhaps participation in drama can be a way in which individuals with autism can share in a "social nature" and the "intellectual life" of a shared culture as has already been suggested on the previous page. Secondly, through 'doing' an activity the students can make their own meaning from it as in the case of **Carina's** example about the actual practical experience changing one's concepts (see p208). This point is in keeping with the philosophy of Grove and Park's work (2001) where there is a belief that understanding can emerge through experience and that this perspective is particularly important for individuals with special educational needs who may be exempt from experiences because of their perceived lack of understanding. As Park noted in a conversation with me about theory of mind difficulties in pupils with autism:

There are two areas where a potential answer may lie, firstly obviously because there may be a theory of mind deficit, mind blindness, but secondly as an alternative possibility simply that it's never been taught. (Park, 2006)

It may be that individuals with autism do not naturally consider their own or other people's thoughts and feelings, but if opportunities are presented for them to actively do so and to practise doing so then there is the potential for it to become part of their natural repertoire. In relation to imitation, Meltzoff and Gopnik make a similar point arguing that imitation is like a private tutorial in person-related versus thing-related interaction:

Children with autism may have a disturbance in the core mechanism for detecting the commonality in body movements between self and other. To the extent that mutual-imitation exchanges are tutorials in common-sense psychology, their absence or diminution might lead to deficits in social understanding and communicative function. (Meltzoff & Gopnik, 1993: 355)

By working with the whole body, drama can perhaps provide opportunities for students with autism to experience the dynamic of their bodily selves in relation to others and start to understand different aspects of perspective taking as a result in terms of how they can represent themselves to others through the body and interpret the meanings that others convey through their bodies.

- Employing a wide variety of modes of communication: Both teachers and students employ a wide variety of modes of communication during drama sessions. The variety of modes of communication in drama seems to provide different pathways through which the students can interact and interpret what is going on (Baldwin & Fleming, 2003: 4). This finding contrasts with studies which suggest that multimodal information does not seem to help and can even hinder the recognition of mental states for individuals with autism (Golan, Baron-Cohen, & Golan, 2008; Pierce, Glad, & Schreibman, 1997). However, these studies focus on observing people in films rather than in real world social contexts which limits contextual cues to draw on in order to interpret that other person's perspective. The finding is consistent with comments by individuals with autism which suggest a need to consider how an individual with autism best thinks and adapt communication as a result (Grandin, 1995; Tissot & Evans, 2003). Indeed, as Vygotsky notes, "Meaning is more important than the sign. Let us change signs but retain meaning" (Vygotsky, 1983: 54). My findings suggest that employing a wide variety of modes of communication opens up opportunities for individuals with autism to engage and gain from social interaction.
- Engaging with student interests and competencies: Teachers draw on student interests and competencies in both individual drama sessions and performances. **Simon** and **Carina** adapt how they work with each individual student in the group and draw on individual student interests in co-ordinating group activities. As drama is a group activity, this latter point is particularly important and both teachers demonstrate intense sensitivity towards the students to ensure that as individuals and as part of the group everyone is

able to participate meaningfully in drama. Engaging with student interests and competencies also provides an opportunity for teachers to build on an individual's prior experience, broaden their interests into useful activities and preserve the real of their experience. This finding reinforces Jordan and Jones's advice:

Looking for strengths and interests, and working with these, is likely to be more effective than focusing too much on areas which the pupils find very stressful. (Jordan & Jones, 1999: 64)

The finding is consistent with both a 'positive differential approach' advocated by Vygotsky which involves attempting to understand the worldview of individuals and working from their strengths (Rieber & Carton, 1993) and a view of drama that seeks to build on an individual's existing cultural resources in familiar and stretching ways (Neelands, 1984: 6). It reinforces findings from research about interactive approaches and comments from those with autism which suggest that using student interests and competencies engages, motivates and empowers (Barrett, 2006; Billington, 2006; Grandin, 1995; Williams, 2005). It also complements findings from experimental research indicating that the quality and quantity of social response improves when an adult follows an individual's lead (Koegel, Dyer, & Bell, 1987; Lewy & Dawson, 1992; Siller & Sigman, 2002).

- Basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and students: Drama activities centre on initiation and response between teachers and students and the notion of performance brings an additional dimension to this initiation and response. This finding has three important empirical implications. First, it emphasises the importance of feedback in relation to self concept and in particular the experiencing self. There is evidence to suggest that individuals with autism have difficulty with personal episodic memory or remembering themselves as part of an experience (Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000). By teachers encouraging what students are doing, using student ideas, and both teachers and peers giving feedback on student performance, students are able remember themselves as part of an activity and consider themselves in relation to others as part of that activity. Secondly, it locates motivation within human interaction focusing on process as well as product. This focus on the process of human interaction, the idea of performing with and to others and the intrinsic enjoyment that all of this interaction can bring, educates students that human interaction on a one-to-one, group and performer-audience level is co-operative and can be rewarding in itself. Indeed, observing more perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas suggests there is more motivation to interact in drama. This motivation to interact appears to be particularly in evidence when students are rehearsing for a performance where there are more instances of perspective taking (381 of 1,264) and more occurrences of spontaneously participating in drama (160 of 467) captured than in

any other part of drama sessions. Thirdly, it demonstrates that teachers need to work as hard as students in order to interact and learn from each other.

The behaviour of social and emotional reciprocity needs to be acquired with something more than chance; reciprocity needs to be developed more purposefully by non-autistics and applied more generously toward autistics. (Gernsbacher, 2006: 142)

The dynamic ways in which **Simon** and **Carina** interact with students, using individual interests and differentiating the ways in which they communicate suggest that they do work hard to build a reciprocal relationship with students on an individual and group level.

- Challenging students and supporting them in their learning: Teachers challenge students in their learning in drama and then 'scaffold' or 'assist' them to meet challenges. This finding confirms findings from studies of other interactive approaches which suggest that input is more effective when it is organised in a way so as to scaffold the individual's actions (Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007). Although strategies in drama are identified – such as instructions with multiple steps and an abstract component, open questions and instructing-modelling where parameters are set for students to draw on – the ways that teachers challenge, scaffold and assist students in their learning is based more on differentiation, collaboration and negotiation than a set of specific approaches. This approach highlights that learning is a two-way process which needs to rest on the communication of shared meaning and this will not necessarily be the same between two individuals (Moll, 1990). Drama, however, differs from other areas of the curriculum and some other interactive approaches in that it "offers a metaphorical device for exploring a range of perspectives" (Peter, 2009: 14). This "metaphorical device" opens the door to working in a more flexible way with concrete and abstract concepts and encouraging students to draw on their own ideas. Vygotsky contends that:

Precisely because retarded children, when left to themselves, will never achieve well-elaborated forms of abstract thought, the school should make every effort to push them in that direction and to develop in them what is intrinsically lacking in their own development. (Vygotsky, 1978a: 89)

In the case of this research, drama seems to be an activity where students across ages and abilities can be challenged where they may not be to the same extent in other curricular areas. Drama sessions appear to open up opportunities for students, who may typically find perspective taking difficult, to work with it; be supported in it and, over time, come to bring aspects of it into their everyday lives.

- Building a trusting relationship with students: Trust plays an important role in drama, both between teachers and students and within the group. The trust is based on mutual

respect highlighting in another way the importance of attitudes and mutual understanding in teaching over prescribed teaching techniques. Trust is not something that a teacher and a student achieve once and for all, it is “continually negotiated” (Nicholson, 2002: 89). It is, perhaps, for this reason that attempts to measure objectively the impact of teacher enthusiasm on the learning of students with autism have failed (Natof & Romanczyk, 2009). They do not take into account that affect is shown in different ways with different individuals and that an affective relationship needs to be based on trust which takes sensitivity and time to nurture and develop. Trust also involves having high expectations and presuming competence.

By presuming the competence of people who do not always demonstrate it in traditional ways, the teacher is then freed to approach the learner with thoughts and practices that would lead her/him to engage the student in meaningful academic opportunities. (Kasa-Hendrickson, 2005: 67)

In this research **Simon** and **Carina** assume that all students can participate in a task and differentiate tasks so that they can all participate in them. The value of this approach has been noted in other interpretative studies where an individual's responses have been much more positive when there is an assumption of being able (Flewitt, Nind, & Payler, 2009: 231). In certain respects the importance of building a trusting relationship reinforces what Asperger noted 60 years ago, “they need teachers who understand them and their condition and allow them to learn in their own way” (Frith, 2003: 135).

In addition, this finding highlights the value of mixing students in terms of their age, ability and experience of drama in order to facilitate building trust in the group. Just as findings from this research have shown that more able peers support less able peers which sits theoretically with Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD, more experienced peers seem to help less experienced peers engage with activities in drama sessions by setting an example for them. Although the value of mixing peers with autism with typical peers has been shown through experimental research in group interventions (Chan et al., 2009), research about the impact of mixing peers with autism across a range of age, abilities and experience has not previously been reported.

5.3.1.3 Methodological significance of the identification of a teaching style in the drama investigated in this research

The methodological approach and methods that I used to reach the findings to this question highlight the importance of weaving theory with practice and using both theory and practice to shed light on each other. This approach is advocated in sociocultural approaches where there is constant dialogue between theory and practice (Vygodskaya, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978c); it is arguably good practice for all research.

5.3.1.4 Practical significance of the identification of a teaching style in the drama investigated in this research

Highlighting factors relating to the interactive nature of drama and distinctive elements pertaining to drama within these is significant practically for two reasons.

First, it provides general factors for teaching individuals with autism, rooted in sociocultural theory and distilled from interactive approaches. Although I observed these general factors in drama sessions, there is no reason why they cannot be adopted in both mainstream and special educational needs settings. General factors include:

1. Allowing for flexibility within structure
2. Teaching through action
3. Employing multiple modes of communication
4. Engaging with student interests and competencies
5. Basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and students
6. Challenging students in their learning and supporting them
7. Building a trusting relationship with students

These general factors support in operationalising government goals “of personalising learning for all students, making education more innovative and responsive to their needs and raising achievement of all students (DfES, 2004) which are challenging to meet” (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008: 138). The general factors highlight that teaching individuals with autism is more about an ethos than a teaching formula which is in concord with conclusions from research about educational approaches for individuals with autism and inclusive educational practice (Jordan, 2008: 13; Jordan, Jones, & Murray, 1998: 119; Nind, 2000: 194). The relationship between general and specific factors associated with perspective taking also reinforces research findings which suggest that an understanding of autism combined with attitudinal and strategic teaching approaches improves outcomes for both teachers and students. Indeed, training to this effect has been shown to reduce teacher stress and improve outcomes for the individuals involved, manifest in reduced challenging

behaviour and improved social interaction (Aldred, Green, & Adams, 2004; Probst & Leppert, 2008).

Secondly, it points to distinctive elements within the drama researched in this thesis which support eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking. These distinctive elements include the dimension of audience which brings additional flexibility to the structure; teaching through action of the whole body; employing a wide variety of modes of communication which facilitate access and understanding; engaging with student interests and competencies by balancing individual and group interests; basing the process of learning on initiation and response between student as performer, within a performance and with the audience; challenging students and supporting them in their learning by setting appropriate challenges and employing strategies that encourage students to think for themselves; and harnessing group trust by combining age and experience so that peers can learn from and support each other. I set out a model drama lesson plan which incorporates these factors in Appendix 13 (see p436). Although these factors lend themselves well to drama activities, many of them can be equally applicable to other areas of the curriculum. However, particular to drama and a point that I have raised repeatedly is the notion of and the importance of a performance. The notion of performance brings together many of the other distinctive elements that I identified within the interactive context of drama. The notion of a performance creates a social dynamic between performer, performance and audience which presents opportunities for perspective taking on many different levels. As a performer, a student is given the opportunity to share a rehearsed or improvised performance with an audience. In sharing, a student has many spontaneous decisions to make about how to perform to an audience and the response of the audience may influence this. As part of a performance, a student needs to think about her/his own role in relation to both others in the performance and the audience. In preparing for a performance or performing improvisations as part of drama sessions, there are opportunities for students to be challenged to think flexibly and draw on their own ideas. As part of an audience, a student is given the opportunity to watch and respond to the performance of others as well as consider individual performers in that performance. In this research, my findings also demonstrate the importance of working towards a performance which is shared with visitors to the school and wider audiences and I have considered briefly the politics of this (see p254). The performance gives a sense of purpose to drama sessions and to the drama work students do at school. This is visible in many of the comments made by students which refer specifically to the 'performance' as a culmination point (see p218).

5.4 Perspective taking in drama over time and across contexts

5.4.1 Evidence to suggest that perspective taking shown in drama maintains and develops over time, internalises and generalises to other contexts

Perspective taking shown in drama maintains and develops over time, internalises and generalises to other contexts for all students involved in this research. There are individual differences between students, however, in the extent and nature of how perspective taking manifests over time and across contexts.

5.4.1.1 Theoretical significance of suggesting the maintenance and development of perspective taking over time, internalisation and generalisation to other contexts

Suggesting that the perspective taking manifest in drama maintains and develops over time, internalises and generalises to other contexts is important theoretically for two reasons.

First, it provides additional evidence to support the view that perspective taking in autism is not an intrinsic deficit but is one which is integrated with the social context and evolves through social experience.

Secondly, it demonstrates that the students can talk about the perspective taking they show in drama outside of the drama context and that they can show perspective taking that potentially originated or developed in drama outside of the drama context. This finding suggests two things: that students may initially rely on the strategies of teachers and peers to enable them to 'move' toward the other (Wimpory, Hobson, & Nash, 2007) but become able to use these strategies independently; that perspective taking is not bound to specific social factors or a particular social context but has the potential to transfer.

5.4.1.2 Empirical significance of suggesting the maintenance and development of perspective taking over time and internalisation and generalisation to other contexts

Empirically, my findings are in accord with and extend research about individuals with autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education by presenting a picture of aspects of perspective taking over time and across contexts, and highlighting individual differences between students. I reflect on each aspect of perspective taking in turn.

- Reciprocating socially: Reciprocating socially is an area of development for all students involved in the research. This finding is consistent with both survey findings that I reported earlier in this thesis in which 89% of teachers from Autism Accredited schools and units believed drama improved the social skills of pupils and students involved (see p85) and with findings from four studies involving individuals with autism participating in drama activities which suggest developments in reciprocal social interaction over time (Alcock & Howlin, 2003; Cattanach, 1996; Lindkvist, 1977; Peach, 2003). I extend these studies by illustrating how reciprocating socially can develop in drama over time and potentially generalise to other areas of the curriculum.
- Initiating interaction: There is a suggestion made by teachers and parents that engagement in drama supported some students in initiating interaction and impacted on the extent to which they initiated interaction in other contexts at school and at home. This finding is consistent with survey findings that I reported in this thesis in which 89% of teachers from Autism Accredited schools and units believed drama improved communication in their students and pupils (see p85). Of note in this research are students with a range of communication abilities communicating about drama outside of the drama context either spontaneously or in response to questions. Their contribution suggests that they enjoy and are motivated by drama which builds on prior research about drama and individuals with autism by reflecting their experience and understanding of drama activities.
- Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others: Students grow in confidence in drama visible in their ability to cope with increasingly challenging scenes and sequences which they remember and perform. There is evidence of generalisation in the students' abilities to perform in unfamiliar contexts and in their increased confidence in other contexts at school and home. Finding that drama leads to greater confidence in the individuals involved is consistent with survey findings that I reported earlier in this thesis where 93% of teachers from Autism Accredited schools and units responded that drama improves the self-confidence of their students (see p85). It also concurs with conclusions drawn from research involving individuals with autism engaged in drama activities (Davies & Lee, 2005; Lindkvist, 1977). I build on findings from previous studies, however, by giving examples of how individuals with autism can be seen to grow in confidence. Similarly, showing that students are aware that drama is a forum in which they can share their achievements with others extends previous studies by incorporating how the students interpret the purpose of the performance and suggests 'internalisation'. Indeed, drama boosting the self-confidence of these students may be one of the reasons for reported changes in behaviour in students. These include Alice showing less challenging behaviour and Fran showing less anxiety over the course of the year (see p220). As self-concept regulates

behaviour, it may be that drama enables these students to be more conscious of themselves and their behaviour and that this increased awareness remains with them (Dweck, 1986; Harter, 1983).

- Engaging in varied, spontaneous, make-believe: Students develop in their ability to improvise which involves varied, spontaneous make-believe. This finding is compatible with experimental research findings about play in individuals with autism which suggest that there can be improvement in spontaneous, varied make-believe over time (Kok, Kong, & Bernard-Opitz, 2002; Rutherford, Young, Hepburn, & Rogers, 2007; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993; Yang, Wolfberg, Shu-Chin, & Pey-Yun, 2003; Zercher, Hunt, Schuler, & Webster, 2001). It also accords with findings from research about drama and individuals with autism which suggest that flexible thinking and creativity can develop through engagement in drama (Cattanach, 1996: 89; Jones, 1996: 227). I advance research about individuals with autism engaging in varied, spontaneous, make-believe by giving detailed examples of developments in this area and by incorporating student understanding on this domain. Data from interviews with students reveal that they can all identify performances they have been part of and know that in these performances they “show new dances” or “say lines”. It is unclear, however, whether students “understand these realities to be mentally based” (Lillard, 1993: 367) in drama performances involving make-believe. Data from observations suggest, however, that even if these students do not understand that the realities in drama are mentally based, they are still able to participate in them and make meaning from the activities they take part in. Conversations with students with stronger language abilities indicate that they do acknowledge dual status in drama (Davis & Lawrence, 1986: 16) and can reflect on it. These students were able to talk about the different roles they had played in performances whilst at the further education unit and could talk about the dual status of props such as a Christmas tree being a rocket ship (see p222).
- Reciprocating emotionally: Although developments in reciprocating emotionally are not identified in data, there are suggestions that emotional reciprocation associated with drama internalise and generalise. This is visible in student abilities to discuss feelings generated in drama. Through this finding, I build on research by Whitehurst which suggests that individuals with difficulties communicating verbally can still communicate their thoughts and feelings about an activity which can be useful in planning future activities (Whitehurst, 2006). All ten students in the research reported in this thesis were able to reflect back on their engagement in drama and talk about aspects they liked and disliked as well as consider how drama made them feel. These responses demonstrate that these students can recall personally experienced events and may reflect a heightened ability to recall events when in the company of others (Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000) or when there is emotional engagement (Hughes & Leekam,

2004). During interviews with students about drama, several were able to recognise that their performance could evoke feelings in others. This is a finding about drama with individuals with autism which has not been noted in previous studies and is important for reflecting on the politics of individuals with autism engaging in drama. For some students involved in this research, the findings about reciprocating emotionally contrast with findings from simple theory of mind tests. Although there is a certain amount of agreement that theory of mind tests only capture a relatively narrow and well-defined range of social behaviours (Fombonne, Siddons, Achard, Frith, & Happé, 1994; Frith, Happé, & Siddons, 1994; Travis, Sigman, & Ruskin, 2001), my findings suggest that experimental tests of theory of mind do not reflect the breadth and flexibility of perspective taking in real world social contexts.

- **Forming peer relationships:** The majority of students develop in their ability to form peer relationships and, in some cases, this generalises to other contexts. This finding adds evidence to studies mentioned earlier which suggest that drama develops the social skills of participants involved (Alcock & Howlin, 2003; Cattanach, 1996; Lindkvist, 1977; Peach, 2003) and I provide clear examples of how this can manifest. Comparable to research about interactive approaches including one about drama, there is evidence in this research that participation in drama has led to genuine friendship (see p226) (Alcock & Howlin, 2003; Wolfberg & Schuler, 1993). Additionally, showing that the students can spontaneously talk about themselves engaged in activities with others and identify when working with others is important extends previous research about individuals with autism engaging in drama. This finding also contrasts with experimental research about self-concept in individuals with autism which suggests that the social self is markedly less defined in those with autism compared with those without, with no mention of relationships and interactions with families or friends or reflection on themselves as part of social activities such as belonging to a group or helping others (Lee & Hobson, 1998).

5.4.1.3 Methodological significance of suggesting the maintenance and development of perspective taking over time and internalisation and generalisation to other contexts

The methodological approach and methods that I used to reach the findings from this question are significant in three respects.

First, through the interpretative paradigm and case study methodology which advocate a combination of methods to capture the complexity of a phenomenon in real world social contexts, I show the value of incorporating the viewpoints of the students involved. As I explained in the chapter on methodological approach and data collection methods, incorporating the viewpoints of the students appreciates that they are active social agents and experts about their own lives. Interviewing individuals with autism presents challenges,

however, because of difficulties with self-report and reflecting on their own experience in addition to those related to social interaction and communication (see p105). The approach that I developed to interview students in this research builds on the debate about how to involve individuals with autism in research (Beresford, Tozer, Rabiee, & Sloper, 2004; Preece, 2002). I tackled difficulties by incorporating as stimuli widgeit literacy symbols, photographs and video footage from drama sessions. These different modes of communication seemed to provide enough stimuli to enable the students to engage meaningfully with questions that I asked. The responses also suggest experiential awareness and evidence of personal episodic memory which counters findings from experimental research (Capps, Yirmiya, & Sigman, 1992; Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000). I enhanced the trustworthiness of these responses by correlating them with responses to other questions in the interview which probed the same area as well as observations and interview data from class teachers and drama teachers. Being familiar with the students prior to carrying out the interviews meant the students were more relaxed in my company and I arranged the interview so that it flowed more like a conversation with me sitting next to the students and on the same level. All students were able to engage with the full interview and they did not appear to acquiesce as Stalker cautions (1998). All students volunteered to add further information about their participation in drama through extended responses to questions, comments about photographs or video footage and requests to see photographs or video footage again. The responses the students gave provided a window into their understanding of drama and also gave an indication of what they found meaningful or 'internalised' from their participation in drama.

Secondly, through the interpretative paradigm and case study methodology, I highlight the importance of garnering views from a range of sources. These comprised those directly involved in teaching the individuals with autism (drama teachers and class teachers) as well as those who were not (the school psychologist, head teacher, manager of the further education unit and parents) to gain a picture of perspective taking over time and across contexts. These viewpoints were useful because they could be combined and compared with other data sources such as observations and documentation to reach findings about perspective taking shown in drama and other curricular areas as well as perspective taking over time and across contexts.

Thirdly, through the methodological approach and methods, I reveal the benefits of researching over a long period of time where consistency in observations can suggest maintenance over time and changes in individual students over time can be investigated by asking parents, class teachers and drama teachers and examining documentation such as annual reviews. This can enable a more detailed picture to be developed of perspective taking in individuals with autism over time and across contexts.

5.4.1.4 Practical significance of suggesting the maintenance and development of perspective taking over time, internalisation and generalisation to other contexts

The positive findings suggesting maintenance and development of perspective taking over time, internalisation and generalisation to other contexts add further weight to the benefits of incorporating drama or the teaching style that I identified within drama into the curriculum. I have already discussed these points (see p251, 261).

From the findings to this question, I draw out two further practical implications for teachers.

First, the benefits of observing and listening to students, and taking time to garner their views. Similar to taking note of how students participate in the social context (see p246), accounts from the students outside of sessions can help to understand aspects of sessions they find meaningful which can facilitate future lesson planning. The different modes of communication that I used to interview students in this research can also be used as a template for devising feedback sessions with students in schools and future research.

Secondly, the importance of learning about students from sources in different contexts. Bringing together viewpoints from subject teachers, class teachers and parents can create a more detailed picture of how an individual interacts, communicates and makes meaning which is also valuable for future planning.

5.5 Reflecting on the credibility of the findings and the methodological approach used

My discussion of the findings by question has shown the ways in which the findings elucidate and extend prior research. But how credible are these findings? As a framework for reflecting on the credibility of the findings and the methodological approach, I use five questions which are rooted in recommendations suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), adapted from O'Leary's indicators of 'good' research (2004: 58) and draw on Yin's criteria of an exemplary case study (2003: 161-165).

1. Is my subjective positioning managed throughout the research?
2. Do I approach my methods consistently?
3. Have I really captured what is happening?
4. Are my findings applicable beyond the immediate frame of reference?
5. Can my findings be verified?

5.5.1 Is my subjective positioning managed throughout the research?

As the researcher is the instrument in interpretative research, I needed to be transparent about my role throughout the research process. I sought to achieve this transparency by keeping myself in the research and showing clearly how and why I took particular decisions and followed particular lines of enquiry. For example, I clarified how I came to the research and the extent of my relationship with the organisations involved; I set out in the literature review my understanding of autism and positioning of drama education and I explained my role in the data collection and analysis process. Transparency is not easy and I found that I needed to constantly reflect on my relationship with the participants and the data that I was generating. There are many examples that I could draw upon to illustrate this reflection. The example that I have chosen to exemplify my approach to dealing with issues that arose out of reflection concerns an ethical challenge relating to the students' consent to participate in the research. I was content with the steps I took to explain the research to the students, ensure they were happy with my presence as an observer and to ensure their participation in interviews was voluntary and meaningful. I was not certain, however, how far this consent extended beyond data collection. Do students understand, for example, that in consenting to the research their words and photographs of them will form part of research reports and are they happy about this? I sought to address this challenge in four ways. At the start of the project, I gained written consent from parents and the head teacher and verbal consent from drama teachers to incorporate "excerpts from observations, feedback conversations, interviews ..." into research reports (Appendix 6.1-6.5: 324-342). At the end of the data collection period, I thanked students for their help and explained that I would now talk about what I had learnt and help other people. I passed the thank you note to each student and it

included within it photographs of the students engaging in drama over the year (Appendix 6.8: 351). After the data collection period, some of the students were involved in a conference workshop about the research and I explained that talking about their work was an important part of talking about the research. In the completed version of the thesis, I blurred still images and incorporated them in black and white to protect the identity of the students involved. These four ways provided different approaches to tackling this challenge which both involved the students directly and considered implications for research reports.

5.5.2 Do I approach my methods consistently?

I used a wide range of methods to collect and analyse data in this research and, in detailing these methods, I considered the way in which they are conducted and documented with reference to steps taken to enhance trustworthiness. This approach to detailing the methods had two aims. First, to show the completeness of the case study and the exhaustive effort spent collecting all the relevant evidence so that I could analyse closely perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated with it across contexts (Yin, 2003: 162-163). Secondly, to demonstrate that the methods are dependable in the sense of being “systematic, well-documented, and designed to account for research subjectivities” (O’Leary, 2004: 58). There are, however, challenges to consistency resulting both from methods that I did not use and from the way in which I used particular data collection methods.

The absence of video as a data collection method in curricular areas apart from drama potentially limited a fair comparison between perspective taking and factors associated with it in drama and other curricular areas. Although it would have been desirable to incorporate video as a data collection method in other curricular areas, this was not possible for ethical and practical reasons (see p102). Video data, however, still had relevance for field notes in curricular areas apart from drama because field notes were collected in the same way across contexts. In addition, I strengthened the trustworthiness of field notes in curricular areas apart from drama by having informal conversations with teachers and members of staff to discuss and clarify what I had observed in the sessions and I compared field notes from individual sessions with field notes over the observation period so that I could look for areas of consistency and contrast.

This research relies heavily on information gained through observation. Yet to recall a question by Hobson, “How can an observer judge the significance of autistic children’s expressions, if the normal coordinated patterns of expression and behaviour might be absent or aberrant in these children?” (1991: 1137) My stance in this research was that individuals with autism do intentionally communicate and that rather than seeing their communication as “aberrant” my task was to capture how individual students communicate. I sought to do this by spending time with and observing the students prior to starting the research and speaking

with class teachers and drama teachers to gain an understanding of how individual students interact and communicate. I incorporated multimodality into my approach to observation so that I could capture different ways in which students were communicating and analyse them in detail. As these observations were over time, I was able to compare findings and look for consistency and discrepancy. Additionally, I could compare and contrast data from observations with data from other sources to help me interrogate and reach consensus on findings.

It was not possible to obtain parental feedback for all students involved in the research. The parents of seven students responded to a questionnaire sent at the beginning of the year and the parents of three students responded at the end of the year. Absent information prevented a home perspective from being incorporated into the data analysis. Even when parents gave their feedback, it was sometimes compromised by their limited knowledge of school activities. Nevertheless, I could still obtain a relatively full picture of each student from class teachers who have regular contact with parents and from annual reviews which incorporate viewpoints from different members of staff working with the student.

I placed a certain amount of weight on the feedback given by students during sessions and during interviews with students. However, individuals with autism are reported to have difficulties with self-report, in particular recalling personally experienced events (Capps, Yirmiya, & Sigman, 1992; Millward, Powell, Messer, & Jordan, 2000). As described earlier, I devised a specific interview approach so that the students could meaningfully engage in an interview about their participation in drama. This approach incorporated symbols the students were familiar with as well as photographs and video footage of the students during sessions. The components seemed to provide sufficient stimuli for the students to participate in a feedback session with me. As with feedback given by students during sessions, the responses were correlated with and interrogated by other sources of data before I reached conclusions.

5.5.3 Have I really captured what is happening?

In outlining the paradigm in which this research is conducted, I explained that truth is about reaching a consensus rather than a single valid truth (see p78). One way in which the truth value of the research can be assessed is by considering the authenticity of the findings or the extent to which the findings capture what is happening in the context. In this research, I sought to capture what was happening in the context and display sufficient evidence in an engaging manner (Yin, 2003: 164-165) by combining an overview of what was in the data with detailed analysis of examples from the context. I presented the findings by question to maintain focus and allow for clarity when discussing the implications of findings and how they relate to theory, prior research and practice. The way I formulated the questions set up

opportunities to explore alternative explanations before reaching conclusions (Yin, 2003: 163-164). For example, my analysis of perspective taking and factors associated with it in drama and other curricular areas opened up the opportunity to question whether drama is a context in which perspective taking can be elicited and/or enabled and whether there are factors specific to drama. Similarly, exploring whether differences between factors associated with perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas could be explained by the interactive nature of drama opened up the opportunity for alternative explanations to be uncovered. Capturing what is happening in the context is not, however, without its challenges and I raise three below.

I focused my analysis on perspective taking and factors associated with it and considered these two areas separately. Although it could be argued that this separation breaks up the context and as such is at odds with typical interpretative research, the reason I chose to research in this way was so that I could reach a consensus about how perspective taking manifests in the interactive context of drama before turning to why this may be the case. In analysing why perspective taking is shown, I focused on factors that were temporally prior to the perspective taking shown. This is because, from analysing these factors in context, I judged them to be influencing the instances of perspective taking in question. This meant, however, that I did not always give full consideration to important teaching elements following an instance of perspective taking. These elements included feedback, explanations and positive or negative encouragement. Many of these points, however, I expanded upon in the analysis of why there might be differences in the perspective taking shown in drama compared with other curricular areas (see p206).

Given the amount of data collected, I had to make decisions about how to present it. In the findings about perspective taking and factors associated with it, I chose to do this in terms of an overview of what was in the data and a representative example from the context that was informed by analysis of the whole data set. The overview showed how perspective taking or factors associated with it manifested across the group and between contexts whereas the example enabled closer analysis of a particular aspect of perspective taking or factor in context. This approach potentially masked a full picture of how and why perspective taking manifested in individual students. However, I chose the approach adopted because it enabled a balance to be drawn between the picture of perspective taking and factors associated with it for individual students and across the group.

I observed two drama teachers and six class teachers as part of this research which is a relatively small pool of teachers. It could be argued that I observed the quantitative and qualitative differences in perspective taking in drama because of two excellent drama teachers. However, I also observed these two teachers working with students in other

curricular areas and yet quantitative and qualitative differences in perspective taking and factors associated with it between drama and other curricular areas remained.

I analysed student interviews to gauge what students took away from drama sessions and examined class teacher interviews, questionnaires and documentation to ascertain whether perspective taking shown in drama maintained and developed over time and generalised to other contexts. Together, data gave a positive indication about maintenance, development and generalisation with clear examples from the context. In future, an experimental design focusing on particular outcomes could provide an alternative approach to questions about maintenance, development and generalisation. The outcomes could be identified from aspects of perspective taking in this research.

5.5.4 Are my findings applicable beyond the immediate frame of reference?

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the theoretical, empirical, methodological and practical significance of the findings. This discussion was important in demonstrating the contribution of the findings (Yin, 2003: 161-162). But, how applicable are these findings beyond the immediate frame of reference? There is debate amongst interpretative researchers both in terms of whether findings should be and how they can be deemed to be transferable (Larsson, 2009). Whereas in research within a positivist paradigm applicability tends to be judged in terms of whether the findings from a sample can be considered to be representative of a larger population, in research within an interpretative paradigm where samples are not necessarily representative such an approach is not appropriate. Instead other approaches are used to illustrate the significance of findings to larger populations or other contexts and I consider three in relation to this research.

The findings from this research are detailed. I illustrate clearly perspective taking shown and factors associated with it and accompany these findings with a comprehensive description of the research context and methods used. Although the setting of the research at one UK school which provides a uniquely intense drama curriculum potentially has implications for the transference of findings to settings where drama is not or cannot be practised in such an intense way, I deliberately chose to focus on such an intense curriculum to build up a detailed picture of interaction in drama. This detailed picture has enabled me to identify general and specific factors associated with perspective taking in drama which has relevance for those working with individuals with autism in drama education and education more generally. As Corrie and Zaklukiewicz remark:

Qualitative research is of value to those involved in the practice of education not because it is fully exhaustive and definitive – social life is so complex and variable that no account can be so – but because it provides a realistic account of the world as participants experience it and such research can be

used by them to aid their understanding in the world. (Corrie & Zaklukiewicz, 1985: 135)

It is through the detailed description of perspective taking in individuals with autism and factors associated that I seek to enable readers to decide on wider applicability.

There is relative unanimity in the findings relating to perspective taking and factors associated with it across the ten students involved. Although the participation of ten students in this research is a small sample, the sample is larger than many studies involving students with autism. Indeed, in a review of ten social skills interventions for children with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism, only three studies included more than ten participants (Rao, Beidel, & Murray, 2008: 358). Additionally, the students are not selected at random and, furthermore, they have learning difficulties associated with autism. The fact that there is consensus in findings across these ten students who have varying autistic characteristics, however, adds to the applicability of the findings beyond the frame of reference through what Laarson refers to as "maximising variation" (Larsson, 2009: 31). The small sample has the additional advantage of allowing me to retain the individuality of each student and the examples of individual students participating in drama and other areas of the curriculum provide a realistic picture of perspective taking and factors associated with it in context.

Using a multiple case study design, I was able to demonstrate the relevance and applicability of sociocultural theory to individuals with autism. My analysis of perspective taking and factors associated with it in the interactive context of drama education revealed consistent patterns across the ten students. These patterns suggested that individuals with autism showed perspective taking in the interactive context of drama education because the teaching approaches in this context reflected sociocultural theory. This analysis contrasted with different patterns of perspective taking and factors associated with it across ten students in other areas of the curriculum. In other areas of the curriculum, the patterns suggested that individuals with autism showed less instances of perspective taking than in drama because the teaching approaches in these contexts did not reflect sociocultural theory to the same degree. The agreement in findings about factors associated with perspective taking, therefore, gives the findings wider applicability on theoretical grounds. They demonstrate that interactive approaches based on sociocultural theory are relevant and applicable to individuals with autism.

5.5.5 Can my findings be verified?

The verification of findings within an interpretative paradigm relates predominantly to auditability and the extent to which methods are explicated so that others can see how and why conclusions were reached. I sought to demonstrate auditability by providing a clear

picture of the research setting, educational contexts under investigation and participants involved in the research; by documenting systematically the ways in which I used methods to collect and analyse data; and by placing additional material in the appendices to add to the transparency of these methods.

This process has been particularly important in relation to areas where I needed to build on existing research approaches to devise appropriate methods for the research at hand. These include the ethical approach that I developed to involve the students with autism in the research; the interview approach that I devised to incorporate student viewpoints and the multimodal approaches that I used to capture and analyse perspective taking and factors associated with it.

5.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discussed the theoretical, empirical, methodological and practical significance of the findings by research question. I reflected upon the credibility of these findings from five different angles: my subjective positioning; the consistency of the methods; the extent to which the findings capture what is happening; the applicability of the findings beyond the immediate frame of reference; and the extent to which the findings can be verified. In this section, I summarise the significance of the findings in terms of how they elucidate and extend knowledge about autism in relation to perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education.

Through the findings, I strengthen an understanding of perspective taking in autism as multifaceted, having potential for development and being rooted in social experience. I extend current knowledge about perspective taking in autism by presenting a picture of perspective taking in real world social contexts. This picture shows that perspective taking manifests in quantitatively and qualitatively different ways across individuals with autism and that it is not necessarily more visible in individuals with higher adaptive behaviour scores, according to assessment measures. Additionally, the findings illustrate that perspective taking manifests in multimodal ways and in different ways across contexts, resulting from different social factors in these contexts.

In concert with research about interactive approaches, my findings suggest the relevance of applying a sociocultural approach to human development to individuals with autism which is empowering for teachers and carers. I extend research and practice about interactive approaches by uncovering factors associated with perspective taking noting, in particular, when students spontaneously participate in the social context and how peers with autism spontaneously support each other.

Through the findings, I enhance knowledge about the interactive context of drama education with individuals with autism by demonstrating that students show more perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas and by describing how the perspective taking shown is qualitatively different. I note particular differences in relation to spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests and achievements with others; engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe; forming peer relationships and considering how other people think and feel. Specific factors account for these quantitative and qualitative differences. A comparison of these factors across contexts reveals that students respond to and participate in the social context in drama more than in other areas of the curriculum. The comparison also reveals quantitative differences in means of assistance which provide more opportunities for students to draw on their own experience and think flexibly. When I considered the factors in drama in relation to successful factors in interactive approaches which are underpinned by a

sociocultural approach to human development, each of these factors were present alongside distinctive elements pertaining to the drama investigated. Together these suggest a teaching style which elicits and/or enables perspective taking. Particular to drama is the notion of performance and this aspect of drama brings together many of the distinctive elements that I identified. The findings have implications for practice in general education and drama education for individuals with autism. Returning to a closer analysis of perspective taking in the interactive context of drama, my findings extend previous research by suggesting that perspective taking maintains and develops over time; internalises and generalises to other contexts which adds further endorsement for the practice of drama with individuals with autism.

The research differs from previous studies about drama with individuals with autism by focusing on a larger number of participants (ten); involving young adults (16 to 19) rather than young children; young adults with a cross section of abilities rather than just those with good language abilities or those with severe needs; and observing over a longer time frame (34 weeks) which gives a clearer picture of individuals with autism engaging in drama. As I observed qualitative and quantitative differences in perspective taking in drama across the group and associated these differences with particular factors which are underpinned by a sociocultural approach to human development, the findings potentially have a wider application for individuals with autism and those who work with them. Indeed, in relation to practical relevance for teachers, the findings provide examples of ways of working in drama and illustrate the value for practice of reflecting on the modes of communication students use to communicate; how and when students participate in sessions; how and when they spontaneously work with peers; and what students find meaningful in sessions by conducting feedback with them outside of the context.

I conclude this research in the next chapter by drawing together its achievements and pointing to avenues for future research.

6. Conclusion

***“There are no limits for children with autism.
They can get there with the right support.”***

Head teacher

In the research reported in this thesis, I investigated perspective taking and factors associated with it in the interactive context of drama education. The research was complex involving the development of close relationships with students and teachers at the further education unit where the research was based; the collection of vast amounts of data and the careful organisation of this data to make sense of it. The process was fascinating and incorporated far more than I initially anticipated. It revealed the varied ways in which individuals with autism show perspective taking which suggest that it is multifaceted, multimodal and integrally connected with the social context. In turn, investigating factors associated with perspective taking demonstrated that sociocultural approaches, particularly in interactive contexts such as drama education, are theoretically relevant and practically applicable to the education of individuals with autism. The research process and its findings have significance on theoretical, empirical, methodological and practical levels which I discussed along with considerations relating to credibility. In this chapter, I summarise the key findings; consider avenues for future research that these findings open up and outline practical implications.

6.1 Key findings

Key findings include:

- Students show perspective taking in drama and this perspective taking is multifaceted and manifests in multimodal ways through spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others; reciprocating socially; reciprocating emotionally; initiating interaction; engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe; forming relationships with peers.
- Perspective taking varies in its manifestation between contexts. In relation to drama, findings reveal that there are more instances of perspective taking in drama than in other curricular areas. Differences are particularly notable in relation to spontaneity in terms of spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests and achievements with others and engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe; the ways in which students form relationships with peers; and the interest they show in the thoughts and feelings of others.

- Students show perspective taking in order to respond to or spontaneously participate in the social context and there are quantitative differences between students.
- There are more occurrences of means of assistance and means of participation in drama than in other curricular areas and the range of means of assistance and means of participation is wider. A closer examination of means of assistance reveals qualitative differences which suggest that teachers challenge students more in drama than in other areas of the curriculum through instructions with multiple steps and instructions with an abstract component; open questions; and instructing-modelling which demonstrate parameters on which students can base their own work. A more detailed investigation of means of participation suggests that the students have more of an emotional investment in the social context in drama which motivates them to participate. Quantitative and qualitative differences remain when drama teachers are observed working with students in other curricular areas.
- Peers with autism can spontaneously support each other in their learning and use a wide range of approaches in order to do this. These approaches tend to mirror those of their teachers illustrating that individuals with autism can learn and do learn incidentally. It tends to be students with higher adaptive behaviour scores who spontaneously support their peers.
- Drama brings a distinctive dimension to each of the seven factors identified in interactive approaches. These distinctive dimensions may account for differences in perspective taking and factors associated with it in drama compared with other curricular areas. These include:
 - flexibility within structure which is enhanced by the presence of an audience;
 - teaching through the action of the whole body;
 - employing a wide variety of modes of communication allowing students to access and interpret the curriculum in their own way;
 - balancing interests and competencies of individual students and the group;
 - the notion of performance which adds an extra dimension to learning through initiation and response;
 - challenging students and supporting them in ways that encourage students to think flexibly and draw on their own ideas;
 - harnessing group trust by more experienced students supporting less experienced students.

Together these elements form a teaching style which appears to contribute towards eliciting and/or enabling perspective taking. Particular to this teaching style in drama is the notion of performance which brings together many of the distinctive elements

about drama in this research and creates a dynamic between performer, performance and audience.

- Perspective taking shown in drama appears to maintain and develop over time; internalise and generalise to other contexts for all students involved, regardless of age and ability. However, there are qualitative differences between students.
- Cumulatively, the findings imply that the interactive context of drama and the teaching style within it is a fruitful one in which to build and nurture flexible thinking, an understanding of the self and other people, and relations between them in individuals with autism.

6.2 Avenues for future research

Through the research process and findings, I open up avenues for future research in the following directions.

- Drama and individuals with autism: I identify aspects of perspective taking which individuals with autism show in drama and uncover particular strategies that may facilitate these; illuminate how individuals with autism make meaning in drama; and contribute to debate about the politics of individuals with autism performing. However, there is a clear need for further studies to investigate the participation of individuals with autism in drama and bring additional clarity to the learning of individuals with autism in drama education. Further discussion is also needed about the politics of individuals with autism performing. This debate is underdeveloped but particularly important in light of the widespread practice of drama in schools, as I show in the survey of Autism Accredited schools and units, and growing media interest in the opportunities presented to individuals with autism through drama and performance work (Dehaney, 2010; Gilbert, 2010; Kelly, 2010). This media interest not only underscores the need to unpack “theatre, drama, commercial success, stardom ... to really understand the social constructions of drama, success and dramatic careers” (Roulstone, 2010: 434) so that people with disabilities have more access to mainstream creative work but highlights the urgent need to unpack how and whether these notions shift when applied to people who are placed in or are already in the limelight. Performances by individuals with a particular condition/disability which attract wider media interest also need closer scrutiny in terms of both their impact on the individuals themselves and how a particular disability/condition may be interpreted.

- Multimodality: I highlight the value of analysing the multimodal nature of teacher and student interactions. Within the same dataset, there is potential to investigate further the modes of communication that students and teachers use in drama in an attempt to understand more clearly how students are making meaning in the drama activities in which they participate. Multimodality in general has huge potential for autism research in examining competencies in individuals with autism and investigating how they interact in different contexts.
- Role of peers: I identify ways in which peers with autism spontaneously support each other; the advantage of a mixed age group in the classroom; and the value of peer pressure. There is the opportunity to investigate further the role of peers with autism supporting each other in their learning in different contexts and across experience and age groups.
- Factors associated with perspective taking: I uncover factors associated with perspective taking in drama and other curricular areas. Further studies that investigate factors associated with perspective taking in other contexts would enable the findings from this research to be enhanced and substantiated.
- Interpretative studies: I show how research about individuals with autism in real world social contexts can both challenge perceptions about the condition and uncover ways in which to support individuals with it. Additionally, my findings reinforce the value of interpretative studies and the need for additional studies of this nature to deepen understanding about individuals with autism, particularly in educational contexts.
- Involving individuals with autism in research: I illustrate the value of involving individuals with autism in research about them. There is scope for involving participants with autism even more in research through participatory or emancipatory research designs.

6.3 Practical implications

The findings from the research have particular practical implications. These can inform both drama education and educational approaches more generally for individuals with autism and could be brought together as part of an INSET or teacher training for those working with individuals with autism. These include:

- Recommending general factors that encourage perspective taking in individuals with autism. These factors are underpinned by a sociocultural approach to human development and include:
 - Allowing for flexibility within structure
 - Teaching through action
 - Employing multiple modes of communication
 - Engaging with student interests and competencies
 - Basing the process of learning on initiation and response between teachers and students
 - Challenging students and supporting them in their learning
 - Building a trusting relationship with students

These factors are not specific to drama but drama adds a distinctive dimension to each, particularly in relation to the notion of performance.

- Providing guidance on specific ways in which teachers can engage individuals with autism in drama and in other curricular areas. These include instructing, questioning and instructing-modelling. It also raises awareness about the multiple modes of communication that students use in the classroom; the ways in which students participate in social contexts; and the ways in which peers work collaboratively and suggests that the timing and content of these can be reflected upon by teachers to inform their own practice.
- Suggesting an ethical procedure in the consent and interview approaches that can be used by schools and researchers alike when working to gain the perspectives of individuals with autism.

Through the research reported in this thesis, I contribute towards theory, research and practice about autism in the fields of perspective taking, interactive approaches and drama education. It is my sincere hope that this research will be a platform: a platform for researchers to continue to build on our understanding of autism; a platform for teachers to draw on the guidance presented in this thesis and work in truly reciprocal and flexible ways to give the 'right support' to individuals with autism; and a platform for me to continue to research, learn from practice and inform practice.

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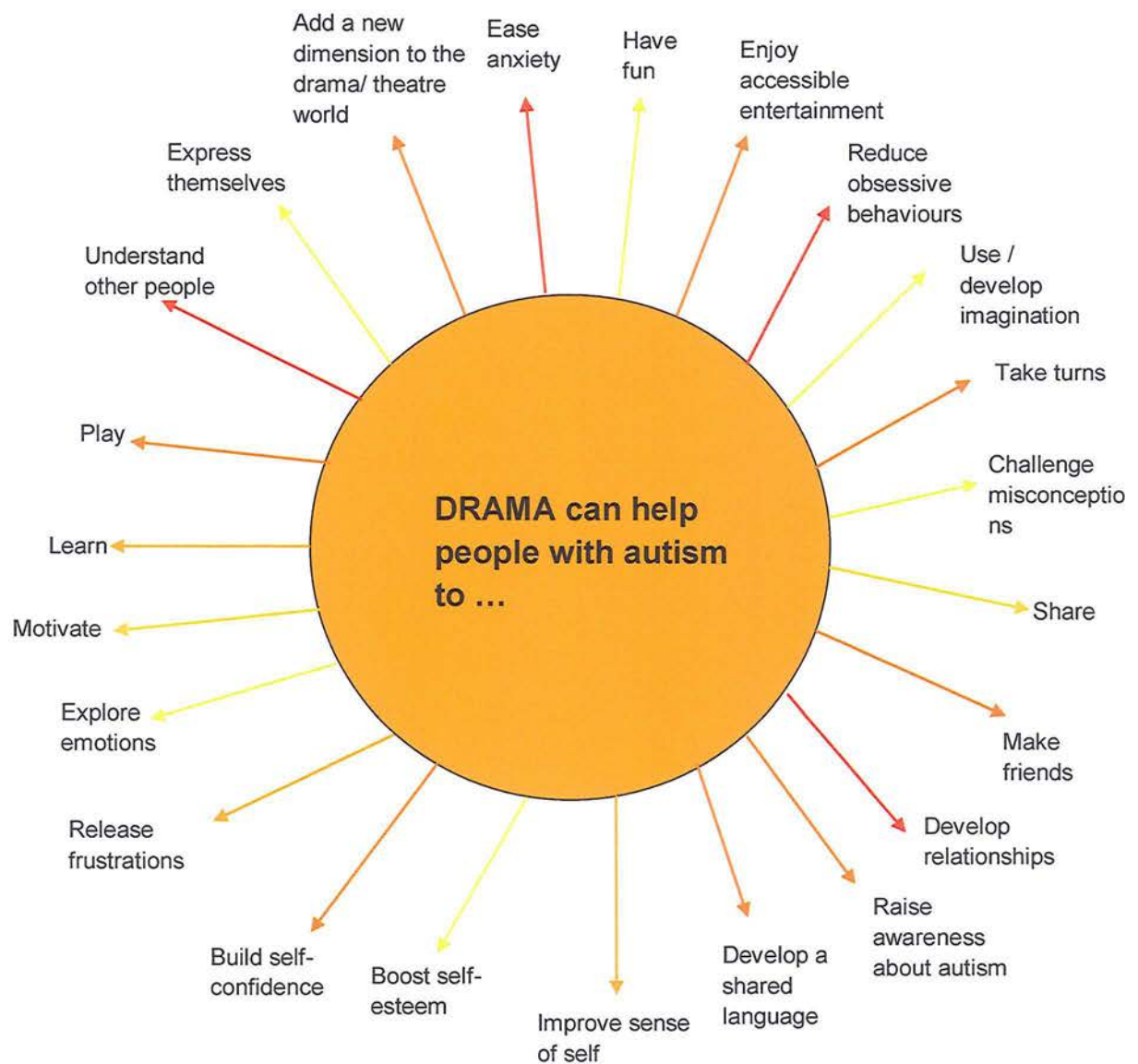
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Appendix 1: Reported outcomes from participation in drama



A summary of how drama work for people with autism can be helpful (Loyd, 2004: 64)

Appendix 2: Research timetable

Activity	Time
Ascertaining the scope of drama education available for students with autism	
Survey of Autism Accredited schools and units (44) via Autism Accreditation	January 2007, March 2007 and February 2008
Obtaining consent	
Consent letter to school	February 2007
Consent letter to parents of students involved incorporating a version for students	March 2007
Consent letter to parents of new students involved incorporating a version for students	September / October 2007
Verbal consent from students	September 2007 to July 2008
Conducting assessment measures	
Assessment measures with class teachers of students: Social Communication Questionnaire Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales	September / October 2007
Assessment measures with class teachers of students: Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales	June / July 2008
Carrying out interviews	
Interviews with drama teachers	September 2007
Interviews with class teachers	September / October / November 2007
Interviews with school psychologist	September 2007
Interviews with manager of further education unit	February 2008
Interviews with school head teacher	May 2008
Interviews with drama teachers	July 2008
Interviews with class teachers	June / July 2008
Gaining feedback from parents	
Survey to parents with option of face-to-face meeting	September / October 2007
Survey to parents with option of face-to-face meeting	June / July 2008
Speaking with students	
Student prompted and spontaneous comment during observations	September 2007 – July 2008
Individual student feedback sessions	March 2008
Observing sessions in drama and other curricular areas	
Field note observations of drama sessions and sessions from other curricular areas	September 2007 – July 2008
Video observations in drama sessions	Four times per term, September 2007 to July 2008

Collecting school documentation	
Annual reviews	September 2007
Student profiles	September 2007
Behaviour support plans	September 2007
Annual reviews	July 2008
Debriefing to school and students	
Student debriefing	July 2008
Debriefing to school psychologist	February 2009
Debriefing to head teacher	May 2009
Analysing and disseminating	
Submission for upgrade	April - June 2008
Analysis and writing up of individual chapters	August 2008 – August 2009
First full draft	September 2009
Dissemination to school, NAS, Research Autism and interested parties	2010 onwards

Appendix 3: Description of participants

3.1 Description of the students

Alice is 18 and in her third and final year at the further education unit. She participates in drama sessions full time. Alice is in the same class as Ben and her class teacher is Mark. Her favourite session at school is drama and she particularly looks forward to performances. In her spare time, Alice loves looking up information about her favourite food and films on the internet. She is very communicative and has good language abilities. Her speech, however, can become unclear when she is upset. Alice is social and has particular students, usually male, who she enjoys spending time with. This year, her favourite student is Eddie who does drama with her.

Ben is 18 and in his third and final year at the further education unit. He participates in drama sessions one morning per week and more frequently as a performance approaches. Ben is socially able and spends three days per week at a mainstream college where he pursues BTEC and NVQ courses in computing and cookery. He is in the same class as Alice and his class teacher is Mark. Ben is a relatively solitary student at the school enjoying spending time listening to his iPod and surfing the internet. He looks forward to his classes in the mainstream environment but recognises that drama is an activity that helps him to work with other students at the school.

Claire is 18 and in her third and final year at the further education unit. She participates in drama sessions full time. Claire's class teacher is Elaan. Claire enjoys all the activities she participates in at school. She is an avid reader and enjoys reading with Gina during break times and to her class when the opportunity arises. She loves drama and performances and is very happy performing rehearsed scenes to visitors at short notice. Indeed, Claire refers to herself as an "actress".

Deborah is 17 and in her second year at the further education unit. She participates in drama sessions full time. Deborah is in the same class as Fran and her class teacher is Ed. Deborah enjoys organising and takes on the daily task of sorting out the files of residential students. Deborah likes people and introduces herself to visitors at the school. She is particularly interested in names. Deborah loves drama, particularly the performance, and enjoys learning new words to say in the performance.

Eddie is 17 and in his second year at the further education unit. In his first year, he participated full time in drama sessions. This year, he participates in drama sessions for two out of three mornings per week. He spends one morning doing work experience at a bookshop. Eddie is in the same class as Jacob and his class teacher is Simon. In his spare time, Eddie enjoys looking at TNT magazine and his favourite session at school is drama. Eddie does not use speech to communicate but he has a good level of comprehension and can communicate clearly using gesture, vocalisations and the written word.

Fran is 17 and in her second year at the further education unit. She participates in drama sessions for two out of three mornings per week. She spends one morning doing work experience at a local charity shop. Fran is in the same class as Deborah and her class teacher is Ed. In her spare time, she loves talking to staff about fashion and what she has been doing. Her favourite activity at school is work experience and she also enjoys drama, although can become unsettled when rehearsals interrupt her timetable.

Gina is 16 and in her first year at the further education unit. She is also the only student in the group who is new to the school and to formal schooling. Gina participates in drama sessions full time. Her class teacher is Carina. In her spare time, Gina enjoys listening to music and during break times she reads with Claire. Her favourite activity at school is music and she also enjoys swimming.

Harry is 16 and in his first year at the further education unit. He participates in drama sessions full time. Harry is in the same class as Isy and his class teacher is Carl for the first two terms and Christopher for his third term. In his spare time, Harry enjoys telling stories and singing songs and he likes to be surrounded by other students. Harry enjoys community activities such as going to the local café or the library and he likes to spend time on the computer.

Isy is 16 and in her first year at the further education unit. She began the year participating in drama sessions full time but, in her third term, she started work experience at a book shop one morning per week. Isy is in the same class as Harry and her class teacher is Carl for the first two terms and Christopher for her third term. Isy loves organising and holds responsibility for getting the register in the morning, handing out timetables to the students and filling in outing forms when the students leave the school premises. She uses single words to communicate but has good comprehension and learns visually very quickly. Isy enjoys singing and dancing as well as time on the computer.

Jacob is 17 and in his second year at the further education unit. He is, however, new to drama sessions having focused on PE in his first year. Jacob participates in drama sessions full time. He is in the same class as Eddie and his class teacher is Simon. In his spare time, Jacob enjoys playing on the computer and participating in energetic activities. Jacob has very good levels of comprehension and takes on responsibility for getting the register and monitoring other students when in the classroom and out in the community. Jacob is very expressive in terms of his facial expressions and gestures but uses single words or short sentences to communicate verbally.

3.2 Description of the teachers

Carina has taught at the school for two years and is Gina's class teacher. She is a drama teacher at the school and, as well as experience in special education, she has a background in performance as an actor.

Carl has taught at the school for five years and is Harry and Isy's class teacher. He is a PE teacher at the school. He left the school in April 2008 and was replaced by Christopher.

Christopher has taught at the school for one year and replaced Carl as Harry and Isy's class teacher and the school's PE teacher.

Ed has taught at the school for five years and is Deborah and Fran's class teacher. He is a music teacher at the school.

Elaan has taught at the school for three years and is Claire's class teacher. He co-ordinates work experience for students at the school.

John writes the script for performances. He has been at teaching assistant at the school for five years and is a professional author and playwright.

Mark has taught at the school for one and a half years and is Alice and Ben's class teacher. He is an art teacher at the school and has a background teaching art in a mainstream setting.

Mary is the manager of the further education unit. She has been based at the school for over five years and has a background in school management, as well as professional training in art and dance.

Simon has taught at the school for five years and is Eddie and Jacob's class teacher. He is also the main drama teacher at the school and has a professional background in dance and choreography.

Appendix 4: Survey of Autism Accredited schools and units

4.1 Survey questions

What is the extent of drama education in schools and units where there are pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

Introduction to Daisy Loyd and the research

I am a researcher at the Institute of Education, University of London investigating the impact of drama education on pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This is a project that I am taking forward in partnership with Research Autism and the National Autistic Society working with Heathernmount School and the Institute for Education. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

One aspect that has become clear through my preliminary research is that the availability, use and understanding of drama education vary considerably between schools and units where there are pupils with an ASD. In order to gain a better understanding of the scope of drama education in these domains, I have designed a survey which initially seeks participation from Autism Accredited schools and units. As a head teacher at an Autism Accredited school / unit, I would like to draw on your help by asking you to participate in this survey. It should take no more than ten minutes of your time and I can assure you that your survey responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Please note that the survey relates to teaching pupils with an ASD.

I do hope that you will be able to take part and thank you in advance for your help.

Background information

Name

Position

Name of school / unit

Age range of school / unit

- ☐ 3 to 11
- ☐ 3 to 19
- ☐ 11 to 16
- ☐ 11 to 19
- ☐ 16 to 19

Classification of school / unit

- ☐ Mainstream school with pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- ☐ Mainstream school with a specialist unit for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- ☐ Specialist school for pupils with learning difficulties
- ☐ Specialist school for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Manager and / or financier

- ☐ Local Education Authority
- ☐ Autism charity
- ☐ Private funding

Availability of drama

1. Is drama available to pupils at your school / unit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (**Please move on to question 4**)

2. Is drama available to every pupil at your school / unit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, please explain

3. Why do you work with drama? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ It enables pupils to participate in an art form.
- ☐ It is a useful teaching tool.
- ☐ It is a way of teaching life skills.
- ☐ It is statutory.
- ☐ Other, please explain

(Please move on to question 5)

4. Do you do any of the following? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ Movement with music
- ☐ Annual / biannual school play / production / show
- ☐ Animated storytelling
- ☐ Sing songs
- ☐ Role-play
- ☐ Other, please specify

(Please move on to question 19)

Drama in the curriculum

5. How is drama incorporated at your school / unit?

- ☐ Curricular
- ☐ Extra-curricular **(Please move on to question 15)**

6. How is drama incorporated into the curriculum? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ As an art form
- ☐ As a performing art
- ☐ As part of English
- ☐ As a teaching tool in other subjects
- ☐ As drama therapy
- ☐ Other, please specify

7. Is drama timetabled on the curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. Do all pupils participate in drama every week?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, please explain

9. How often do pupils that participate in drama have a drama session?
- ☐ Less than once a week
 - ☐ Once a week
 - ☐ More than once a week
10. How long is a drama session?
- ☐ Less than one hour
 - ☐ More than one hour
11. Do you assess drama work?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No (**Please move on to question 14**)
12. How do you assess drama work? Please tick one or more of the following.
- ☐ Against Individual Education Plan
 - ☐ Against curricular levels
 - ☐ Using the input of pupils
13. Is drama work accredited (e.g. certificated by the OCR Curriculum or similar?)
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
14. Is pupil participation in drama work included in pupil reports and records?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Teacher qualifications

15. Are your teachers that take drama sessions specialist drama teachers?
- ☐ Yes, all are
 - ☐ Yes, some are
 - ☐ No
16. Do your teachers that take drama sessions teach other subjects as well?
- ☐ Yes, all do
 - ☐ Yes, some do
 - ☐ No

17. Are your teachers that take drama sessions trained in drama teaching?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No **(Please move on to question 19)**

18. What is the nature of their training in drama?

- ☐ Post Graduate Certificate in Education
- ☐ Continuing Professional Development
- ☐ Other, please specify

Extra-curricular uses of drama

19. Do you have an annual / biannual play / production / show involving your pupils?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. Do external practitioners visit to lead drama activities with pupils?

- ☐ Yes, please explain
- ☐ No **(Please move on to question 22)**

21. How often do external practitioners that lead drama activities visit your school?

- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Once a term
- ☐ More frequently

22. Is dramatherapy available to your pupils through your school / unit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Working with drama

23. Do you think all pupils have the capacity to engage with drama?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

24. In your experience, what do you consider to be the main barriers to pupil engagement in drama? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ Unease around other people.
- ☐ Limited communication skills.
- ☐ Challenging behaviour
- ☐ High levels of anxiety
- ☐ Other, please specify

25. In your experience, what do you consider to be the main barriers to teaching drama? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ Lack of teacher training
- ☐ Pupils do not have the ability to engage in drama
- ☐ Teacher fear
- ☐ Managing pupil behaviour
- ☐ Lack of funding
- ☐ Other, please specify

26. What do you consider to be the main objectives of drama at your school? Please tick one or more of the statements below

- ☐ To participate in an art form
- ☐ To access literature
- ☐ To boost pupil confidence
- ☐ To encourage working with other people
- ☐ To encourage communication skills
- ☐ To enhance imagination
- ☐ Other, please specify

27. What outcomes do you see from drama? Please tick one or more of the statements below.

- ☐ Knowledge of drama skills
- ☐ Knowledge of literature
- ☐ More self-confidence
- ☐ Reduction in challenging behaviour
- ☐ Improved social skills
- ☐ Improved communication
- ☐ Other, please specify

Keeping you informed

28. Would you like to be kept informed with the results of this survey?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please return this survey to Daisy Loyd at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or to Daisy Loyd, c/o Anton Franks, The Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL.

If you would like more information about the wider research project, please contact Daisy Loyd at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk.

*Thank you for your time and for sharing this information with me.
I greatly appreciate it*

4.2 Survey report

The survey presented on the previous pages was sent by email to 45 Autism Accredited schools and units across the UK and 27 responded spread relatively evenly across Autism Accredited schools and units; a response rate of 60 per cent. Of the respondents, 16 were either head or deputy head teachers, nine were class teachers and two did not specify their role. There were no obvious patterns in the data that differentiated the views of class teachers from those of head or deputy teachers. The responses given build the following picture of the availability, use and understanding of drama education in schools and units for pupils with an ASD.

Background information

The age range of the schools

The respondents were in schools and units that ranged in age groups from three to 19. The majority of respondents were in primary schools, 37 per cent; three were in schools and/or units dedicated to the 16 to 19 age group which is the group that my research focuses on; and a further nine catered for students up to the age of 19.

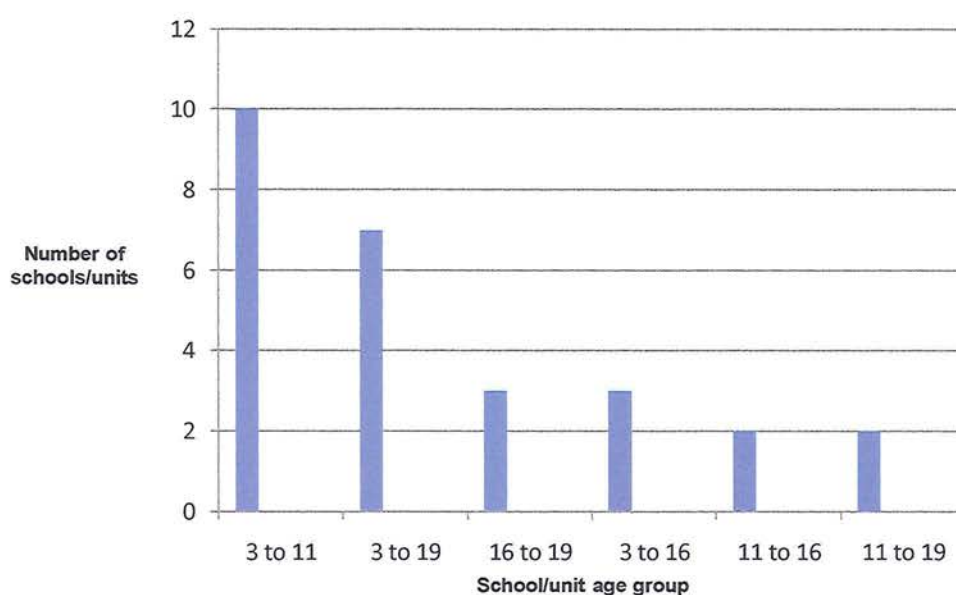


Figure I: The age range of the schools and units that responded to the survey

Classification of the schools and units

Almost half of respondents (48 per cent) were in schools that specifically catered for pupils and students with an ASD. This is similar to the school where this research is based. One third (33 per cent) were in specialist schools for pupils with learning difficulties and a small proportion (18 per cent) were in mainstream schools with specialist provision for pupils with an ASD.

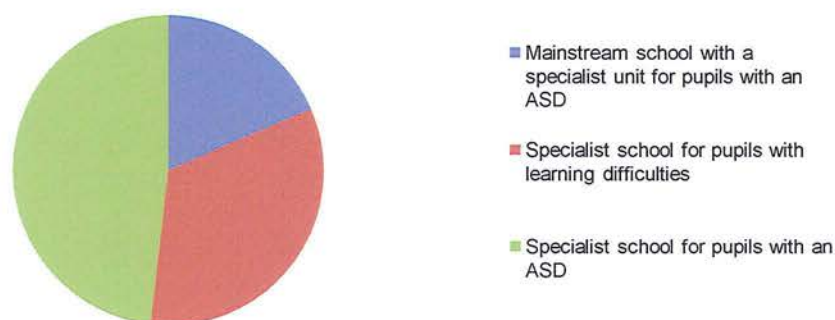


Figure II: The classification of the schools and units that responded to the survey

Two thirds of the respondents (66 per cent) were in schools and/or units managed and financed by the Local Education Authority. Of the 27, six were in schools and/or units funded by an autism charity and two were in privately funded schools and/or units.

Availability, use and understanding of drama

The availability of drama in schools and units

Drama is available to pupils at 24 out of 27 of the schools surveyed. Given that drama is compulsory as part of English within the National Curriculum and up to the age of 16 and all schools in England and Wales have to follow the National Curriculum, the availability of drama and its place on the curriculum for pupils with an ASD is expected. Drama is not offered at a school specialising in Applied Behavioural Analysis where it is considered that "pupils do not have the ability to engage in drama"; at an autism-specific provision within a mainstream school and a specialist school for pupils with an ASD where "lack of teacher training" is given as the reason for its absence.

Reasons for working with drama

The respondents that do work with drama do so for a variety of reasons. The majority of the respondents regarded drama as a useful teaching tool (75 per cent), enabling pupils to participate in an art form (71 per cent) and as a way of teaching life skills (58 per cent). Several also mentioned that it was an important tool in encouraging students to think flexibly;

to develop skills to communicate and to interact with others. It was also highlighted as being an activity that pupils enjoyed.

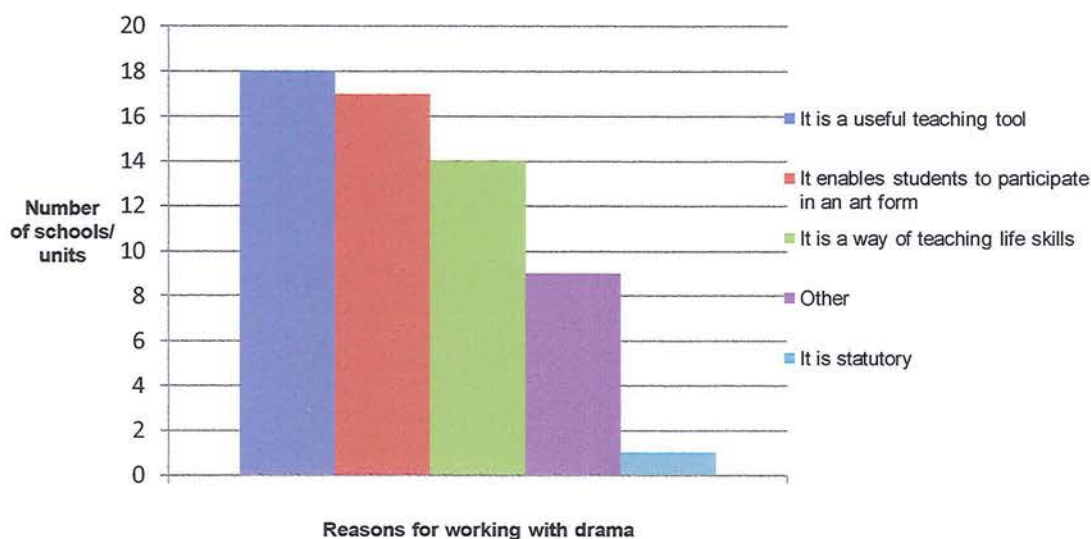


Figure III: Reasons for working with drama

The contents of drama

Drama is used in a variety of ways in schools for those with an ASD. The most popular use of drama is role play with 22 respondents noting this use in their school. A similar number, 21, responded that an annual or biannual school show was prepared for in their school and this figure includes respondents in schools that do not offer drama within the curriculum. Of the schools offering drama within the curriculum, teachers work with music and movement in 20 of them; sing songs with their pupils in 19 of them and work with animated storytelling in just under half of them.

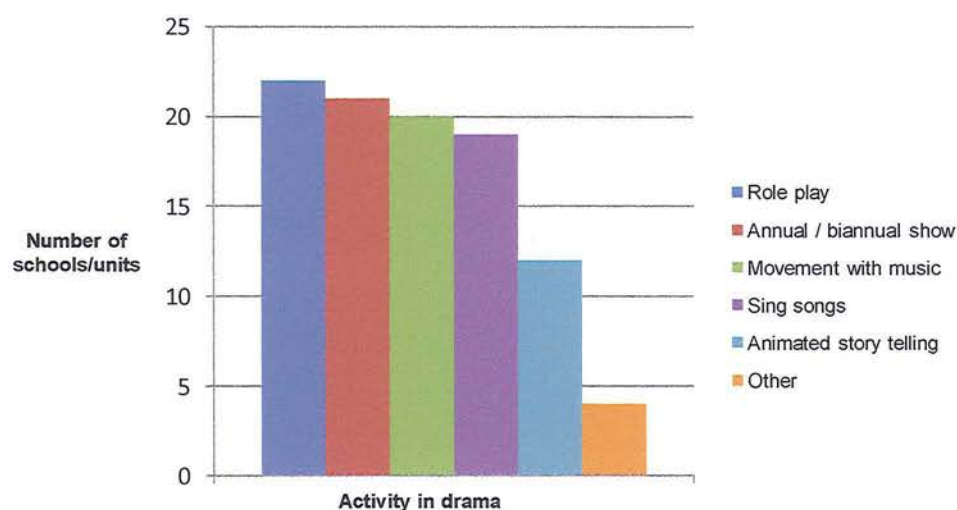


Figure IV: The contents of drama

The ways in which drama is incorporated into the curriculum

Drama is incorporated into the curriculum in various different ways. For three quarters of schools, drama is incorporated as an art form or performing art. A large proportion of schools used drama as a teaching tool in other subjects (71 per cent) and almost two thirds engaged with it as part of English (63 per cent).

The amount of drama offered to pupils

Drama is timetabled on the curriculum at 14 of the 24 schools offering drama (58 per cent). It is worked with every week at 11 of the 24 schools (46 per cent). This, however, is not always as part of a dedicated drama session as many of the schools rotate drama with other expressive arts including art and music. This is the case at 7 of the 24 schools and units (29 per cent). Alternatively, it is dependent on the teacher as to whether drama is used in lessons (13 per cent). In terms of the length of a drama session, the majority are less than one hour (67 per cent) with three schools and units offering sessions of more than one hour.

The assessment of drama

Of the 24 schools and units offering drama as part of the curriculum, 18 respondents said that the drama work carried out is assessed (75 per cent). This assessment is primarily against individual education plans (61 per cent) with some assessment against curricular levels (39 per cent) and some using the input of pupils (39 per cent). Drama work is accredited at two schools and units. This is either as part of an Entry Level and GCSE or as part of an ASDAN. Three quarters of respondents in schools and units offering drama on the curriculum (75 per cent) said that it was reported in pupil reports and records.

The training and qualifications of teachers taking drama sessions

Of the 24 schools and units offering drama on the curriculum, 10 (42 per cent) have specialist drama teachers with training taking drama sessions. Of this number, however, it is not always the specialist drama teacher who takes all drama sessions. All of the drama teachers teach other subjects as well as drama.

Extra-curricular drama activities

The majority of schools and units put on an annual or biannual show involving pupils (78 per cent) and this includes schools which do not offer drama on the curriculum. Over half of the schools and units also work with external practitioners (52 per cent). This includes theatre-in-education groups and links with local theatres. Activity with external practitioners or theatre groups takes place more than once a term for five of the 14 schools and units; once a term for three of them and once a year for four of them. Some of the schools and units did not respond to how regularly they worked with external practitioners and theatre groups. None of the schools and units offers dramatherapy for their pupils.

The ability for pupils with an ASD to engage with drama activities

Of the 27 respondents, 19 (70 per cent) believed pupils with an ASD could engage with drama activities on some level. Those that did not considered drama activities to be inappropriate for pupils with an ASD because they did not have the ability to engage with it. The main barriers to pupil engagement were considered to be high levels of anxiety (70 per cent), limited communication (63 per cent) and challenging behaviour (56 per cent). The other reasons given relate to a lack of theory of mind skills. These include difficulties in interacting with others, pretending and thinking flexibly as one teacher explained:

The level of learning disability and deficits associated with autism mean that some children will simply not understand conceptually.

One teacher, however, was keen to highlight that there were no barriers to pupils engaging with drama as:

Children engage at their own level, within their own zones of confidence.

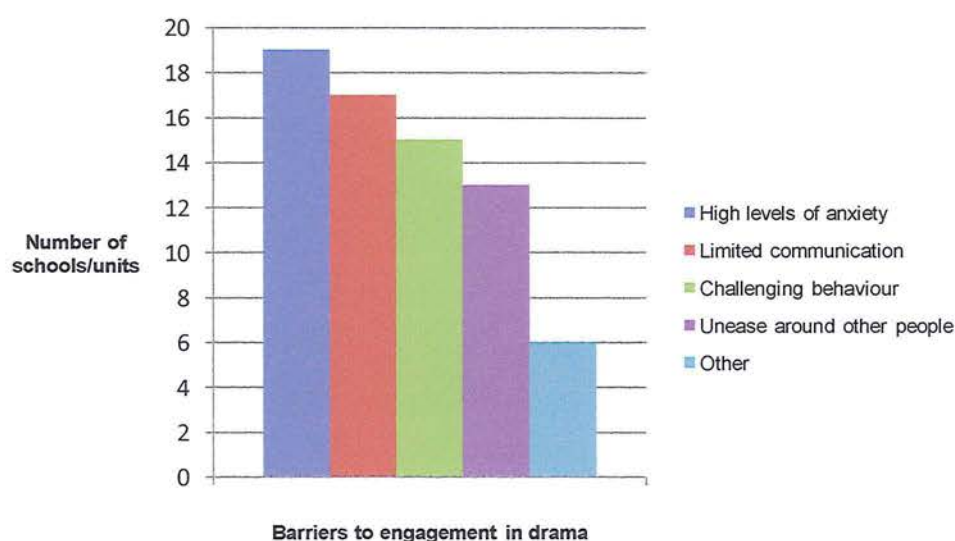


Figure V: Barriers to engagement in drama

Barriers to teaching drama

A large proportion of respondents (59 per cent) highlighted a lack of teacher training as the primary barrier to teaching pupils with an ASD drama. Some explained that this related to knowing how to adapt drama to account for both difficulties in theory of mind and the range of abilities of those with an ASD. As one teacher explained:

There is lack of awareness by staff as to what drama actually means or can mean for children with ASD.

Over one third (37 per cent) acknowledged that teachers were afraid of teaching pupils with an ASD drama. This may be because they believed pupils do not have the ability to engage in drama (22 per cent) or that they were concerned about managing pupil behaviour (27 per cent) during the session. Other reasons given as barriers to teaching drama included a lack of time, space and equipment. As one teacher explained:

Pressure to cover other areas of the national curriculum

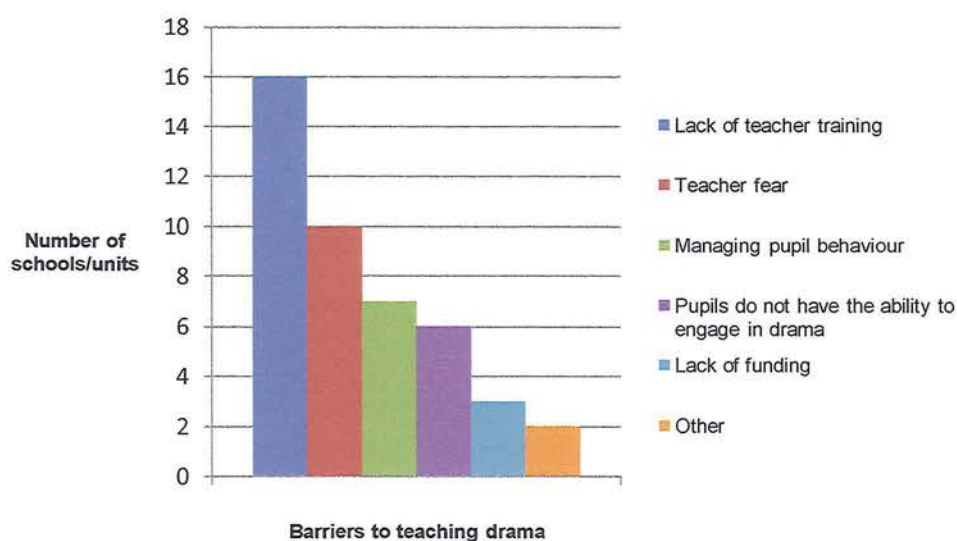


Figure VI: Barriers to teaching drama

The outcomes of drama

Although some respondents were more cautious than others about the appropriateness of drama for pupils with an ASD, all of them identified outcomes from participating in drama activities. Of 27 respondents, 25 (93 per cent) believed drama activities helped to boost self-confidence and a similar number 89 per cent (24 out of the 27) claimed drama improved social and communication skills in their pupils. One teacher explained:

My school was involved in Drama4Learning and Creativity [a drama project across Norfolk] with two aims. 1) To see if ASD pupils could show empathy/imagination/improve social interactions 2) To improve communication skills generally. I feel it is meeting both of these aims.

Smaller numbers considered drama to reduce challenging behaviour (33 per cent) and improve knowledge of literature (33 per cent) and drama skills (22 per cent). Other outcomes mentioned included improved understanding of other perspectives; personal and

social development of the individual in their specific needs area such as sensory curriculum; enjoyment and parental satisfaction.

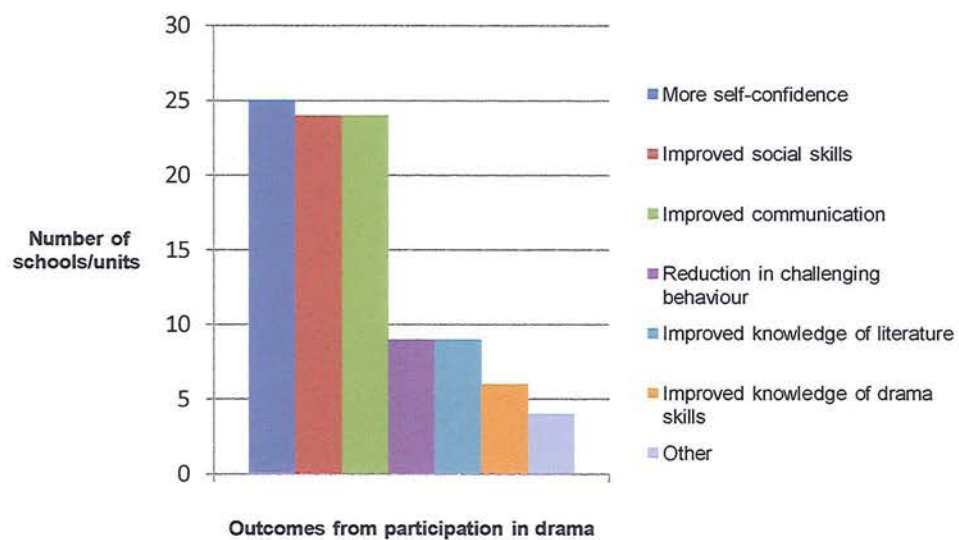


Figure VII: Outcomes from participating in drama activity

Appendix 5: List of presentations, seminars and conferences

Event	Date	Topic
National Autistic Society Academic Networking – a seminar	7 September 2010	Drama education and pupils with autism
National Autistic Society School INSET – a seminar	31 August 2010	Drama education and pupils with autism
United Arab Emirates University – a seminar	15 November 2009	Drama education and pupils with special needs, including autism
London Borough of Merton movement, music and drama therapists, Freshfields Day Centre – a seminar	12 May 2009	Investigating perspective taking in individuals with autism
London Borough of Greenwich Speech and Language Therapists, Charlton School, Greenwich – a seminar	28 April 2009	Researching drama education with students with autism
Centre of Multimodality, Institute of Education, University of London – a seminar for researchers	19 March 2009	The use of video in researching drama education with students with autism
PGCE Primary Education, Institute of Education, University of London – a seminar for trainee teachers	19 March 2009	Drama education and students with autism
Confederation of Service Providers for People with Autism (CoSPPA), Bi-annual conference, Portsmouth	27 November 2008	Researching practice: Drama education and pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Institute of Education, University of London – a seminar for researchers	12 November 2008	The use of video in researching drama education with students with autism
National Autistic Society 2008 International Conference, Research into Practice, London	19 September 2008	Researching practice: Drama education and pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Institute of Education, University of London, Doctoral School Summer Conference, London	21 June 2008	Ethical and valid participation in research: Working with students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Multimodality and Learning, an International Conference, London	19 June 2008	Using a multimodal approach to analyse drama activity with students with autism
Research Methods – a seminar for doctoral researchers	16 February 2008	The place of 'theory' in research
Research Methods – a seminar for doctoral researchers	13 February 2008	Data collection and analysis
Bi-annual meeting of Educational Psychologists at the National Autistic Society – a seminar	21 June 2007	Outlining a research design for investigating drama education and students with autism
Institute of Education, University of London's psychology research group – a seminar	21 March 2007	Outlining a research design for investigating drama education and students with autism
MA Literature and Medicine, King's College, University of London – a seminar	1 February 2007	Drama and individuals with autism
School Annual General Meeting	17 May 2006	Drama education for students with autism
Institute of Education, University of London, Doctoral School Poster Conference, London	December 2006	Drama education for students with autism

Appendix 6: Ethical materials

6.1 Letter to the head teacher at the beginning of the research



School of Culture, Language and Communication

Head of School: Professor Gunther Kress
School Manager: Maureen Linney

20 Bedford Way
 London WC1H 0AL
Website: www.ioe.ac.uk/clc

Director Professor Geoff Whitty

31 January 2006

Name

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Postcode

Dear [Name of head teacher]

Re: Research at the further education unit

I am writing to you to request whether it would be possible to undertake some field research at the further education unit of [name of school] during the summer term of 2006. This would form part of a larger study I am undertaking at the Institute of Education exploring the role drama can play in the education and development of young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The four-year project, currently in its first year, is funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council and has the full support of the National Autistic Society.

As you may know, in driving the research forward and ensuring it is conducted in the most effective way, I have set up an interest group which brings together experts in the field of drama and / or Autistic Spectrum Disorders including [name of contact] of the National Autistic Society, [name of contact] a drama specialist at the Institute of Education, [name of contact] one of your drama teachers, [name of contact] your school psychologist and other drama teachers and drama therapists. Our first meeting took place at the further education unit on 2 December 2005 where we discussed how the research could be taken forward and the most suitable first stage. I explained that my intention for this invaluable stage would be to undertake a case study at a school where drama already features in order to explore how it fits into the curriculum, what its objectives are, how students respond to it and what learning and developmental outcomes can be tabled from it. Central to the case study would be piloting evaluation measures for assessing drama activity, which could then be used to feed into a larger study further down the line.

At this meeting, it was suggested that it may be possible for me to undertake research at the further education unit and I have been in contact with [name of school psychologist] and [name of drama teacher] to discuss this further. Before going forwards, however, I would like to take this opportunity to explain the dynamics of this case study to you in more detail so that I can ensure that you would be happy for me to conduct it at your school and discuss other ways in which you may be able to benefit from this research. Details of the case study and how it fits into the larger project are outlined in the enclosed booklet. This booklet also includes a formal consent form for you to sign should you be satisfied with the details.

I would be delighted to speak with you in person about the study, alternatively if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07811394183 or at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or my supervisor Anton Franks at the Institute of Education on 020 7612 6332 or at a.franks@ioe.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

Encs.

Cc. Manager of further education unit
 School psychologist
 Drama teacher

Drama and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

A case study exploring and evaluating drama work in a
school setting

Research briefing pack

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The Last Step by Donna Williams

Daisy Loyd

Research student

Institute of Education, University of London

Background

I am undertaking doctoral research at the Institute of Education looking at the role drama can play in the education and development of young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

This interest stems from two areas, firstly from play work I have been doing for the last four years at Barnardo's Indigo Project, Ilford where several of the young people are on the autistic spectrum and secondly, from a passion for drama that has inspired me for some time. I first drew the two together as part of an MA in Text & Performance Studies that I completed in 2004 where I explored what was happening in the world of drama with people with ASD from four angles:

- Drama at a therapeutic level where drama work is used to aid personal development through dedicated dramatherapy sessions.
- Drama at a receptive level where the focus is on the response people have to drama and theatre or the impact it can make on them.
- Drama at a participative level where drama work takes place in a group, either in schools or integrated theatre workshops.
- Drama at a creative level where the focus lies on the contribution an individual can make in the field of drama.

My conclusions were two-fold. Firstly, that there is a growing interest in drama work with young people with ASD and some amazing work that is being done. Secondly, that there is a clear need for research to gain a better understanding and acknowledgement of the potential of drama in terms of aiding the personal, social and creative development of people with ASD.

With my research going forward, I aim to contribute towards this latter point by focusing my attention on drama work that is taking place in or being advocated by schools. I would like to see more clarity as to why it is being introduced, how it is being used, the impact it is having and what learning and developmental outcomes can be tabled from it.

In terms of my timescale, I am looking to conduct a pilot study over the course of the summer term in 2006 based on one case study. This will then feed into a larger research project from 2006-2009, which would look to explore in more detail drama activity in schools where there are young people with ASD and involve evaluation work of activity over the course of one academic year (September 2007–July 2008).

Further details about the case study and what it will involve are outlined in the following pages.

The research

The case study is part of a longer-term project looking at the role of drama in the education and development of young people with (ASD). In developing and refining the research approach, I am working with the National Autistic Society, experts in educational research at the Institute of Education, teachers, drama teachers, dramatherapists and educational psychologists.

The purpose of this phase of research is to look in detail at a school where drama already features in order to explore how it fits into the broader curriculum, what its objectives are and what learning and developmental outcomes can be tabled from it. Central to this study will be piloting measures for assessing and evaluating drama activity, which can then be used to feed into a larger study further down the line.

What is the purpose of the main study?

- **To contribute to research in the area of drama work with people affected by ASD:** Although there is an increasing interest in drama work with people with ASD with practical approaches to drama being developed (eg in Dave Sherratt and Melanie Peter's *Developing play and Drama in Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders* (London: David Fulton Publishers, 2002), some schools introducing dedicated drama programmes and other schools offering the services of dedicated drama therapists, there is currently no consistent approach or opinion on the subject and limited research evaluating this work from an educational and longer-term developmental perspective. This means that those who work in the field lack an objective analysis and evaluation of the field, which could give more credence to what they do. I want to change this and attempt to assess and evaluate drama work taking place in schools.
- **To assess whether it is possible to objectively evaluate drama work with people with ASD:** All studies relating to ASD suffer from problems of evaluation because of the breadth of the spectrum and no real understanding of its causes. In relation to drama, I would like to address this problem and look at whether it is possible to effectively evaluate this type of work.
- **To explore the value of having drama as a dedicated subject in schools where there are those with special needs, particularly ASD:** As a result of the lack of research, many people are sceptical about the value of drama as an intervention or academic subject for young people with ASD. I would like to carry out some dedicated research so that there can be a greater understanding of how drama can be employed, whether learning and developmental outcomes can be tabled from it and whether there are any implications or potential adverse effects. Just as the contribution drama can make in the national curriculum of mainstream schools is beginning to be recognised, I want to challenge the existing approach in special needs schools and provide additional insight and authority on which to base drama programmes.
- **To encourage dissemination in this field:** There is a huge amount of expertise both nationwide and internationally within the field of drama and those with ASD. It would be beneficial for all those who work with people with ASD to have more understanding of the role drama or drama therapy can or cannot play. I want to encourage this.

What will the case study involve?

- The study will involve observing a drama group over a six-week period during the first half of the summer term of 2006. Within this group, two “focus” students will be observed in detail. These students will be agreed with both parents and the school.
- The evaluation will adopt a participatory approach and include:
 - Assessing the views and aspirations of what is hoped for from the drama activity before it begins by speaking / liaising with:
 - Drama teacher
 - Head of drama
 - Students in the group (this may be through a co-worker or teaching assistants and will be supported by a dedicated Social Story)
 - Two “focus” students
 - Carefully assessing where the students are at before the observation period begins. This will be particularly important for the “focus” students and will be established through:
 - Speaking / communicating with students directly or through their support workers
 - Speaking with teachers about individual strengths and weaknesses
 - Observing students in school during both drama sessions and other classes prior to the case study beginning
 - Recording the drama sessions on a weekly basis and a non-drama session on a fortnightly basis through direct observation which will involve:
 - Taking notes during the session
 - Videoing some of the sessions
 - Sharing feedback with the drama teacher
 - Completing a record sheet which includes:
 - Aims of session
 - Activities carried out
 - General observation about the session
 - General comment on response to activities
 - Responses and learning and developmental outcomes specific to the “focus” students
 - Whether session objectives were met
 - Teacher response to the session
 - Other comments
 - A final feedback session / interview will take place at the end of term with students and teachers reflecting on the term’s activity to date.
 - In addition, informal interviews will take place with the head of drama, one or two other teachers at the school, the educational psychologist and the Head of Research at the National Autistic Society to gain alternative perspectives on drama activity at the school.
 - There will be opportunities for parents to be involved should they wish.
- All those involved will be fully briefed and debriefed and be required to formally consent to taking part in the project.

What will happen after the case study?

After the data has been collected there will be a period of analysis and evaluation. The project will then be written up with an abridged version of the final copy available for all those involved.

The importance of the 'pilot project' cannot be under estimated. It will form the basis of more detailed research planned for 2006 to 2009 and ultimately in making an inroad into better understanding the role drama can play in the education and development of young people with ASD.

Contact details

Daisy Loyd
C/o Anton Franks
The Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL
T: 07811394183
E: dloyd@ioe.ac.uk

I understand that your time is extremely valuable and would like to thank you for letting me liaise with you about this project. It is very much appreciated.

Case study consent form

Please read the information below

Purpose of the case study

This booklet explains the rationale and importance of conducting a case study during the summer term of 2006. The case study research will form part of a larger study that is exploring the role of drama in the education and development of young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. It is based at the Institute of Education, sponsored by the Economics and Social Science Research Council and has the full support of the National Autistic Society.

The study

Your school has been chosen as a case study for this research because of the extensive arts programme already in place at the further education unit.

Your school's participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

The study will involve direct observation of drama sessions and selected other classes via note taking and potentially with the use of video as well as informal interviews with the drama teacher, other members of staff and feedback from the students themselves (where possible). There will also be opportunities for parents to be involved should they wish.

All data collected will be stored according to the Data Protection Act 1998 with information used solely for the purposes intended. Data collected from the case study will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team. To protect the confidentiality of the students and other participants as well as maintain anonymity, names or other identifying data will not be recorded or will be altered unless otherwise specified. Excerpts from observations, feedback conversations and interviews that take place as part of the research will be made part of the final report. Video data will only be shared with moderating bodies.

Refusal or withdrawal of participation

You agree to participate in this programme and understand that your participation is entirely voluntary. You are equally free to withdraw from the study, or elements of it, at any time.

Consent to participate in the study

You hereby agree to participate in the case study. Please sign and date this form to show that you have read and understood the information.

.....(signed)

.....(printed)

.....(date)

Please keep this copy for your reference and return the other to me:

Daisy Loyd
C/o Anton Franks
The Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me directly at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or on 07811394183. Alternatively, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Anton Franks at the Institute of Education at a.franks@ioe.ac.uk or on 020 7612 6332.

Thank you

6.2 Letter to the head teacher prior to the main study

School of Culture, Language and Communication

Head of School: Professor Gunther Kress

School Manager: Maureen Linney



**Leading education
and social research**

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www.ioe.ac.uk

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Post code

February 2007

Dear [Name of head teacher]

Re: Researching the impact of drama education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Further to the preliminary study in the summer term of 2006, I wanted to update you in writing on the next phase of this research and ensure that you are happy for me to take it forward at the further education unit.

As you know, I continue to meet and converse regularly with both [contact at National Autistic Society] and [school psychologist] about how best to take this research forward and I am pleased with the strong partnership we have developed. At our last meeting, I set out in detail my research plan and I would like to summarise this for you here.

The research builds on the preliminary study in which I explored how the impact of drama education can be investigated and set out a framework for future research. As the further education unit is one of the few places in the UK with a dedicated drama curriculum for students with autism and my interest remains focused on impact, it makes sense for the study to remain with you following students in the drama group. I would like to follow students for the school year of September 2007 to July 2008. This will also involve some pre-study data collection in the summer term of 2007 and post-study work in the autumn term of 2008.

I plan to use a mixture of data collection techniques. I will draw on qualitative techniques to help me look at the students' individual experience and what it means to them. This will include direct observations of drama and other sessions, interviews with teachers and parents, feedback from students and analysis of school documentation. I intend to use quantitative techniques to help me to look at the impact on students' social skills.

I have a strong belief that ethics should be an integral part of the whole research process and that everyone involved in the research should get as much as possible out of it. In this vein, beyond following the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association, the British Psychological Society, my funders the Economic and Social Research Council, my partners Research Autism and the National Autistic Society and my research base the Institute of Education, I will continue to meet regularly with the interest group I set up in October 2005 (this includes experts from the fields of autism, drama education and psychology) and to work closely with staff and students at the further education unit.

I have enclosed a booklet outlining the research in more detail. It includes a formal consent form which I would like you to sign once you are satisfied with the details and return to me in the envelope provided.

I would be delighted to speak with you in person about the study, alternatively if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on **07811394183** or at **dloyd@ioe.ac.uk**. I am also very much looking forward to seeing you on 1 March.
Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

Cc. Manager of further education unit
 School psychologist
 Drama teacher
 Contact at National Autistic Society

Drama education and students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Research briefing pack

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The Cheshire Cat, Alice in Wonderland

Daisy Loyd
Research student
The Institute of Education

Background

Based at the University of London's Institute of Education, I am researching drama education with students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

This interest stems from two areas, firstly from play work I have been doing for the last six years at a Barnardo's project where several of the young people are on the autistic spectrum and secondly from a passion for drama that has inspired me for some time. I first drew the two together as part of an MA in Text & Performance Studies that I completed in 2004 where I explored what was happening in the world of drama with people with an ASD from four angles:

- Drama at a therapeutic level where drama work is used to aid personal development through dedicated dramatherapy sessions.
- Drama at a receptive level where the focus is on the response people have to drama and theatre or the impact watching it can have on them.
- Drama at a participative level where drama work takes place in a group at integrated theatre workshops.
- Drama at a creative level where the focus lies on the contribution an individual can make in the field of drama.

My conclusions were two-fold. Firstly, that there is a growing interest in drama work with young people with an ASD and some amazing work that is being done. Secondly, that there is a clear need for research to gain a better understanding of the limitations and potential of drama in terms of aiding the personal, social and creative development of those with an ASD.

I decided to undertake this challenge by looking at drama work that is taking place in or being advocated by schools. This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and, in taking it forward, I am working in partnership with Research Autism and the National Autistic Society.

What is the research?

The research focuses on the impact drama education can have on the personal and social development of students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

As I consider students with an ASD to be first and foremost individuals who despite their ASD are social agents, I want them to be able to play a role in the research and I want to attempt to understand their personal experience of and response to drama. Secondly, as one of the main difficulties for students with an ASD is social interaction, I want to ascertain whether drama education can support the development of social interaction and how and why this may be the case.

Why is the research important?

There are two reasons in particular that I would like to highlight:

1. **To help gain a clearer understanding of the limitations and contribution of drama education for students with an ASD:** Although there has been some theoretical work explaining how drama can directly address some of the difficulties faced by students with an ASD relating to social interaction, communication and imagination, practical research to support this theory is limited. There needs to be more clarity about how different approaches to drama can impact on students with an ASD across the spectrum and not simply for those with strong language abilities. From the qualitative perspective, there needs to be a greater understanding of how to work with drama and how students with an ASD engage and respond to it incorporating their own subjective points of view. From the quantitative perspective, there is a requirement for longer-term research, with a tighter experimental design to better understand whether, to what extent and how drama can support the difficulties of those with an ASD.
2. **To contribute to research exploring educational interventions for young people with an ASD, particularly those that address social and communication skills:** In a 2005 survey with over 1,000 members of the National Autistic Society, one of the overriding conclusions was that “social and communication problems continue to impact on quality of life of the whole family into adulthood”. There is a clear priority to explore educational interventions, such as drama education, that can potentially support the development of social and communication skills.

How I plan to take it forward?

The research builds on a preliminary study in which I explored how the impact of drama education can be investigated and set out a framework for future research.

The study commenced with a survey of Autism Accredited schools and units in order to gauge the availability, use and understanding of drama education in these settings. This aims to benchmark the state of drama education available to pupils and students with an ASD and position the further education unit where the in-school research will take place.

The in-school research will take place at a specialist further education unit for students with an ASD aged 16 to 19. This is one of the few places in the UK with a dedicated drama curriculum for students with an ASD. It will be small-scale and take into account the individual nature of both students with an ASD and how drama education is carried out and experienced. I plan to use a mixture of data collection techniques and draw on the philosophy of the "Mosaic Approach" which embraces participation and triangulation. I will draw on qualitative techniques to help me look at the quality of the drama and the students' individual experience to ascertain its impact on the individual as a whole person i.e. what it means to them. I intend to use quantitative techniques to help me to look at the impact on particular aspects of individuals with an ASD i.e. their social skills.

I have a strong belief that ethics should be an integral part of the whole research process and that everyone involved in the research should get as much as possible out of it. In this vein, beyond following the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association, the British Psychological Society, my funders the Economic and Social Research Council, my partners Research Autism and the National Autistic Society and my research base the Institute of Education, I will continue to meet regularly with an interest group I set up in October 2005 (this includes experts from the fields of ASD, drama education and psychology) and to work closely with staff and students at the further education unit where my research is to be carried out.

Contact details

Daisy Loyd
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The Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
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WC1H 0AL
T: 07811394183
E: dloyd@ioe.ac.uk

Research consent form

Please read the information below

Purpose of the research

This booklet outlines a research study investigating the impact of drama education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It is hoped that this will take place at the further education unit of [name of school] during the school year of 2007 to 2008 and incorporate some pre-study and post-study work. Based at the University of London's Institute of Education, this is a project that I am taking forward in partnership with Research Autism and the National Autistic Society. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The study

Your school has been chosen as a case study for this research because of its unique offer in terms of drama education.

Your school's participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

The study will involve direct observation of students in drama sessions and selected other classes via note taking and the use of video as well as informal interviews with the drama teacher, other members of staff and feedback from the students themselves. There will also be opportunities for parents to be involved should they wish. As part of this investigation explores whether involvement in the curriculum has an impact on social skills, the study will also utilise established assessment measures which I hope to conduct with students in the summer terms of 2007 and 2008.

All data collected will be stored according to the Data Protection Act 1998 with information used solely for the purposes intended. Data collected from the study will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team. To protect the confidentiality of the students and other participants as well as maintain anonymity, names or other identifying data will not be recorded or will be altered unless otherwise specified. Excerpts from observations, feedback conversations, interviews and assessment measures that take place as part of the research will be made part of the final report. Live video data will only be shared with moderating bodies.

Refusal or withdrawal of participation

You agree to participate in this research and understand that your participation is entirely voluntary. You are equally free to withdraw from the study, or elements of it, at any time.

... more follows

Consent to participate in the research

You hereby agree to participate in the research. Please sign and date this form to show that you have read and understood the information.

.....(signed)

.....(printed)

.....(date)

Please keep one signed copy for your reference and return the other to me:

*Daisy Loyd
C/o Anton Franks
The Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL*

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me directly at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or on 07811394183. Alternatively, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Anton Franks at the Institute of Education at a.franks@ioe.ac.uk or on 020 7612 6332.

Thank you

6.3 Letter to head teacher at the end of the research

Daisy Loyd
 Department of Learning Curriculum and Communication
Tel +44 (0)7811394183
Email dloyd@ioe.ac.uk



**Leading education
 and social research**
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 University of London

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 Tel +44 (0)20 7612 6000
 Fax +44 (0)20 7612 6126
 Email info@ioe.ac.uk
 www.ioe.ac.uk

July 2008

Re: Researching drama education for students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

As my period of data collection draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support and time that you, your staff and your students have given me over the last few years. Researching at the further education unit has been an extremely enjoyable and enriching experience and I am really very grateful to all staff and students for making me feel so welcome and for teaching me so much.

Having collected data relatively intensively throughout this academic year, I now move into a period of detailed analysis before focusing on writing up my thesis. At this stage, I am on schedule to complete by the end of next academic year. Once I have pulled the material together, I will prepare a summary for you and your students and will certainly be available to talk about the research with you or interested parties next academic year and beyond. I can be reached at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk, on 07811394183 or c/o Anton Franks at the address above. Thank you once again for your time, involvement and support and I do hope we will be able to stay in close contact in the future.

Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

Cc. Manager of further education unit

6.4 Interview consent information

Securing consent

Having observed one of your students at school doing drama and other activities, I would like to speak with you to better understand the targets you have for this student and how you are working to meet these targets.

Before we start I would like to check that you are happy for our conversation to be recorded.

I would also like to emphasise that:

- your participation is entirely voluntary
- you are free to refuse to answer any question
- you are free to withdraw at any time

The interview will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from our conversation may form part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in the report.

Are you happy to progress?

6.5 Letter to parents at the beginning of the research

School of Culture, Language and Communication
Head of School: Professor Gunther Kress
School Manager: Maureen Linney



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March 2007

Dear

Re: Researching the impact of drama education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

I am working with the National Autistic Society and writing to let you know about a research study which may involve [insert name of child]. The research is investigating the impact of drama education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and follows a preliminary study that took place at the further education unit in the summer term of 2006. It is in partnership with Research Autism and the National Autistic Society and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The aim of the research at the further education unit is to better understand the effect of drama activity on student personal and social development. It will cover the school year of 2007 to 2008 and involve observing drama and other sessions; having conversations with teachers and other staff; gaining feedback from the students themselves and assessing student social skills over the period. In the research, I would also like to use video to support the data collection and analysis process. This would only be shared with my research partners.

As parents, I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the drama activity your child [insert name of child] takes part in and hope you do not mind if I contact you over the course of the year.

If you are happy for [insert name of child] to be involved, I would be grateful if you could read and sign the attached consent form and return it to [insert name of contact] at the further education unit as soon as you can. I have also provided information about the research for [insert name of child].

I would be delighted to speak with you in more detail about the research and can be contacted on 07811394183, at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or at the above address. Alternatively, please do discuss with [insert name of contact].

Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

Research consent form

Please read the information below

Purpose of the research

This letter outlines a research study investigating the impact of drama education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This will take place at the further education unit of [name of school] during the academic year of 2007 to 2008 and incorporate some pre-study and post-study work. Based at the University of London's Institute of Education, this is a project that I am taking forward in partnership with Research Autism and the National Autistic Society. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

The research

You have been informed of this research because [insert name of child] is a student at the further education unit and takes part in school drama sessions.

The study will involve direct observation of students in drama sessions and selected other classes via note taking and the use of video as well as informal interviews with drama teachers, other members of staff and feedback from the students themselves. You, as parents, will also have the opportunity to talk about the drama activity [insert name of child] takes part in. As part of this investigation explores whether involvement in the curriculum has an impact on social development, the study will also utilise established assessment measures which I plan to conduct with students at the beginning and end of the academic year.

All data collected will be stored according to the Data Protection Act 1998 with information used solely for the purposes intended. Details from the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team. To protect the confidentiality of the students and other participants as well as maintain anonymity, names or other identifying data will not be recorded in disseminated reports or will be altered unless otherwise specified. Excerpts from observations, feedback conversations, interviews and assessment measures that take place as part of the research will be made part of the final report. Live video data will only be shared with my research partners.

Refusal or withdrawal of participation

On behalf of [insert name of child], you agree to participate in this research and understand that participation is entirely voluntary. [insert name of child] is equally free to withdraw from the study, or elements of it, at any time.

Consent to participate in the study

On behalf of [insert name of child], you hereby agree to participate in the research. You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep for future reference.

Please sign and date this form to show that you have read and understood the information.

.....(signed)

.....(printed)

.....(date)

Please keep one signed copy for your reference and return the other to [insert name and address].

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact [name of school] contact or correspond with the researcher directly at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk or on 07811394183.

Thank you

6.6 Letter to parents at the end of the research

Daisy Loyd
Department of Learning Curriculum and Communication
Tel +44 (0)7811394183
Email dloyd@ioe.ac.uk



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www.ioe.ac.uk

June 2008

Dear

Re: Researching drama education for students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

I have very much enjoyed carrying out my research at the further education unit this academic year and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for enabling me to observe your child in drama sessions. As I explained in my original letter, this is a research study looking at drama education for students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. I am taking it forward with Research Autism, the National Autistic Society and the Economic and Social Research Council and we hope that it will enable us to better understand the potential of this type of education for our students.

At the beginning of the academic year, I asked you to fill in a short questionnaire about your child and now the year is drawing to a close I would very much value your input once again. I have attached some short questions on the following pages and would be really pleased if you would be able to answer them and return them to *[name of school psychologist]* in the envelope provided by Monday 21 July 2008. I can assure you that your answers will be kept completely confidential and anonymous but information given may be used as part of the final research report.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either *[name of school psychologist]* at the further education unit or me. I can be reached at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk, on 07811394183 or at the address above. Thank you once again for your time, involvement and support.

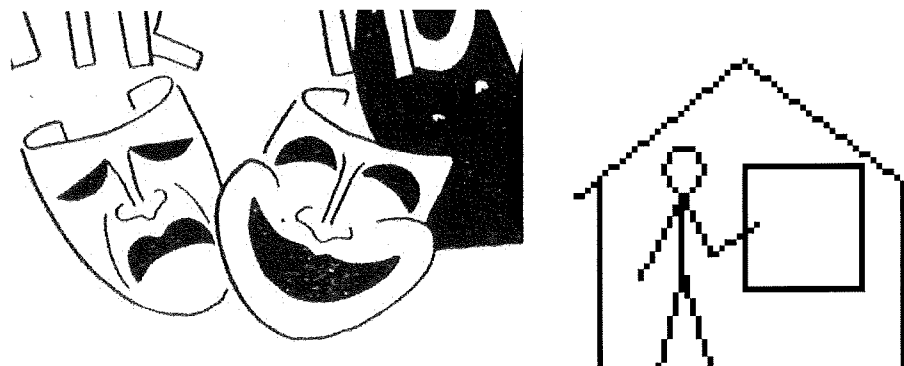
Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

6.7 Information for students at the beginning of the research

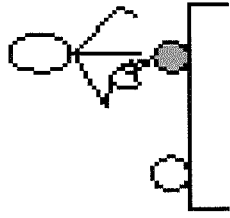
Drama at school

Student consent pack

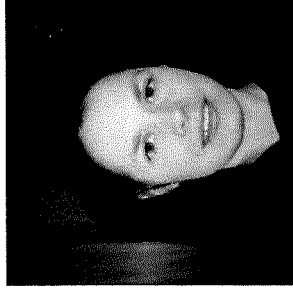


© Daisy Loyd, Research Student

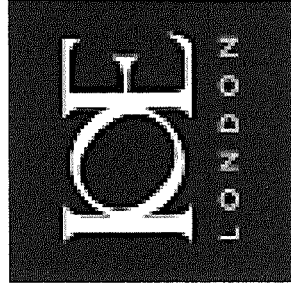
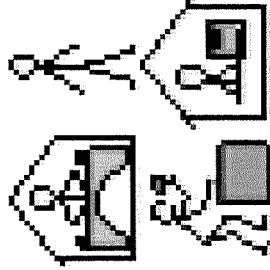
The Institute of Education, London



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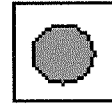


Daisy Loyd.

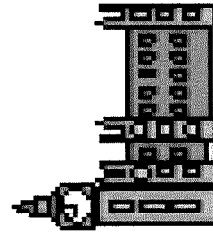


Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

Daisy



in



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works

at

the Institute of Education



She

has

a question.



What

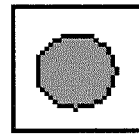
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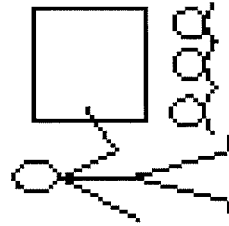
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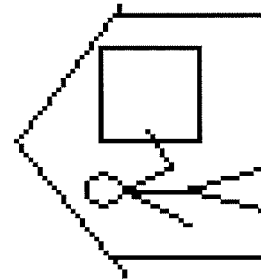
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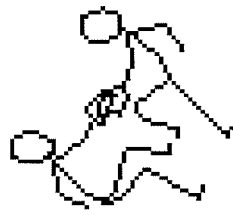
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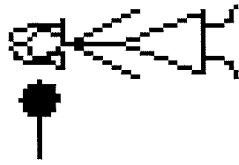
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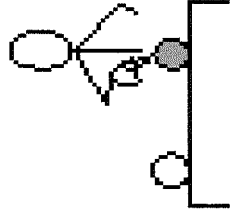
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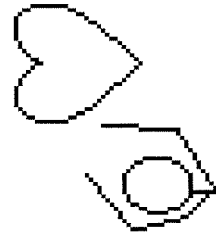
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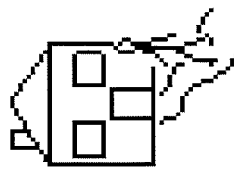
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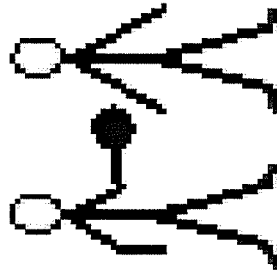
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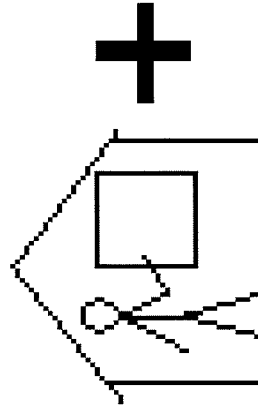
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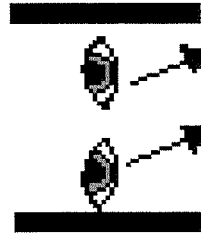
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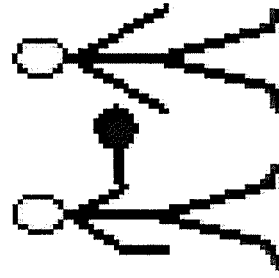
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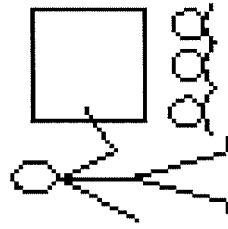
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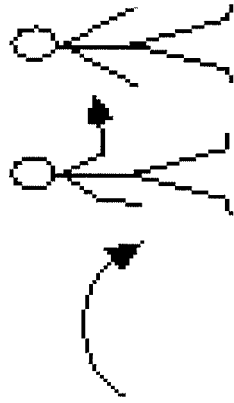
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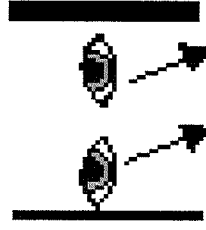
agree to have



Daisy



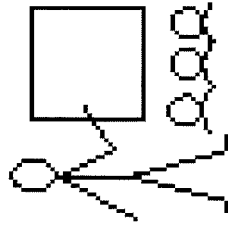
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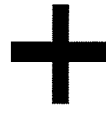
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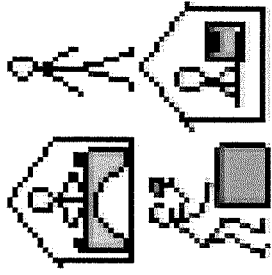
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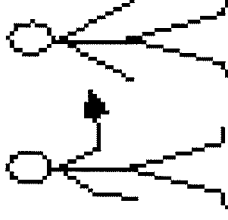
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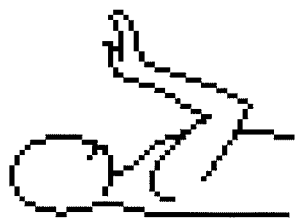
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Yes



No

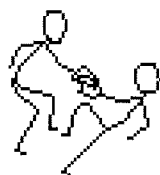


Thank You

6.8 Information for students at the end of the research



Thank you



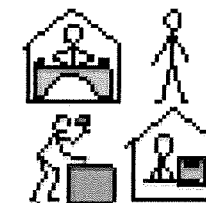
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Daisy



with her work.



Daisy



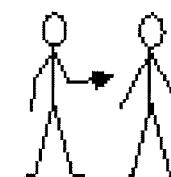
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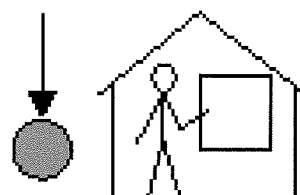
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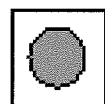
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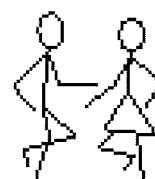
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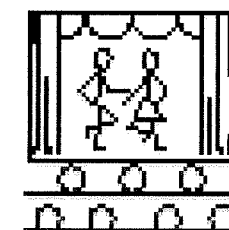
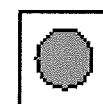
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drama, dance



and in the performance.

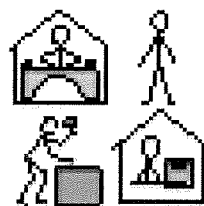




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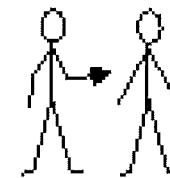
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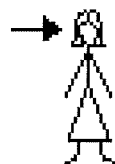
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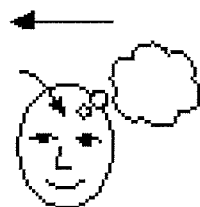
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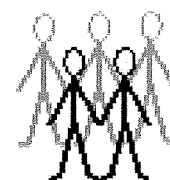
and



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other



people.



Appendix 7: Observation timetable and field note samples

7.1 Observation timetable

TERM 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
W/c 10 September		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Eddie 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Deborah Other curricular area: Claire Other curricular area: Fran 	
W/c 17 September				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Alice Other curricular area: Gina 	
W/c 24 September		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Eddie 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Fran Other curricular area: Fran 	
W/c 1 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Deborah Drama: Eddie <p>Videoing drama session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Gina 		
W/c 8 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Jacob Drama: Gina <p>Videoing drama session</p>			
W/c 15 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama :Alice Drama: Ben Other curricular area: Harry Other curricular area: Isy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Claire Drama: Claire 	
W/c 22 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Ben 			
HALF TERM					

TERM 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday
W/c 5 November				Videoing drama session	
W/c 12 November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Ben • Other curricular area: Alice • Other curricular area: Jacob 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Harry • Drama: Isy 	
W/c 19 November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Jacob • Drama: Harry • Drama: Claire 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Alice • Drama: Isy • Drama: Eddie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Harry • Other curricular area: Isy
W/c 26 November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Gina • Drama: Jacob • Drama: Deborah 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Fran 	
W/c 3 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Deborah 	Videoing drama session			

TERM 2	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
W/c 14 January		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Claire • Drama: Isy • Other curricular area: Harry • Other curricular area: Isy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Fran • Other curricular area: Claire <p>Videoing drama session</p>	
W/c 21 January		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Eddie • Drama: Jacob • Other curricular area: Eddie • Other curricular area: Jacob 			
W/c 28 January		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Deborah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Deborah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Harry 	
W/c 4 February				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Gina • Drama: Isy <p>Videoing drama session</p>	
W/c 11 February		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Gina • Drama: Ben • Other curricular area: Eddie 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Fran 	
HALF TERM					
W/c 3 March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Deborah • Drama: Eddie • Other curricular area: Deborah 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other curricular area: Harry • Drama: Harry • Drama: Alice <p>Videoing drama session</p>	

TERM 2	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri
W/c 10 March			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Fran Drama: Claire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Gina Other curricular area: Gina 	
W/c 17 March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Alice Other curricular area: Ben Drama: Alice Drama: Ben Other curricular area: Claire 			
W/c 24 March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Jacob Other curricular area: Jacob Other curricular area: Fran <p>Videoing drama session</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Isy 	
W/c 31 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Alice Other curricular area: Ben 				

TERM 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday
W/c 21 April		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Alice Other curricular area: Ben Other curricular area: Deborah 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Eddie Other curricular area: Jacob Drama: Deborah <p>Videoing drama session</p>	
W/c 28 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Claire Drama: Harry Drama: Fran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Harry Drama: Gina Other curricular area: Gina Drama: Eddie 			
W/c 5 May					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Isy Other curricular area: Claire
W/c 12 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Alice Drama: Claire <p>Videoing drama session</p>				
W/c 19 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Deborah Other curricular area: Fran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Gina Other curricular area: Gina 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Isy Drama: Deborah 	
HALF TERM					

TERM 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday
W/c 9 June					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other curricular area: Alice Other curricular area: Eddie Other curricular area: Fran
W/c 16 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Claire Videoing drama session				
W/c 23 June		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Eddie Other curricular area: Harry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Fran Drama: Isy 	
W/c 30 June		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Jacob 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Harry 	
W/c 7 July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Ben Other curricular area: Jacob 			
W/c 14 July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Alice Other curricular area: Isy 			
W/c 21 July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Jacob 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama: Ben Videoing drama session	

7.2 Breakdown of observation by student

Student	Drama	Other curricular areas
Alice	16/10 (Warm up – 40 mins) 22/11 (Rehearsal – 30 mins) 6/3 (Drama – 65 mins) 18/3 (Warm up – 50 mins) 12/5 (Warm up – 50 mins) 15/7 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 300 minutes	20/9 (Timetable – 45 mins) 13/11 (Café – 110 mins) 18/3 (Timetable – 15 mins) 31/3 (Timetable – 15 mins) 22/4 (PSHCE – 40 mins) 13/6 (Art – 30 mins) 255 minutes
Ben	16/10 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 23/10 (Tracing – 60 mins) 12/2 (Warm up – 50 mins) 18/3 (Drama – 65 mins) 8/7 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 24/7 (Performance – 50 mins) 340 minutes	13/11 (Timetable – 30 mins) 18/3 (Timetable – 15 mins) 31/3 (Timetable – 30 mins) 22/4 (PSHCE – 40 mins) 115 minutes
Claire	18/10 (Rehearsal – 60 mins) 20/11 (Rehearsal – 75 mins) 15/1 (Warm up – 30 mins) 12/3 (Rehearsal – 90 mins) 12/5 (Dance – 65 mins) 16/6 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 385 minutes	13/9 (Art – 60 mins) 18/10 (Cleaning – 30 mins) 17/1 (Library – 60 mins) 18/3 (Kitchen – 90 mins) 28/4 (Timetable – 30 mins) 9/5 (Music – 90 mins) 360 minutes
Deborah	2/10 (Warm up – 30 mins) 27/11 (Dance – 60 mins) 29/1 (Salsa – 65 mins) 4/3 (Warm up – 35 mins) 24/4 (Dance – 65 mins) 22/5 (Warm up – 50 mins) 305 minutes	13/9 (Music – 20 mins) 3/12 (Kitchen – 100 mins) 30/1 (Timetable – 45 mins) 4/3 (Library – 100 mins) 22/4 (Tutor group – 80 mins) 19/5 (Kitchen – 45 mins) 390 minutes
Eddie	02/10 (Shapes – 60 mins) 23/11 (Dance – 70 mins) 22/1 (Warm up – 50 mins) 4/3 (Expressive – 65 mins) 29/4 (Story – 65 mins) 24/6 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 375 minutes	11/9 (Tutor-based – 45 mins) 25/9 (PSHCE – 25 mins) 22/1 (PSHCE – 45 mins) 12/2 (Library – 90 mins) 24/4 (Timetable – 40 mins) 13/6 (Arts – 30 mins) 275 minutes

Fran	27/9 (X-factor – 70 mins) 29/11 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 17/1 (Magic – 60 mins) 14/2 (Warm up – 50 mins) 28/4 (Mirroring – 65 mins) 26/6 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 345 minutes	13/9 (Music – 25 mins) 27/9 (Shopping – 135 mins) 12/3 (Timetable – 50 mins) 25/3 (Tutor-group – 30 mins) 19/5 (Kitchen – 45 mins) 13/6 (Timetable – 50 mins) 335 minutes
Gina	9/10 (Bean bags - 60 mins) 27/11 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 12/2 (Drama - 65 mins) 13/3 (Warm up – 50 mins) 29/4 (Warm up – 30 mins) 20/5 (Warm up – 50 mins) 320 minutes	20/9 (Tutor-based – 80 mins) 3/10 (Tutor-based, 150 mins) 7/2 (Tutor-based – 90 mins) 13/3 (Timetable – 30 mins) 29/4 (Café – 90 mins) 20/5 (Timetable – 30 mins) 470 minutes
Harry	15/11 (Rehearsal – 45 mins) 20/11 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 31/1 (Drama - 65 mins) 6/3 (Warm up – 50 mins) 28/4 (Warm up – 50 mins) 3/7 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 325 minutes	16/10 (Café w/l – 55 mins) 23/11 (Music w/l – 40 mins) 15/1 (Café w/l – 45 mins) 6/3 (Timetable – 15 mins) 29/4 (Timetable – 30 mins) 24/6 (Morrisons – 120 mins) 305 minutes
Isy	15/11 (Rehearsal – 60 mins) 22/11 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 15/1 (Impro – 60 mins) 7/2 (Tracing – 60 mins) 22/5 (Dance – 40 mins) 26/6 (Dance – 65 mins) 350 minutes	16/10 (Café – 55 mins) 23/11 (Music w/H – 40 mins) 15/1 (Café w/H – 45 mins) 27/3 (Timetable – 30 mins) 9/5 (Timetable – 50 mins) 15/7 (McDonald – 120 mins) 340 minutes
Jacob	20/11 (Rehearsal – 45 mins) 27/11 (Rehearsal – 65 mins) 22/1 (Dance – 60 mins) 25/3 (Dance – 65 mins) 1/7 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 22/7 (Rehearsal – 50 mins) 335 minutes	9/10 (PSHCE – 50 mins) 13/11 (PSHCE – 30 mins) 22/1 (PSHCE – 45 mins) 25/3 (Library – 45 mins) 24/4 (Timetable – 40 mins) 8/7 (Library – 120 mins) 330 minutes
TOTAL	56.3 hours	52.9 hours

7.3 Sample field notes

Drama session summary

Date: 6 March 2008
 Name of teacher: Carina
 Session: Drama
 Time of session: 1115
 Session length: 65 minutes
 Number of students: 4 students (Alice, Fran, Gina and Harry)
 Number of adults: 2 (Carina and John)
 Location: Carina's classroom
 Activities: Sitting on the green chairs
 Shake hands
 Bean bag
 Movement games
 Drama games
 Relaxation

Narrative observation

1115: Alice is looking at a book on witches and commenting on it. She is sitting next to the teaching assistant, John.

1120: Alice puts the book to one side. She sits down and tickles Harry. She says, "Look, I tickle Harry". She then says, "Harry, laughing" and he laughs.

I was interested in this as Simon used to do it to Alice when she got very upset so is she copying something that is done to her or is she using her sense of agency?

1125: Carina puts a blindfold on and asks the students to guide her to them. Fran gives the instructions. When Carina gets closer Fran says, "More that way". Carina puts her arms out saying "left" and "right". Fran uses this but does go back to "More that way". Carina moves round the group. When Carina gets to Alice, Alice says, "Good morning Carina". Carina prizes the blindfold from her eyes and Alice says, "There she is". Carina then says, "Ok, we are going to do the timetable". Alice gets up and does the first three steps shouting them out as she puts them up.

None of the students comment on Carina having the blindfold on. I was surprised that Fran didn't have Carina's blindness in mind when guiding her – is this important? Alice is the one that is interested in hiding and appearing. She also likes her sense of control in doing the timetable.

1130: Alice says "Music" and Carina sorts out the music for the sessions and for relaxation. They get up and she hands a bean bag to each student. She says, "Which colour is going to start?" Alice says "Blue" and she starts. Alice adds in a turn and throw.

This new way of doing a session where Carina organises the music so that Alice does not become upset when her music is not chosen is still working well.

1135: Alice initiates a new movement before throwing the bean bag. She spins and then jumps up and down. Carina uses this idea and encourages the other student to do something different before they throw the beanbag. Alice does the scissors the next time she throws the bean bag. She does something different each time. Carina beats her chest. She says, "What's this?" Alice says, "Gorilla".

1140: John pretends to be a cat. Alice copies and does it twice. She also copies John in "swimming" and Carina in being a "dog". Carina puts the beanbag on Alice's shoulder. She does some "magic" to John. Alice then copies John in running, "I try running on the spot".

She encourages Harry to run on the spot. John pretends to be an elephant. Alice guesses this. She throws the beanbag to me.

There is a lot going on here. Alice is initiating, she is imitating and she is imposing her sense of agency on others.

1145: Fran watches out of the classroom. Carina is bringing everyone together. She whispers, "I think I'm going to sneeze". Alice copies as does Fran. They then sit on the floor and Carina says, "Alice is going to show a performance with music and one of the materials". Carina shows first. Fran chooses not to go under the material when Carina asks if she would like to.

It is interesting that Fran does not go under the material – is this because she feels too mature, self-conscious, doesn't like what it feels like?

1150: Carina finishes her performance when the song finishes and asks Alice to go. She explains that Alice is going to choose one song and piece of fabric. Alice chooses red material and directs Carina to a song she likes called, "I'm a vampire". When the song starts Alice sings the words of the song and wafts the material over the students. She brings the material close to her and then opens it out saying, "I'm a witch" and cackling. She moves around the room with the material swaying behind her. The song finishes and Alice opens the material behind her. There is clapping from the teacher, teaching assistant and some students.

1155: Harry chooses the green fabric and music after Carina gives him a choice. Fran starts a beanbag game with Gina. Harry moves to the centre of the room but is silent. He walks around and moves with the fabric over his head. Carina prompts him with ideas for what he can do and he responds. Fran watches a little. Fran says to Gina, "It'll be you next". Gina prepares for her turn.

1200: Alice says to John, "I put a hat on you". She puts a blue bean bag on his head. Harry copies her. As Gina puts the material on she says, "Ladies and Gentlemen, let's go, pretend to be a ghost". Fran chooses the green material when it is her turn. She gets her CD so she has music she likes. She chooses number three and says, "Pause it, it's paused". She gets ready. She does similar movements to Carina's performance. Then she floats the material and moves it in lots of different ways. Carina prompts and makes suggestions for different types of clothes Fran could make with the material. Fran sings along to the song.

1205: At the end of her turn, Fran sits next to Gina and holds her hand. Carina asks the group to stand up and they do parachute games lifting the material up and letting it fall down. Carina suggests she lie under the fabric when it falls down. She demonstrates. When it is Alice's turn, Carina says, "Where's Alice? Where's she gone?"

1210: Fran nominates Harry to go next. Alice says, "Where's Harry?" Alice removes the fabric to uncover him. Fran volunteers to go next. She squeals when the material falls on her and goes back to Gina. Alice removes the fabric each time. It is then relaxation with Alice's music until 1215 when there is silence.

Fran talks to John about the performance. He says it will be sketches rather than one big performance. She also talks about Carl who hurt his foot yesterday.

PSHCE session summary

Date:	22 January 2008
Name of teacher:	Simon
Session:	PSHCE
Time of session:	1330
Session length:	60 minutes
Number of students:	5 students including Eddie and Jacob
Number of adults:	3
Location:	Simon's classroom
Activities:	Register Food intake PSHCE worksheets

Narrative observation

Observation of Jacob

1340: Jacob is giggling at Simon. He responds correctly to the register, "Good afternoon, Simon". Jacob mimics characters from cartoons. He says, "Scream" and then screams quietly with an accompanying expression and throws himself to the floor. Simon asks the class to do their food intake forms. Jacob sits down and continues to make noises and say "Yowch". He does this while filling in the form. Simon asks Jacob what he had for snack and Jacob writes down, "Biscuits, water". His spelling is questionable but he copies from previous food intake forms. Jacob's pen runs out half way through writing and he remarks, "Oops". Jacob concentrates on the task.

1345: Jacob continues to fill in the form and then says, "Help please". Simon tells him that he had fish fingers for lunch and Jacob writes this down. After completing their food intake forms, the students move on to OCR worksheets. Jacob does the work sheet where he has to fill in his timetable for a Monday using widget symbols. Simon shows him the first two and Jacob does the rest correctly.

Jacob concentrates well on this task and seems to have a good understanding of what is expected of him.

1350: When it comes to where Jacob goes at the end of the day, he points first to the residential unit symbol which is where he goes and then to the home symbol. Simon asks him, "Which?" Jacob does not say. He then points to "home" twice.

1355: Another student says, "Good night". Jacob laughs and repeats, "Good night". On the second worksheet, Jacob sits and does not appear to do anything. The worksheet is about Tuesday's timetable. The teaching assistant, John, asks Jacob to fill in his name and Jacob says, "Where is it?" John realises he does not have a pen and passes a pen to him. Jacob gets on with his work sheet. John, however, gives lead in questions which pre-empt the answer, "Are you going to residential tonight?"

1400: Simon prompts Eddie, "PSHCE with ..." Eddie gives the answer by pointing to Simon. "And then we go ..." Eddie signs home. Jacob needs to be prompted to fill in the date on his worksheet. Jacob looks at the board for the spelling of "January" and copies that spelling.

1405: Jacob writes his name and copies the date from the previous worksheet.

Observation of Eddie

1410: Eddie watches Simon cutting out phrases for the next worksheet which is about going to the library. Eddie copies him and cuts out the phrases on his worksheet. He does these very neatly. Eddie starts to order the phrases which set out the steps during a visit to the library. Simon prompts him on the ordering.

This worksheet is about procedure at the library. There are five steps and Eddie gets three of them in the right order. He gets, "Take off coat", "Read books", "Go home". He misses out the details of putting books back on the shelf and putting on coat. The main essence of the activity he gets though.

1415: Eddie needs to fill in the names of the students that he goes to the library with. He looks for a form to copy and copies directly the form of his neighbouring peer. Simon explains that he does not need to write his own name down.

1420: Simon asks Eddie what the question on the worksheet is. Eddie points to relevant parts of the worksheet indicating what they do in the library.

1425: Eddie sits quietly.

1430: There is a new worksheet and Eddie prepares himself before he receives it by picking up his pen and looking alert. He writes his name and the assistant leads Eddie, "Yes, you do this".

1435: In the final worksheet Eddie has to write out the order of the things he does in the library. He copies this from the previous worksheet where he pasted the steps from the library using widgeit symbols.

Appendix 8: Interview materials and transcript samples

8.1 Class teacher interview schedule

FOR REFERENCING PURPOSES ONLY

Name:

School:

Teaching experience:

Teacher background

- How long have you been teaching at the further education unit?
- What do you enjoy about your work here?
- What do you find challenging?
- What have been your main learning points in the time you have been here?

Individual student focus

- Tell me about xx.
- Can you describe a typical class with xx.
- What are her/his strengths and weaknesses?
- What motivates her/him?
- How does s/he learn best?
- What does s/he particularly enjoy?
- What areas are you specifically working on with her/him?

Student and drama

- What does s/he do in drama?
- What skills is s/he learning?
- Does s/he share work done in the performing arts with the group?
 - How?
 - In what ways?
- Talk me through a time when you have watched her/him in a drama session / performance?
 - Is her/his behaviour different on the day of drama or of a performance?
 - Are there differences in her/his behaviour during drama compared with other sessions?
- What does s/he get out of drama?
- S/he is able to play a role in drama, do you see her/him playing roles or taking the perspective of others outside of these sessions?
- Skills can be difficult to generalise. How do you aid the generalisation of skills learnt in drama?
- How does drama support in meeting targets for this student?

8.2 Drama teacher interview schedule

FOR REFERENCING PURPOSES ONLY

Name:

School:

Teaching experience:

Teacher background

- How long have you been teaching at the further education unit?
- How would you summarise your approach and what you are trying to do?
- What has struck you about the drama work you do with students?
- What do you find challenging?
- What have been your main learning points in the time you have been here?

Drama at the school

- Can you talk me through a typical session.
- How are drama sessions organised?
- Why are they organised in this particular way?
- What activities do you find helpful / constructive with your students?
- Are there types of activities or approaches you find you need to avoid?
- What skills do you aim to teach through drama?

The drama group

- How would you describe the ability levels of the group?
- How does it compare with previous years?
- What are the group dynamics?
- What is most challenging for this group?
- Do you see any differences in students during drama sessions compared with other sessions? Please give examples.
- Do you see any differences in students during performances?
- Have you seen any changes in the group / particular students within the group during the year?
- Do students share with you what they do in drama sessions outside of them?

Over time

- Do you see these skills generalise in other sessions?
- Skills can be difficult to generalise. How do you aid the generalisation of skills learnt in drama?

Individual dimension

- For each student ask?
 - What are her/his strengths and weaknesses in drama?
 - How does s/he respond to the subject?
 - What areas does s/he particularly enjoy?
 - What does s/he find challenging in drama?
 - What areas are you specifically working on with her/him?

8.3 School psychologist interview schedule

FOR REFERENCING PURPOSES ONLY

Name:

School:

Professional experience:

Drama at the school

- Can you describe the drama offer for me?
 - What is its ethos?
 - What is trying to be done in terms of the outcomes for students?
 - Do you think the background of the teacher impacts?
- I would also like to learn more about how the decision is taken for students to pursue the drama curriculum?
- How does it support students in their particular curricular targets? Please give examples from the group.
- Can you describe a time when you have seen students in drama sessions? What, if anything, strikes you?
- Can you describe a time when you have seen a performance? What, if anything, strikes you? Please give examples from the group.
- What features of the drama curriculum strike you? What features do you think work?
- Do you see differences in students in drama sessions compared with other sessions? Please give examples and why you think there may be these differences.
- Do you see changes in students over the course of the programme? Please give examples.
- Do you think the intensity of the curriculum is important?
- From what you see, what do you think students get out of the programme?
- Skills can be difficult to generalise. Do you see the skills learnt in drama generalise to other contexts?
 - Can you give examples?
 - What do you think helps with generalisation?

Thank you for your time

8.4 Manager of further education unit interview schedule

FOR REFERENCING PURPOSES ONLY

Name:

School:

Teaching experience:

School ethos

- How would you describe what you are trying to offer students at the further education unit?
- How would you summarise the teaching approach and ethos?

Drama at the school

- With the drama curriculum:
 - Why was it adopted?
 - What was the original vision for it?
 - What was the original rationale for it?
 - How do you see it as meeting student needs? Can you give examples?
- What has struck you about the drama work carried out with the students?
- Involvement in drama work is intensive, do you think the amount of time spent engaged in an activity is important?
- Drama is often seen as something too complex to approach with students with ASD. Why do you think there is such a fear? What qualities do you feel a drama teacher needs to be effective?
- What do you think students get out of the programme?
 - Are there aspects of it that are more productive in this respect?
 - Do you think it supports them in terms of where they go next? Can you give examples?
 - Have you seen any changes in students as a result of participating in the curriculum?
- How do parents respond to the drama curriculum?
 - Would they prefer a more practical programme for their students?
- In drama the students are playing roles. This involves taking the perspective of another. Do you see students taking the perspective of another outside of drama?
- Skills can be difficult to generalise. How do you aid the generalisation of skills learnt in performing arts?

Thank you for your time

8.5 Head teacher interview schedule

FOR REFERENCING PURPOSES ONLY

Name:

School:

Teaching experience:

School ethos

- Can you describe what you are trying to offer students at the school?
- How would you summarise the teaching approach and ethos?

Drama at the school

- With the drama work, this is strong throughout the school and particularly at the further education unit. Can I ask:
 - What was your rationale for introducing it?
 - What was your vision for it?
 - How do you see it as supporting student needs?
 - Do you find that you need to defend what you are doing?
 - How do you see it as fitting in with broader educational approaches for students with an ASD?
- What has struck you about the drama work carried out with the students?
 - In general, over time.
 - Specifically, examples.
- Involvement in drama is intensive; do you think the amount of time spent engaged in an activity is important?
- Drama is often seen as something too complex to approach with students with ASD. What approach and qualities do you feel a drama teacher needs to be effective with students with an ASD?
- What do you think students get out of the programme?
 - Are there aspects of it that are more productive in this respect?
 - Have you seen any changes in students as a result of participating in the curriculum?
 - Do you think it helps them with where they go on to next?
- How do parents respond to the drama programme?
 - Would they prefer a more practical programme for their students?
- In drama the students are playing roles. This involves taking the perspective of another. Do you see students taking the perspective of another outside of drama?
- Skills can be difficult to generalise. How do you aid the generalisation of skills learnt in performing arts?

Thank you for your time

8.6 Sample interview transcript

Simon, drama teacher: July 2008

Ok, just to talk generally initially if you reflect back on the work you've done this academic year with the students this year with the drama group what have you found most positive and what have you found frustrating or disappointing if there is anything?

The most positive aspect or achievement I think this year was adapting the new students within the routine of self-discipline.

And what do you mean by the self-discipline?

Ah following routine with pro-active approach and with willingness is something I think is very difficult to create and is something that is passed from generation to generation. So this year we have leavers, very strong personalities leaving Alice, Claire, Ben and I think Eddie and Deborah, they already have sense of so the next group, next year group they will have someone to learn from because that was the most difficult thing to establish when we started the drama group. Another very positive obviously is the confidence. The confidence they have gained that is there from performing and actually the knowledge of the concept of performing is quite profound within the group. And this is the new incomers have all done very, very well.

The most frustrating thing is well three years is not very much enough. I would love to have the boys and girls who are leaving perform the next few years so we can do actually more. That is quite sad actually to see them go because this year is very, very strong generation of performers and we have a few. Another very big disappointment to me as a teacher is the approach of parents towards Isy because she was someone I liked to work with. Maybe it is not the approach.

Have they now said no more?

Yes, they actually asked for her to be removed from the performing group which is quite sad because she was one of the people who would do really well next year I think.

And was that primarily from the filming aspect?

Maybe it's just we needed to explain more what is actually happening but once it got into no nothing it is difficult to reverse. Maybe we should explain at the beginning.

And one thing I noticed this year and I know we talked about it a bit at the beginning of the year about focusing more on technical dance skills which I know you put quite a bit of work into that and I wondered if you could talk a bit more about that kind of thing.

Yes. Great. Another thing which I have not seen and which I will probably miss next year is we have Claire staying after classes practising pirouette and practising chemez and that sort of thing and that is something you normally get, you kind of see in professional dance group, it's really the willingness to do it and to achieve something and I don't think I have seen something before she came and again we talk about this precision of Eddy's movement and his confidence when he performs. That is something really, really nice. We talk about Harry slowly opens. He will probably be there next year doing things more complex. Jacob, yes definitely with his confidence. Talking about technical things, Deborah very much wants to do it, when I verbally motivate her, she will push herself to limits. The stretching actually is very demanding. Stretching we use it's copied it from Vaganova school, which is the best ballet school in the world (*Named after a renowned ballet dancer and teacher, the school is where Nureyev and Pavlova trained*). Vaganova Academy. It's Russian ballet stretching and it is quite painful and they go through the pain barrier to achieve something. You see

Deborah, you can see she suffers, but she just wants to do it, she has to achieve something. That's quite nice.

And you can see actually all of them in terms of flexibility have got more flexible and can do a lot more than they could do.

Yes definitely. It's obviously, we are not going through all bits and pieces.

I mean just thinking back on Harry and Jacob, I have found it very interesting even that short sequence that Harry is doing in the dance, it takes a little while for him to pick it up but I think again that is partly his processing ...

Yes.

But once he's done it once he is able to do it again and again.

The most important thing for Harry is that in last performance he was part of a group and now he is individual and I think that is something he will pick up on and we will develop that next year.

Again actually Jacob having that solo.

Yes, Jacob is very similar. It's a shame with Jacob is we didn't have him last year because by now he would be able to take more complex, perhaps, roles.

Ok and thinking about the students working together as a group, I wanted to reflect a little bit in terms of their turn taking and working together for performance and whether you could talk about those social skills within the drama group.

Yes. Again, it's matter of I call it performance discipline but it really comes from them, it has to come from them where they remind each other, "Ok you be quiet" and "Now, you're performing" and that's the biggest kind of teachers weapon is using peer pressure to basically to use it, to exploit the peer pressure. I have to say it has been great this year with Claire trying to, with Deborah in a way as well, Fran.

Fran actually talks about performance discipline as well doesn't she?

Yes. They will talk about "performance discipline", they will talk about "no pain no gain", they will talk about "practise makes perfect" and I think they do understand the meaning of those sayings. As I said what stems from that is it's the group that's very strong. They are team and in a way I have very easy job trying to teach them.

And actually with Fran, I quite wanted to talk to you about this because certainly last year she seemed to be really quite anxious about performing and rehearsals taking work experience time and she doesn't appear to be so much this year and I don't know whether that's just me or whether she does seem to be a bit more relaxed in sessions and relaxed about her approach towards the performance.

Yes that's very much so, with Fran in particular there was this problem with also confidence. She loves to be the star, she likes to be told everyday that she's pretty and that boys keep looking at her and she just loves that so we last year I think we told her that without her we just can't do it and she takes the full responsibility, you know she lives up to it. She thinks oh and she said a few times, we're not going to work experience because without me it's impossible to do it which is true. The week before performance we need people there to perform. She definitely next year will be one that we could base performance, she could lead the whole group.

She also seems to be a bit more relaxed in her movements. I mean you do sometimes see her [show clicking] but seem to see a bit less of it and again I just wonder if it's

just me seeing it. But she seems to be a bit more relaxed and I don't know if that's because she's a bit more flexible now from the warm ups.

You do remember the last performance, the Christmas performance when she did sing and there was this clicking when she was excited. That's 90% reduced now and that was just so spontaneous, clicking and clapping and tapping. It's gone, she just follows. Because she's got routine and that's the routine that she follows when she sings. So that has gone. Maybe, I don't know, it's partly because it's ... it's interesting. Maybe because of experience, performing experience and she's more confident and excitement doesn't take over the actual performing. She's more relaxed because she knows that people look at her, she knows that people like it when she is doing so she's probably more open and more perceptive perhaps, maybe it's because of that I don't know. And obviously it's a complex thing. It's not one. So ...

Yes.

Maybe, as you say, it's to do with a lot of movement we do, more co-ordination.

And in terms of thinking about individual student progress over the year. How do I phrase this, I would be interested in you talking about examples that you have been quite surprised with in terms of either the complexity of what they are able to do or their comprehension of pretence or their ability to learn a routine ...

Yes, I'm very much. Well they all surprise me in a way. Claire surprised me with her homework. She works at home a lot to improve her and her input into her lines and the way that she can actually improvise. Likewise Ben. The same thing, the way he practises, even at home. I believe. The way he can add his bits and pieces to it to make it better because that's what it really is about if you are a performer and you don't get anything out of them 9if you are only using body whereas if you put something personal in, that way it becomes really good I think. That's what I enjoyed and I think that was surprised me in a way.

And what's interesting actually with both of those when they improvise is it's not the same thing each time. I mean Ben when you watch it he will use different words so just on that Victoria Beckham line he will sort of do the head like an alien, skinny or he'll mimic. I mean it's interesting because you would expect that if he is going to improvise or if Claire is going to improvise that she will add in a line and then keep that line in.

The interesting bit is that last year they had that improvisation and they got into improvising so much that they didn't know where they were with their improvising so ... but now it doesn't happen so they only improvise a bit so they still keep the structure. Yes, an element of surprise, maybe Deborah definitely surprised me with her ability to follow movement sequences. Eddie surprised me with his ability to comprehend the performing concept in a way that ok now I'm performing and then we are going to clap and I will do my best and I think that I can squeeze much more out of Eddie in this aspect but I think that's what surprised.

I mean it is interesting when you think of the perspective taking difficulty and people say they find it hard to think in different ways or see something from another perspective and having that sort of performing and this is the audience it is a very interesting dimension that is nice to see and when you do get the students smiles and everybody claps or everybody claps and the students smile you know that what you've done has pleased other people.

Yes, definitely. Makes them artists, it does, this performing thing. Claire, Ben, they love it and if they don't perform they get stressed out in a way. They get kind of used to it, addicted to it as people do, as artists do when they perform and when it doesn't happen they get distressed. So that's nice, very nice achievement. When we talk about surprise again, Harry with showing his potential in a way. Harry I think if he managed to find ways into him,

he will be great. We need to find ways to open Harry a bit more but he has shown that he can do great things for a first year student.

Yes. And I mean actually, it has been interesting Harry coming into the classroom and pirouette. He started that only relatively recently. I thought "Oh, where did that come from?"

Yes, it's very nice. Alice, very much surprised me with her kind of very human approach towards people. It is very human in the sense that just nice. That she's got to a level where she's not trouble making someone, doesn't want to make trouble, there are other ways to cope with things and she knows it. And also with her liking towards drama and for three years if you look at her behaviour plan there is challenging behaviours, she has never done it ever in dance for three years and she's finishing now. She has never kicked off if you like in dance sessions. One time I remember was something that was taken from previous session, throughout break and perhaps it was a bit of our fault, staff fault, she had bit of problems but then she settled back into routine. Apart from that it has never, ever happened that she had challenging behaviour for three years so that's a great achievement for Alice and for us and who else do we have.

We have probably gone through.

And obviously Jacob, again, what I enjoyed and what surprised me and what I believed in when I took Jacob to drama session because I knew that he is the way he is, quite energetic and fun seeking young man but I know that on the day he will always deliver in away. So he recognises the importance so I am quietly confident in Jacob. That's nice.

One thing that I have found very interesting and look for examples of and it is primarily Alice who I see do it but actually other students do and is this again more able students supporting less able and I remember when we had Graham doing that magic and Alice got up and they each did their magic trick and it came to Harry's turn and he walked up confidently and then stood there. Assistant teachers supported him but it was Alice who was able to enable him to do the task at hand.

It is a generational thing. When we started with the drama, it was Nathan who really wanted to do things and Robert learnt from Nathan and Nieghm from Robert. I remember when Claire started she used to spit and slap and she then learnt. The peer pressure is the motivation in the classroom. I have never, ever had a problem with motivation. There are some students who do have problems. Alice has challenging behaviour. Aditcha used to lie down and not co-operate but in the dance room they are able to do things.

And what is the motivating factor?

Well it's a mixture of things of peer pressure and the performance. They need to work towards something. I need to work towards something or I have personal problems. But also, the staff enjoy it and make it fun for them and they see that. There is also a variety of teaching methods with dance, movement and drama so students can work in different ways. Alice has a lot of energy and she is able to expend it.

It is amazing watching her singing that Phantom of the Opera piece and she has choreographed it very well.

Yes she actually has a very good voice. But also there are not many distractors in the room. I mean there is the music but there aren't things to look at.

I find the mirrors very interesting. Claire looks in the mirrors when she is performing and works on her facial expressions and movements. Jacob does the same and I wonder whether they are a distractor for him.

It is interesting you mentioning the mirrors. I have mirrors everywhere in my flat and I think it helps with confidence a lot. You may notice with dancers that they are not always the most

educated but they have a confidence or are even over confident and I think it is all the work they do with mirrors and seeing how they move. I think it would be really good if we could get the sound beam, I think that would be a great help.

Do you see any differences between students in the dance room compared with outside?

I get the impression with Eddie and Jacob that when they are in the dance room they are a good artist whereas when they are in the classroom they are a good student. The physical side helps as well. When I work with a different group on a Wednesday we spend 20 to 30 minutes walking until I can get control of the class. Last time they spontaneously sat down once they had done some walking as though they were then ready for the session. It's the same with me if I have a lot on my mind I need to really work hard and sweat and then I am ok.

And what about differences in the performance?

Things change on the performance day. I think we will start to have a challenging time on Thursday. I start to get frustrated and I can't help it. On Thursday and Friday we will start to see Claire saying, "It's useless, it's useless" and Alice doing the "Leave me alone" and Ben will sulk but on the day they will be great. Deborah is more open and age appropriate. She is a cool teenager for example she likes jogging. I think James has been more sensitive in this performance. It's more appropriate and it comes from them rather than the *Alice in Wonderland* where they have to pretend to be elsewhere. I think it works better when it comes from the self. The words came from Claire and the movements came from their own shapes






I think that's covered most things. Thank you very much.

I spoke to Peter on 24th July about Gina as he was marvelling her on the drums. He said he just couldn't find a way in to her in dance. She would just copy and wouldn't do things independently. I explained that it may be demand avoidance or the fact that she wants to be the best and it's a protection mechanism. He wasn't sure. It surprised him though that her good rhythm does not translate into the body and felt frustrated that he couldn't find a way in.






8.7 Student interview schedule

Part I: Questions with symbols





Question one: I like ...





  I like ...		
 work experience	 performance	 computer

Question two: I do not like ...





  I do not like ...		
 work experience	 performance	 computer





Question three: In drama, I like ...

			
In	drama	I	like ...


			
stretching	drama	games	performance

Question four: In drama, I do not like ...



			
In	drama	I	do not like

			
stretching	drama	games	performance


Question five: Drama helps me to ...




Drama helps me


to work with friends






to feel good





to make a performance




Question six: In the performance, I can ...


In the performance, I can


entertain people




show




new



dances

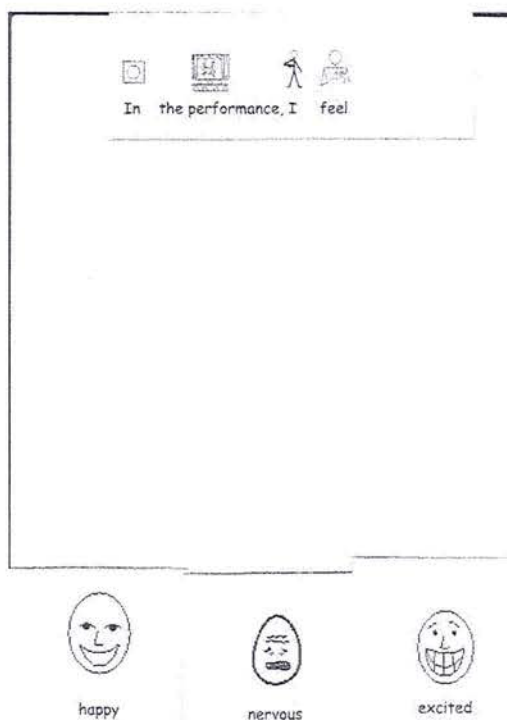


work



with friends

Question seven: In the performance, I feel ...



Part II: Question with photographs

Question eight: Tell me, what is happening in this picture? Fran is ...

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Question nine: Tell me, what is happening in this picture? Fran is ...

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Question ten: Tell me, what is happening in this picture? Fran is ...

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Question eleven: Which picture do you like? Fran likes ...

Question twelve: Which picture do you not like? Fran does not like ...

Part III: Questions with the video

Question thirteen: What are you doing in the video?

Question fourteen: Who are you with?

Part IV: Simple theory of mind tests

Question fifteen: Where will Anne look for her button?

In the 'Sally-Anne test', two teddies were introduced to Fran called Sally and Anne and name labels were placed in front of them. Fran was asked to confirm the names of the teddies in response to the statements, "Show me who Sally is" and "Show me who Anne is." Both teddies had bags but inside Anne's bag there was a button and the student was asked to look in the bag and tell me either using a symbol or words what was in the bag. Sally and Anne were animated and Anne said to Sally, "Sally, I forgot something, I am going to get it." While Anne was away, Sally explained, "I am going to play a trick on Anne and hide the button in my bag". Sally then carried out the action. Anne returned and said, "I am now going get my button." Fran was asked, "Where will Anne look for her button?" Students with limited verbal communication were encouraged to point to where they thought Anne would look.

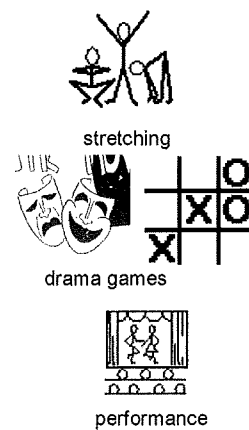
Question sixteen: What do you think Sally will think is in this box?

In the 'Smarties test', Fran was shown a box of Smarties and asked, "What do you think is in this box?" After giving an answer, Fran was asked to open the box and tell me what was inside it. She was then asked to close the box and Sally was reintroduced to Fran. Fran was asked what Sally would think was in the box. Students with limited verbal communication were encouraged to point to symbol card depicting options for what was in the box.

8.8 Sample student interview transcript



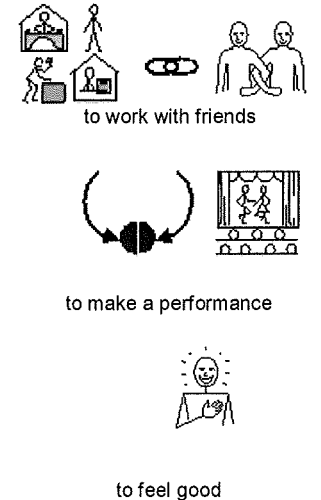
Individual student feedback transcript: Fran

Video time	Speech	Action	Image
0.00	<p>1. I will just get to my page so I can remember what I wanted to ask you. Ok.</p> <p>2. Fran we can probably talk this one ...</p> <p>3. Right, yes.</p> <p>4. ... because you can tell me. Fran can you tell me what you like doing at school.</p> <p>5. At school, I like drama.</p> <p>6. You like drama.</p> <p>7. Yes.</p> <p>8. And what other things do you like during the week.</p> <p>9. Work experience.</p> <p>10. Work experience, ok.</p>	<p>1. Fran sits forward.</p> <p>5. Fran picks her jumper.</p>	
0.30			


	<p>11. And what are the things at school that you don't like doing. Anything, there might not be anything.</p> <p>12. Don't like doing umm</p> <p>14. ... rehearsal.</p> <p>15. Rehearsals. Why don't you like rehearsals?</p> <p>16. Too much. Because it's a bit, it take out too much space.</p> <p>17. Too much time.</p> <p>18. Yeah.</p>	<p>13. Fran moves her hands from one side to another.</p> <p>16. She clasps her hands together and the moves them out before bringing them together again.</p>	
1.00	<p>19. Fran, what I'm going to do is just set out for you some of things that you do in drama with Carina ...</p> <p>20. Ok.</p> <p>21. ... and I want you to sort them into things you like ...</p> <p>22. Yeah.</p> <p>23. ... and things you don't.</p> <p>24. Yeah. Right.</p> <p>25. Ok. So, I might not put them out in the right order.</p> <p>26. No, might not.</p> <p>27. Because you know this better than me.</p>	19. I put out the choices.	 <p>stretching</p> <p>drama games</p> <p>performance</p>




1.30	<p>28. Might not, no.</p> <p>29. These are some of the activities you do in drama.</p> <p>30. Yeah.</p> <p>31. And what else do we have there. That's probably all right for now. Can you show me which of those activities that I've got here that you like. You might like all of them.</p> <p>32. Yeah, I might like all of them actually. All of them I like.</p> <p>34. Are there any that you don't like as much?</p> <p>35. No, I like all of them.</p>	<p>33. Fran gestures to all of them.</p> <p>35. Fran gestures to all of them.</p>	
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2.00	<p>36. Great. Thank you Fran, we're wizzing through this.</p> <p>37. Now Fran, I've got a couple of photographs ...</p> <p>38. Ah right.</p> <p>39. ... of you doing drama.</p> <p>40. Right.</p> <p>41. I just want to ask you some questions about them. Just a moment.</p> <p>42. That's in dance. That's in drama.</p> <p>43. Ok, can you tell me what's happening in the picture?</p>	<p>39. Fran looks away and then back again.</p> <p>41. I put the pictures out.</p> <p>42. Fran points to the picture and she looks at them and smiles.</p>	<p>PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES</p>
2.30	<p>44. In this picture, I was dancing.</p> <p>45. In this one, you have to do these with the linen, cotton, the fabric, I mean.</p> <p>46. Great, this is brilliant.</p>	<p>44. She points and describes.</p> <p>45. She gestures lifting up and down with both hands.</p>	
3.00	<p>47. And then the third one we sort of, we sort of sit on, what happening in dance and drama.</p> <p>48. Sitting on the floor, to see what happens.</p> <p>49. Yeah.</p> <p>50. Great, thank you.</p>	<p>48. She points and describes.</p>	


	<p>51. And out of those pictures which one do you like best.</p> <p>52. I prefer the middle one.</p> <p>53. In Carina's class.</p>	<p>52. Fran points to the middle one.</p>	<p>PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER</p> 
3.30	<p>54. And is there any one of those that you don't particularly like. The activities you are doing in there.</p> <p>55. Um. Probably that one, I don't like that one.</p> <p>56. Is that what you're doing or the picture.</p> <p>57. Yeah, I'm that ...</p> <p>58. Right there we go, brilliant.</p>	<p>55. She points.</p> <p>58. She breathes out a sigh, fed up sigh.</p>	
<p>4.00</p> <p>4.30</p>	<p>59. Now the next question Fran, I'm going to ask you what you think drama helps you to do.</p> <p>60. It helps you ...</p> <p>61. You can tell me first.</p> <p>62. Yeah, I can tell you first. It helps you to stretching and that, stretching on the Monday morning. Sort of like bean bags and that and movement games.</p> <p>63. And movement games, that's brilliant. And I'm going to show you some pictures ...</p> <p>64. Ah right.</p> <p>65. ... and I want you to choose from the pictures ...</p> <p>66. Ah right.</p>	<p>62. Fran shows stretching and bean bags.</p> <p>64. Fran nods.</p> <p>66. Fran nods.</p>	 <p>to work with friends</p> <p>to make a performance</p> <p>to feel good</p>

5.00	<p>67. ... whether you think drama helps you to do any of them. I'm going to put five pictures out so there's quite a lot.</p> <p>68. Ok, now out of those does drama help you to do any of these things?</p> <p>69. To work with friends</p> <p>70. To work with friends.</p> <p>71. Yes.</p> <p>72. Any of the others.</p> <p>74. Um. That's it really.</p> <p>75. It's them two that I do not like.</p> <p>76. Those two you don't like. You don't like making a performance.</p>	<p>69. Fran fiddles with her rings and points to one.</p> <p>73. Fran looks at the options.</p> <p>75. She points to two and puts them to one side.</p>	
5.30	<p>77. Definitely not and I do not like new things, that's for sure.</p> <p>78. Great Fran, thank you.</p> <p>79. You're welcome.</p> <p>80. This is really helpful.</p> <p>81. Brilliant. Ok.</p>	<p>80. I clear away the symbols.</p>	
6.00	<p>82. Who's at the door?</p> <p>83. I think it's locked.</p>	<p>82. Fran looks at the door.</p>	

6.30	<p>84. Ok, now Fran. I'm going to again, a bit like the last question. I'm going to put some things out of what you can do</p> <p>85. Oh right.</p> <p>86. Or what you think you can do in the performance so it's thinking about the performances you've been in when you've been here. Again, there's quite a lot of choices. You can choose more than one.</p> <p>87. It's more than one this time.</p> <p>88. In the performance, what can Fran do?</p> <p>89. I can work with friends and I think entertain people.</p> <p>90. You can entertain people very well. This is super work Fran thank you. Anything else?</p> <p>91. No that's it.</p> <p>92. This is super work Fran, thank you.</p>	<p>84. I put out the symbols.</p> <p>86. Fran watches.</p> <p>89. Fran points to each in turn.</p>	 <p>show new dances</p> <p>to work with friends</p> <p>to entertain people</p>
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7.00	<p>93. And the final question ...</p> <p>94. Final one.</p> <p>95. ... is about how the performance makes you feel. How you feel in the performance. You might pick something else that you may want to tell me.</p> <p>96. I would feel nervous, I would.</p> <p>97. How do you feel after the performance once its all over?</p> <p>98. I feel happy, sort of in between.</p> <p>99. These two, in between.</p> <p>100. In between these two, proud and happy.</p> <p>101. Yeah.</p> <p>102. That's brilliant Fran.</p>		 <p>happy</p>  <p>proud</p>  <p>nervous</p>
7.30		<p>96. Fran points.</p> <p>98. Fran's hand hovers over two options.</p> <p>100. I point to both symbols.</p>	
8.00	<p>103. The next thing that I would like to do is just to show you some video footage of you in the performance.</p> <p>104. All right.</p> <p>105. Ok and I just want you to tell me what you think of it really.</p> <p>106. Is that your wedding?</p> <p>107. It is my wedding. I will show it to you in a moment.</p>		
8.30	<p>108. Now, it's 27.</p>	<p>106. Fran points to the picture on my computer.</p>	

9.00	<p>109. Stephen, just a minute of this. It won't be long.</p> <p>110. My computer is being very slow today Fran. Very slow. We will forward this a little bit because there is just a little clip that I wanted you to watch.</p> <p>111. Oh right.</p> <p>112. Stop here.</p> <p>113. Stop.</p> <p>114. It's just a little bit further on Fran but it is a bit with you in it. Just a little bit more.</p>	<p>110. Fran watches the video.</p> <p>112. Fran indicates to stop.</p> <p>113. Fran indicates to stop.</p> <p>115. Fran watches.</p>	
9.30	<p>116. How did you find doing this?</p> <p>117. Ok.</p> <p>118. What was the best bit?</p> <p>119. After the dance when the three of them come up on stage. And then when I jump it went slow. Did it in slow motion.</p>	<p>119. Fran points to the screen.</p>	
10.00	<p>120. I think we've got the bit where you jump in a moment. Did it take you a long time to learn?</p> <p>121. Yeah it took me a long time. I was stressed out a lot of the time. It was ...</p> <p>122. It paid off though.</p> <p>123. How do you feel watching it?</p> <p>124. All right, yeah.</p>		

10.30	<p>125. I had long hair there but not anymore.</p> <p>126. And which performance did you prefer Fran? This one or Grease.</p> <p>127. I prefer, probably this one.</p> <p>128. And why did you prefer in this one, Fran? What did you prefer in Planet Christmas?</p> <p>129. I think it's the thing where the three of them came.</p> <p>130. Fran this is the picture. This was one of the main ones.</p> <p>131. Thank you very much Fran, I think we are finished.</p>	128. I start putting it away.	
11.00			
Later on in the day we do two theory of mind tests which are not video recorded because they are in a room with students not involved in the research.	<p>This is Sally and this is Anne.</p> <p>Sally has a button in her bag.</p> <p>Sally goes away.</p> <p>Anne plays a trick on Sally. She takes the button and puts it in her bag and goes away.</p> <p>Sally comes back.</p> <p>Where will she look for her button?</p> <p>She would look there. "Oh no". It's there.</p>	Fran points to the empty one and then role plays what happens.	
	<p>What do you think is in this box?</p> <p>Sweeties, I think it is.</p> <p>Let's have a look and see.</p> <p>Oh no, I was wrong, is pencils.</p>		<p>PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUE</p> 

	<p>What do you think Ed [Fran's class teacher] will think is in this box?</p> <p>Sweeties, he would think, sweeties.</p>		
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Appendix 9: Questionnaires to parents

9.1 Questionnaire to parents at the beginning of the research

School of Culture, Language and Communication
Head of School: Professor Gunther Kress
School Manager: Maureen Linney



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November 2007

Dear

Re: Researching the impact of a performing arts education on students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

I am very grateful to have your consent to observe your child in drama sessions at the further education unit this academic year. As I outlined in my original letter, this is a research study looking at drama education with students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. I am taking this forward with Research Autism, the National Autistic Society and the Economic and Social Research Council and we hope that it will enable us to better understand the potential of this type of education for our students.

As part of this research, I am very keen to have your input. I have attached some short questions on the following pages and would be really pleased if you would be able to answer them and return them to [school psychologist] in the envelope provided by Monday 3 December 2007. I can assure you that your answers will be kept completely confidential and anonymous but information given may be used as part of the final research report. I would also like to offer the opportunity for you to talk with me in more detail about your child's involvement in the performing arts. If you would like to take this up, please contact [school psychologist] at the further education unit and we can arrange a time to meet.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either [school psychologist] or me. I can be reached at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk, on 07811394183 or at the address above. Thank you for your involvement and support.

Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Name	
Student's name	

1. What is the diagnosis of your child?
 - ☐ Autism
 - ☐ High functioning autism
 - ☐ Asperger Syndrome
 - ☐ Other, please explain

2. Is your child on medication for his/her condition?
 - ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No

3. What does your child enjoy doing at home?
 - ☐ Watching TV
 - ☐ Playing computer games
 - ☐ Reading
 - ☐ Listening to music
 - ☐ Cooking
 - ☐ Other, please write down

4. Does your child share with you what he/she does at school?
 - ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No

5. Does your child share with you what he/she does in drama? (This may be learning from drama or dance sessions or information about a performance.)
 - ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No

6. Before coming to the further education unit, had your child participated in drama work? (Either drama or dance sessions or a performance)
 - ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No **(please move on to question 8)**

7. Where had your child participated in drama work before?
- ☐ At school
 - ☐ At an out of school club
 - ☐ At home
8. Do you take your child to the theatre?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
9. Is your child involved in drama activity outside of school?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No
10. Do you expect to see changes in your child as a result of his/her participation in drama?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No
11. In working towards a performance, your child plays a character. Does your child play characters at home or imitate others?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No
12. Do you think your child can understand your perspective or take someone else's point of view?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No
13. Have you watched your child in a performance?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No **(please move on to question 15)**
14. Do you see differences in your child when he/she is performing?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No
15. Do you think drama helps/will help to meet your child's needs?
- ☐ Yes, please explain
 - ☐ No

16. What do you hope your child will get out of drama work?

Please tick one or more of the following:

- ☐ I hope he/she will enjoy it.
- ☐ I hope he/she will learn new skills.
- ☐ I hope it will help him/her with communication skills.
- ☐ I hope it will help him/her to mix and work with other people.
- ☐ I hope it will boost his/her confidence.
- ☐ Other, please list

For parents of students in their second or third year at the further education unit

17. Do you see differences in your child on the day of a drama session?

- ☐ Yes, please explain
- ☐ No

18. Do you see differences in your child in the run up, on the day of or after a performance?

- ☐ Yes, please explain
- ☐ No

19. Have you seen changes since he/she started the curriculum?

- ☐ Yes, please explain
- ☐ No

If you would like to tell me more about your child's involvement in drama, please use the space below. Alternatively, I would be delighted to meet you to talk in more detail.

Thank you for your time and for sharing this information with me.

9.2 Questionnaire to parents at the end of the research

Daisy Loyd
Department of Learning Curriculum and Communication

Tel +44 (0)7811394183
Email dloyd@ioe.ac.uk



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June 2008

Dear

Re: Researching drama education for students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

I have very much enjoyed carrying out my research at the further education unit this academic year and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for enabling me to observe your child in drama sessions. As I explained in my original letter, this is a research study looking at drama education for students with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. I am taking it forward with Research Autism, the National Autistic Society and the Economic and Social Research Council and we hope that it will enable us to better understand the potential of this type of education for our students.

At the beginning of the academic year, I asked you to fill in a short questionnaire about your child and now the year is drawing to a close I would very much value your input once again. I have attached some short questions on the following pages and would be really pleased if you would be able to answer them and return them to *[name of school psychologist]* in the envelope provided by Monday 21 July 2008. I can assure you that your answers will be kept completely confidential and anonymous but information given may be used as part of the final research report.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either *[name of school psychologist]* or me. I can be reached at dloyd@ioe.ac.uk, on 07811394183 or at the address above. Thank you once again for your time, involvement and support.

Yours sincerely

DAISY LOYD
Research student
Institute of Education, University of London#

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Name	
Student's name	

1. Does your child share with you what he/she does at school?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

2. Does your child share with you what he/she does in the performing arts? (This may be learning from dance or drama sessions or information about a performance.)
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

3. Do you think your child can understand your perspective or take someone else's point of view?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

4. Have you watched your child in a performance?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No **(please move on to question 6)**

5. Do you see differences in your child when he/she is performing?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

6. Do you see differences in your child on the day of a performing arts session?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

7. Do you see differences in your child in the run up, on the day of or after a performance?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

8. Do you think the performing arts helps to meet your child's needs?
 - ☐ Yes, please give examples
 - ☐ No

9. Have you seen changes in your child as a result of his/her participation in the performing arts?

- ☐ Yes, please give examples
- ☐ No

10. What do you see your child getting out of performing arts work?

Please tick one or more of the following:

- ☐ He/she enjoys it.
- ☐ He/she learns new skills.
- ☐ He/she communicates better.
- ☐ He/she is able to mix and work with other people.
- ☐ It boosts his/her confidence.
- ☐ Other, please list

If you would like to tell me more about your child's involvement in the performing arts, please use the space below. Alternatively, I would be delighted to meet you to talk in more detail.

Thank you for your time and for sharing this information with me.

I greatly appreciate it.

Appendix 10: Documentation samples

10.1 Sample student profile

STUDENT PROFILE

NAME: Isy
YEAR GROUP: FEU 1 Carl

<u>Medical Details /General Health (to include allergies)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffers from hay fever <p style="text-align: right;">See Medical Profile</p>	
<u>Diet (to include preferences, restrictions and presentation)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isy particularly likes crisps and sweets. 	
<u>Self Help Skills (to include eating, toileting and dressing skills, sleeping patterns and road safety).</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isy enjoys being independent, but she requires discrete supervision at all times. She can dress and undress self. She may need support to not help other slower pupils to dress/undress. Can use knife and fork Independent when using the toilet. Isy needs verbal prompting when crossing roads. 	
<u>Method of Communication (to include expressive receptive and method for timetable)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isy mainly communicates through single words and phrases. She is very able at using symbols, words and short phrases Isy understands simple sentences spoken in context supported by gestures/symbols <p>See Communication Programme</p>	
<u>Likes (to include motivators and leisure activities)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singing and dancing Computers Watching TV Sweets Tidying Pretending to be a teacher 	<u>Dislikes (to include phobias)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loud noises Her routine being interrupted
<u>Behaviour (to include key risks, routines and obsessions)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kissing and touching others (rare) Cleaning and clearing away. May read private information from files. <p style="text-align: right;">See Behaviour Support Plan</p>	
<u>Supervision/Seating (to include classroom, transitions, minibuss and residential)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isy enjoys being independent, but she requires discrete supervision at all times. 1:2 or 1:3 for most tasks. 	
<u>Leisure time/social Interaction/Advocacy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being in the company of others. She may need support to appropriately greet or express her feelings towards others. For example to shake hands, not kiss. Watching the activities of others. Playing math games with peers Listening to music 	
<u>Other Information (to include parental wishes, cultural and religious needs)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No photos or filming for media purposes. 	

10.2 Sample behaviour support plan

Name: Alice Class: FEU 3 Mark

Likes & Dislikes	
<u>Likes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Computer • Cooking • Singing • Dancing • Dressing up • Being the centre of attention • Participating and leading group activities • Friendships with key students 	<u>Dislikes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs • Having hair washed • Mushrooms • Adult disapproval • Bicycles ridden on pavements
Behaviours	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouting and crying out loud • Swearing, repetitive babbling • Physically challenging behaviours –Hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, pulling hair of staff (not observed since Jan. 07). • Throwing self on the floor (rare) • Touching other students faces and 'teasing'. Holding and touching male staff anywhere in the body (except in private parts). • Pinching students (sometimes) • Running into the road on impulse • Changes her outfit several times a day (early morning, late afternoon, sometimes during the day) 	
Antecedents/Triggers/Functions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult disapproval and attention seeking • Demand avoidance • Not getting own way, not understanding what she has to do, escalation of no.1 • Frustration • Affection, role-play (carer and child), attention seeking and play-acting. • Play-acting. Could be a trigger for listed behaviour no.3. • Fear of dogs. In order to avoid bicycles on pavements and dogs. • Likes to dress up. Likes sense of fashion. 	
General Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice needs clear boundaries and structure with a firm and consistent approach to support her manage her behaviour. • Low-arousal and low-key approaches are essential at all times and always use a quite tone of voice when delivering instructions. • Use positive ignoring when behaviour escalates. Avoid engaging in conversation or verbal exchanges. • Provide a quite area with discreet and close supervision. • Allow Alice to help or give directions to others. Give her a sense of responsibility and empowerment. • Support Alice in group situations to be able to wait her turn and to enjoy watching others. • Ensure that Alice has frequent opportunities for creative expression through the drama curriculum. • Alice needs support to develop a range of self-calming strategies for her to rehearse and then be able to put into practice. • Access to physical curriculum, completing at least one physical activity each day. 	

Strategies for listed behaviours	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use minimal verbal direction to help Alice to calm down (do not use Makaton symbols as these make her more anxious, and she will tear them). • Always give clear signals about the amount of work and what she needs to do. Structured and firm instructions. • If behaviour escalates she may need space and time-off in the classroom with discreet 1:1 support. Positively encourage her to sit quietly and calmly before returning to lessons. Low-key monitoring. Adults to be aware of proxemic behaviour when working with her. • When necessary use positive ignoring. Then encourage Melanie to sit in a quiet area. Then ask her if she is ready to come back and join in the activity. Give her time. If frustration persists adopt no.3. • Encourage Alice to interact with another pupil or adult (e.g. shaking hands to redirect). Promoting the use of verbal communication tools. • Positively encourage her to calm down. If she starts to speak loudly and with unidentifiable phrases, monitor encouraging breathing techniques. May need space and time-off. May need to return to her class until ready. Follow strategies for listed behaviour no.3. • Ensure to use symbols and school rules prior going into the community. Remind Alice of her responsibilities as a member of the group in walking to and from with the rest of the group. Use rewards on her return if she has behaved appropriately. Use verbal praise. • This is a behaviour that does not really require any specific intervention. It is important to monitor that the changing of clothing does not increase to a level that inhibits her access to the school resources. 	
Distractors/Motivators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing/colouring • Listening to music • Books-especially related to costumes and fashion • Computers for searching specific subjects (e.g. Halloween, TV programmes) • Singing • Dancing 	
Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share an activity as part of a group in Drama. • To speak and answer using a low tone of voice, and appropriate language. • To develop further relaxation techniques in managing her behaviour. 	
Sensory Integration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From classroom observations Alice demonstrates some vestibular hypo-sensitivity. 	
Signed _____	Review _____

_____	Date _____

10.3 Sample annual review

ANNUAL REPORT

Name of Student: **FRAN**
 Year: **FEU 2**

Physical Description:

Vision: No apparent problems
 Hearing: No apparent problems
 Height: 162cm
 Weight: 54kg
 Health: Fran is generally a healthy young woman.

SIGNATURE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

Targets From Previous Review

1. To ask appropriate questions with minimal prompting.
2. To use her own initiative in the workplace whilst on work experience.
3. To use the correct tone of voice while reading and speaking to express herself appropriately.
4. To be responsible for her own belongings and her work area.
5. To find out information from members of staff and the general public whilst on work experience.

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN is very inquisitive about the lives and interests of others. She will ask appropriate questions without prompting but sometimes needs to be made aware of a 'certain time' and a 'certain place'.
2. FRAN has had many opportunities to use her own initiative during her work experience at Oxfam. FRAN's support worker and her manager often praise to FRAN for the manner in which she tackles her duties and responsibilities.
3. FRAN is part of the Drama group that will be performing a Christmas play at the end of the year. She is expected to memorise her lines and say them with the correct tone of voice to portray her character and storyline.
4. FRAN takes good care of her own belongings. She has her own system of filing her work and she is very organised.
5. Whilst on work experience FRAN is required to find out what her daily tasks are from the manager at Oxfam. She is also encouraged to find information such as the price or location of an item from other staff members and tell customers where to find the items.

Reports on Subjects

Creative and Expressive Arts

Drama

Targets From Previous Review

1. To actively participate in school performances.
2. To learn and remember a basic ballet step sequence.

Comments on Progress towards Meeting Targets

1. This target has been met. FRAN took part in the performances 'Santa Goes to Hollywood' in December 2006 and 'Grease' in May 2007. Presently she is taking part in the rehearsals for the next Christmas performance.
2. FRAN has been working towards learning and remembering basic dance sequences in her Drama lessons.

During this academic year the Drama sessions have been structured with the intention of developing and improving group work skills, body awareness, attention and listening and speaking skills.

FRAN has been practicing several different variations of the frozen frame/still image technique as a warm up activity as well as a tool used in more sophisticated performance related activities such as improvisation. She has also been practicing juggling with beanbags as a warm up for the Drama session where she has the opportunity to work on her imagination and acting skills.

FRAN has also been working on the OCR Module 'Prepare for a Performance' through drawing up a rehearsal schedule, identifying equipment, props, costumes and make up and finally recording role, responsibilities and details of the performance space. FRAN is always well motivated and willingly participates in the activities and she is making excellent progress in her Drama lessons.

Target

1. To provide assistance to others when rehearsing for school performances.

Literacy

Targets From Previous Review

1. To remain on one topic for longer while speaking and not to jump between topics.
2. To be able to scan texts to locate information.

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN is able to remain on one topic for longer periods of time before prompting is required. If there is something specific on her mind she sometimes finds it difficult to talk about a different topic and will attempt to focus the conversation on what she has to say. She has made good progress on this target and shows much more interest in the opinions of others.
2. FRAN is able to find words relating to specific information that she wishes to learn more about. She scans recipes for cooking times and ingredients and chooses what to make according to that information.

Speaking and Listening

FRAN demonstrates that she is able to listen and respond to people and follow requests. This becomes apparent when she is completing her Work Experience at Oxfam where she is required to follow instructions and to say if she does not understand what is expected of her.

FRAN takes others' point of view into consideration and can listen and respond appropriately to suggestions. If she does not agree she will say so and is able to change the topic to something else if she does not want to discuss it. She enjoys having other people's input and is polite when making personal comments.

FRAN sometimes need to be reminded to wait for her turn to speak when someone else is talking. She may find it difficult when she is reminded about this and may become emotional. It is important to let her know that she has not done anything wrong but she needs to be aware of social etiquette. A very

gentle approach and calm voice is essential when addressing this issue.

FRAN is able to ask for certain instructions to be repeated if she does not understand or would like a clearer explanation. She is eager to develop and extend her vocabulary and use words appropriately.

Level SLd/L2

Target

1. To wait patiently for her turn to speak with less prompting.

Reading and Writing

FRAN can extract information from a wide variety of sources and uses it very effectively. She can look up information in dictionaries, encyclopaedias and on the internet and enjoys having the power of knowledge at her disposal.

FRAN takes out books of specific interest for her from the library and takes good care of it until it needs to be returned. She is very confident in the library and only requires discreet adult supervision while she finds what she is looking for.

FRAN is a very competent reader and on occasions she has had the confidence to read to the class.

FRAN fills in her self assessment and evaluation forms independently when she returns from work experience. This is a good opportunity for her to reflect on what she has done and decide on possible improvements for the next time.

Level RT/E3

Target

1. To write down the general idea of a short story she has memorised.

Numeracy

Targets From Previous Review

1. To add and subtract two digit whole numbers with verbal prompts. N1/E2
2. To complete the OCR module 'Recognise Money' independently.

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN can add and subtract two digit whole numbers very successfully. She may need some help when it comes to more complicated equations but has a good logical approach. She may sometimes guess an answer if she is not sure but shows good understanding when given an explanation.
2. FRAN has completed the OCR module 'Recognise Money' independently. She only needs explanation on what is expected of her to complete the worksheets but finished them quickly and neatly.

Using and Applying Mathematics

FRAN has a good understanding of basic Mathematics and enjoys solving equations and problems. She continues to make good progress in Maths related activities. This year FRAN has completed the OCR module 'Recognise Money' and she is very confident when using money. She calculates her coin selection to the nearest pound and knows to wait for her change. She will be encouraged to further develop her money skills and attempt to predict how much change she will receive or the total price of two or more items.

One of FRAN's duties at Oxfam is working behind the till under supervision. She has learned many of the functions on the till and is confident when receiving money and handing back change. She enjoys this duty immensely and strives to fulfil it to the best of her ability. She also prices items from a list and puts them in their correct place.

Level N1/E2

Target

1. To predict how much change she will receive with some support.

PE/Swimming**Targets From Previous Review**

1. To be able to tread water for five seconds independently under adult supervision

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN has been very successful in her efforts to learn to swim. She can tread water for at least five seconds with staff in close proximity to give support when needed. She can swim short distances using a boogie board and her confidence is growing every time she enters the pool.

FRAN continues to have access to many physical activities at the further education unit. These involve group and individual activities and have been important in helping her develop her interpersonal skills, communication skills and attention span.

As part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme FRAN continues to walk to Gunnersbury Park with the group. This walk takes about fifteen minutes on average and provides good cardiovascular exercise for her. Once at the park FRAN is encouraged to choose what she would like to do, whether it is having time on her own or socialising with the rest of the group.

FRAN enjoys team sports, particularly basketball and she is very accurate with her aim.

Target

1. To continue to work on her swimming technique with adult support.

Work Experience/Food Technology**Targets From Previous Review**

1. To follow a recipe while cooking without adult support and to delegate tasks and duties to her peers.

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN is in charge of selecting recipes from which the class can choose what they would like to make in Food Technology. She can follow the recipe with adult supervision but requires some encouragement to delegate tasks and duties to her peers.

As well as offsite work experience FRAN also part takes in many work experience activities in school. She helps to make photocopies, laminate symbols and sort out resources in the classroom. She also has the responsibility of going around all the classes with a member of staff and help to complete the school register.

FRAN sorts out all the fruit for the school on her Monday afternoon work experience sessions in the kitchen. Afterwards she takes the empty boxes and containers to the skip outside the school. She has become familiar with these tasks and completes them with supervision from staff. She also loads and unloads the dishwasher independently and wipes the trolleys and tables.

FRAN has many strengths to add to the group baking session. She is very meticulous at following the recipe but requires some prompting to delegate duties and give others a chance to help prepare the food.

Targets

1. To be more attentive when she sees customers are waiting to be helped whilst on work experience.

College and Community Links

Targets From Previous Review

1. To navigate her way around the local area without adult support.

Comments on Progress Towards Meeting Targets

1. FRAN is very aware of the route required to get to the familiar places she visits on a regular basis. When asked which way to go she is able to reply immediately, although on occasions she may take a few moments to orientate herself. She also has a good general idea how the suburbs of London fit into each other and how to reach them by tube.

Although FRAN has good factual knowledge of transport she continues to be highly vulnerable and is always discreetly but closely supported by a member of staff.

FRAN has College sessions at Acton and West London College every Wednesday. She is currently working on a Photography module and is learning about many different aspects of the camera and computer by taking pictures, editing and manipulating them.

FRAN continues to access the community and this has proven to be a very practical and enjoyable way for FRAN to learn about different aspects of society. She enjoys not being confined by walls and responds well to verbal direction when on outings.

Along with her tutor group FRAN visits the library, swimming pool, café, supermarket and various parks on a regular basis. She has also made use of buses and the tube on numerous class outings. These include journeys to Hyde Park, Park Royal, Ealing Broadway and Hammersmith. FRAN copes well on public transport and enjoys the train journeys immensely.

Target

1. To find a certain location on a street map and lead her class to it.

PSHCE (Personal, Social & Health Education and Citizenship)

Interacting and Working with Others

Targets From Previous Review

1. To approach challenging situations within the classroom with a calm, open minded attitude and use problem solving techniques where necessary.

Comments on progress towards meeting targets

1. FRAN has become more open minded about challenging situations within the classroom. She is less likely to become anxious about situations out of her control and can distance herself from certain situations when prompted. FRAN uses problem solving techniques such as social stories and problem solving forms when necessary.

FRAN has many friends and is a popular student. She seeks out familiar students and staff members and has become very confident around them.

FRAN is showing an interest in things that are commonly of interest to students her age and enjoys sharing these interests with others. She is well aware of her emotions and can generally control them. She has a good understanding of appropriate behaviour and behaves accordingly on most occasions.

FRAN works well with others and even helps some students when instructed to do so. She is able to interact with peers during staff directed work and play activities. She initiates interaction with her peers and staff which is encouraging to see. She relates better to staff members than students and enjoys having conversations about clothes with other females.

Level PSD16e

Target

1. To approach conflict with maturity and try to avoid involvement.

AttentionTargets From Previous Review

1. To persevere with new tasks even though she may find them challenging, for example swimming.

Comments on progress towards meeting targets

1. FRAN shows perseverance with tasks such as swimming. She was aware that being able to tread water was one of her targets and she worked very well in meeting that target. She also tackles other tasks such as origami or baking with determination and tries her best to succeed.

FRAN is currently working at PSD15 for attention. Although she shows fleeting attention to others activities occurring in close proximity her attention is mainly focused on her own choice of activity. She finds it more difficult to focus when it is noisy or there are distractions in the classroom. In these instances it is beneficial for her to work on her own in the library. She tries to complete her own work independently but knows when to ask for help.

She also works well in group situations, especially higher functioning groups and tries to act as a role model for other students.

At her work experience FRAN sometimes needs to be reminded to focus on her task at hand, especially when customers are waiting for assistance but she will quickly help the customer when reminded.

Level PSD16

Target

1. To seek attention from her teacher and other staff when appropriate. PSD16b

Independent and Organisational SkillsTargets From Previous Review

1. To prioritise her time and complete all her duties without being reminded.

Comments on progress towards meeting targets

1. FRAN still requires gentle reminders to complete some of her duties such as her Food Intake Chart and timetable. She may from time to time forget to put resources back in their place but does so when reminded.

FRAN continues to be a very independent young woman who takes good care of herself and her belongings. Her high level of ability and independence should not overshadow her vulnerability in social situations and clear support and structure is required in order for her to live her life to her full potential.

FRAN has gained confidence and self esteem since following the off-site work experience programme. She takes pride in her work and in the respect she receives from others when she is dealing with situations. She takes her responsibilities and her position in Oxfam very seriously and has gone on training days to gain further knowledge and experience.

FRAN can manage changes in routine very cooperatively when the reasons are explained thoroughly. Sometimes she needs to complete a problem solving form or write a social story to help her deal with more radical changes, especially when she was not adequately prepared for it.

Level PSD16e

Target

1. To show emotional stability when certain issues are addressed such as waiting for your turn to speak.

SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY**ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT**

NAME: FRAN

Communication Skills and Progress

FRAN continues to make good progress with her communication skills. FRAN is at the Advanced Level of the School's Communication Curriculum working on social language skills.

FRAN listens to information and advice and has made progress with her understanding of language used in daily conversations, for example 'what do you do at work experience?'

Results from Language Assessment show that FRAN understands a wide range of grammatical sentence constructions including negatives, pronouns and plurals. FRAN follows instructions independently and takes responsibility for jobs and helping her peers. FRAN's comprehension can be supported through demonstrations of tasks and written information.

Communication work has focused on developing social communication skills (Aims December 2006). FRAN has made good progress and is increasingly confident and independent in her interactions with different people in different social situations. FRAN initiates conversations with staff and peers.

FRAN uses her speech to make requests, for example 'can I have the glue please', seek information, for example 'which class is she going to be in?', express opinions, for example 'it's not appropriate' and feelings, for example 'I'm very pleased.'

FRAN has continued to make progress with her ability to use more complex sentences to express her ideas. This progress is reflected in results from language assessment, for example 'it's got holes in that bag, nearly three apples fell out and they should have put a double bag on it.'

Communication Aims

Further develop social language skills

- Provide clear feedback about social situations including explaining other people's point of view.
- Discuss and practice talking in different situations including making phone calls and speaking in an interview.
- Work on problem solving through using clear explanations and encouraging choice and decision making.

Speech and Language Therapy is provided through ongoing assessment, monitoring and facilitation of communication aims.

Annual Review Behaviour Update

Name: FRAN
Class: FEU 2

Key Behaviours:

- There are no behaviours of concern.
- FRAN continues to be highly vulnerable in the wider community due to her lack of social understanding.

Progress

Attention:

FRAN's attention span has continued to improve and she can independently complete different tasks through her extensive work experience in the community. She can easily shift her attention if necessary to a different task and she can more easily and more efficiently manage her anxieties around novel situations.

Learning Styles:

FRAN uses a range of learning styles, although verbal instructions are the main tool used with her.

Motivation:

When faced with novel situations FRAN can experience some anxieties related to changes and unpredictable events. In these instances she can become withdrawn and nervous or engage in repetitive questioning about specific events and people. She is generally well motivated and will cooperate in a group situation helping other peers.

Social Interaction (e.g. symbolic play, organisational and planning skills, empathy):

FRAN is a well organised young lady and she has excellent planning skills. She has been helping other peers by either sharing a task or by guiding them through their choices. When she has experienced difficulties around specific situations, usually novel tasks or activities, she has been able to cope better with those anxieties by talking to an adult member of staff but also by sharing those emotions with her group in relationships sessions.

Motor Skills (Fine and Gross):

FRAN can use a range of tools independently and does not need any adult support or participation. She can dress and undress independently.

Living Skills

1. Eating: Independent.
2. Toileting: Independent.
3. Washing: Independent.
4. Dressing: Independent.

List of Emerging Skills:

1. The ability to complete a work experience task without adult assistance.
2. The ability to engage in a group discussion without engaging in inappropriate giggling.

Sensory Integration:

From observations, FRAN demonstrates some auditory, gustatory and tactile hyper-sensitivities.

Objectives:

- To continue to develop her verbal communication and address adults emotions in appropriate ways.
- To be able to initiate and complete a sequence of novel activities independently.
- To continue to make choices without adult assistance or support

Appendix 11: Codes and coding process

11.1 Perspective taking codes

1. Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people

- Shares/shows to others: A student shares or shows something they enjoy, are interested in or have achieved to others. For example, a student may draw a teacher's attention to something s/he is doing, s/he may point something of interest out or s/he may perform something s/he can do to others. Shares/shows to others are items in the Social Communication Questionnaire and in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 301-302).
- Responds to the sharing/showing of others: A student responds to the sharing/showing of others by clapping, cheering or commenting in response to their performance. Responds to the sharing/showing of others are items in the Social Communication Questionnaire and in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 314, 317).

2. Reciprocating socially

- Follows instructions: A student follows instructions given by a teacher or peer. Follows instructions are items in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and in the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 301-302).
- Responds to questions: A student responds to questions asked by a teacher or peer. Responds to questions is an item in the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18).
- Gives instructions and monitors response: A student gives instructions to a teacher or peer (s) and monitors her/his response. Gives instructions and monitors response is an item in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 304-305).
- Imitates others: A student copies a teacher or peer(s). Imitates others is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 314).
- Takes turns: A student takes turns with a teacher or peer. Takes turns is an item in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 316).
- Helps others: A student helps a teacher or peer by actively supporting her/him with a task. Helps others is an item in the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132).

3. Reciprocating emotionally

- Expresses feelings: A student tells others how s/he is feeling. Expresses feelings is an item in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 313-314).
- Expresses opinion: A student tells other people what s/he thinks about something. Expresses opinion is an item in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 305).
- Shows interest in / awareness of how others think and feel: A student expresses an interest in how others are behaving or shows awareness of what others may be thinking or how s/he may be feeling. Shows interest in / awareness of how others think and feel is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales, the Social Responsiveness Scale and the Social Skills Rating System (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18; Gresham & Elliott,

1990: 132; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 314-315).

4. Initiating interaction with others

- Asks questions/for help: A student asks a teacher or peer a question or for help. Asks questions/for help is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire and in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 303-304).
- Initiates sharing information/affect: A student begins an interaction, verbal or non-verbal, with a teacher or peer. Initiates sharing information/affect is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales, the Social Responsiveness Scale and the Social Skills Rating System (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 19; Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 315).

5. Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe

- Substitutes one object for another, real or imaginary: A student uses one object, either real or imaginary, to stand for another object which is either real or imaginary. For example, a student mimes carrying a bouquet or a student uses a piece of rope as a microphone. Substitutes one object for another is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire and in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 316).
- Improvises a movement sequence / scene / around a script: A student creates a movement sequence or scene or adds her/his own contribution to a movement sequence, scene or script. Improvises is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire, Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and the Social Responsiveness Scale (Constantino & Gruber, 2005: 18; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 316).
- Talks about pretence: A student talks about pretence by talking about her/his character or role or make-believe activities s/he is doing. Talks about pretence is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire and in Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005: 316).

6. Forming peer relationships

- Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with peers includes sharing/showing to peers or responding to the sharing/showing of peers.
- Reciprocating socially with peers includes following instructions from peers; responding to questions asked by peers; giving instructions to peers and monitoring their response; imitating peers; taking turns with peers; helping peers. This is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire and the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15).
- Reciprocating emotionally with peers includes expressing feelings to peers; expressing an opinion about peers; showing interest in / awareness of how peers may think and feel. This is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire and the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliott, 1990: 132; Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15).
- Initiating interaction with peers includes asking peers questions or for help; sharing information/affect with peers. This is an item in the Social Communication Questionnaire (Rutter, Bailey, & Lord, 2003: 14-15).
- Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe includes substituting one object, real or imaginary, as part of an interaction with peers; improvising a movement sequence / scene / around a script with peers; talking about pretence with peers.

11.2 Codes for means of assistance

1. Instructing

- Instructing involves a teacher or peer requesting a specific action.
- It assists a student in selecting the correct response or providing parameters in which to respond to a task.

2. Questioning

- Questioning involves a teacher or peer requesting a response that would not necessarily be produced without assistance.
- The response to a question helps a teacher/peer assess a student's level of understanding.

3. Modelling

- Modelling is when a teacher or peer offers behaviour for imitation.
- It helps a student by providing a remembered image of a desired way in which the task can be performed.

4. Explaining

- Explaining involves a teacher or peer providing explanations.
- It helps a student by giving an explanatory structure to organise or justify approaches to learning.

5. Breaking down tasks

- Breaking down tasks involves a teacher or peer chunking tasks and sequencing them.
- It helps a student by adapting tasks in order for them to be achieved.

6. Encouraging positively or negatively

- Encouraging positively or negatively is when a teacher or peer uses techniques to strengthen or weaken a particular response.
- It is important in helping a student to approach a task in the right way.

7. Giving feedback

- Giving feedback is when a teacher or peer provides an opinion on a student's performance and the opinion often relates to a standard.
- It is important in raising a student's awareness about their ability in performing a task and opening up the opportunity for them to correct themselves.

11.3 Codes for means of participation

1. Giving feedback

- Giving feedback is the process of providing an opinion on the social context.
- Students give feedback to participate in the social context by sharing with others observations about the immediate environment, including the speech and action of teachers/peers, or an activity they are currently or have recently been engaged in.

2. Questioning

- Questioning is a request for a response.
- Students question to participate in the social context to gain information from teachers or peers in the immediate context or seek support or clarification from a teacher on an activity they are currently engaged with.

3. Instructing

- Instructing involves requesting a specific action.
- Students instruct to participate in the social context to try and stop a teacher or peer from doing something because it disrupts what the student is doing or to encourage a teacher or peer to do something to enable what the student is doing.

4. Explaining

- Explaining is providing clarification.
- Students provide explanations to participate in the social context as a way of helping a peer participate in or complete a task.

5. Modelling

- Modelling is offering behaviour for imitation.
- Students model to participate in the social context as a way of helping a peer participate in or complete a task.

6. Encouraging positively or negatively

- Encouraging positively or negatively concerns approaches used to strengthen or weaken a student's response.
- Students use positive or negative encouragement to participate in the social context to encourage a peer to do something or discourage her/him from doing something.

Appendix 12: Data analysis breakdown, by student and by session

12.1 Perspective taking

12.1.1 Perspective taking in drama, by student

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	742	58.70
Claire	122	
Alice	111	
Deborah	105	
Fran	78	
Harry	72	
Ben	70	
Gina	62	
Isy	52	
Eddie	37	
Jacob	33	
Initiating interaction	203	16.06
Alice	60	
Claire	50	
Deborah	36	
Fran	26	
Gina	11	
Ben	9	
Jacob	7	
Isy	4	
Eddie	-	
Harry	-	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	145	11.47
Alice	41	
Claire	28	
Fran	16	
Ben	14	
Deborah	14	
Jacob	10	
Isy	7	
Harry	6	
Gina	5	
Eddie	4	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	106	8.39
Alice	26	
Claire	23	
Ben	13	
Deborah	12	
Isy	8	
Jacob	7	
Gina	6	
Fran	5	
Eddie	4	
Harry	2	

Reciprocating emotionally	68	5.38
Claire	27	
Ben	13	
Deborah	9	
Alice	8	
Fran	5	
Jacob	4	
Eddie	1	
Harry	1	
Gina	0	
Isy	0	
Total	1,264	100.00

12.1.2 Perspective taking in drama, by part of session

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	742	58.70
Rehearsing for a performance	212	
Learning drama and dance skills	124	
Warming up	155	
Playing drama and movement games	93	
Beginning of the session	92	
Going through the timetable	46	
Relaxing at the end of the session	20	
Initiating interaction	203	16.06
Beginning of the session	92	
Rehearsing for a performance	44	
Relaxing at the end of the session	24	
Warming up	17	
Learning drama and dance skills	16	
Playing drama and movement games	9	
Going through the timetable	1	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	145	11.47
Rehearsing for a performance	53	
Playing drama and movement games	40	
Learning drama and dance skills	26	
Relaxing at the end of the session	13	
Warming up	8	
Beginning of the session	5	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	106	8.39
Playing drama and movement games	39	
Rehearsing for a performance	35	
Learning drama and dance skills	29	
Warming up	2	
Beginning of the session	1	
Reciprocating emotionally	68	5.38
Rehearsing for a performance	37	
Beginning of the session	8	
Playing drama and movement games	8	
Relaxing at the end of the session	7	
Learning drama and dance skills	5	
Warming up	3	
Total	1,264	100.00

12.1.3 Perspective taking with peers in drama, by student

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	213	69.84
Alice	53	
Claire	29	
Fran	29	
Gina	28	
Deborah	24	
Ben	14	
Harry	12	
Eddie	9	
Isy	8	
Jacob	7	
Initiating interaction	40	13.11
Alice	24	
Deborah	6	
Claire	3	
Jacob	3	
Gina	2	
Ben	1	
Fran	1	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	34	11.15
Alice	17	
Fran	8	
Claire	4	
Ben	2	
Deborah	1	
Gina	1	
Jacob	1	
Reciprocating emotionally	11	3.61
Claire	7	
Ben	3	
Deborah	1	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	7	2.30
Claire	3	
Ben	2	
Alice	1	
Deborah	1	
Total	305	100.00

12.1.4 Perspective taking with peers in drama, by part of session

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	213	69.84
Warming up	59	
Rehearsing for a performance	59	
Beginning of the session	21	
Going through the timetable	23	
Learning drama and dance skills	24	
Playing drama and movement games	21	
Relaxing at the end of the session	6	
Initiating interaction	40	13.11
Beginning of the session	21	
Rehearsing for a performance	6	
Learning drama and dance skills	5	
Relaxing at the end of the session	4	
Warming up	3	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	34	11.15
Rehearsing for a performance	16	
Playing drama and movement games	10	
Warming up	3	
Learning drama and dance skills	3	
Relaxing at the end of the session	2	
Reciprocating emotionally	11	3.61
Rehearsing for a performance	11	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	7	2.30
Rehearsing for a performance	4	
Playing drama and movement games	3	
Total	305	100.00

12.1.5 Perspective taking in other curricular areas, by student

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	352	65.67
Deborah	50	
Claire	46	
Gina	42	
Isy	42	
Fran	37	
Harry	34	
Jacob	32	
Alice	31	
Eddie	31	
Ben	7	
Initiating interaction	135	25.19
Alice	43	
Deborah	27	
Claire	20	
Fran	18	
Gina	15	
Jacob	7	
Harry	3	
Ben	1	
Isy	1	
Reciprocating emotionally	27	5.04
Fran	8	
Alice	4	
Gina	4	
Claire	3	
Deborah	3	
Eddie	2	
Harry	1	
Isy	1	
Jacob	1	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	17	3.17
Alice	5	
Claire	5	
Jacob	4	
Gina	2	
Fran	1	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	5	0.93
Alice	3	
Jacob	1	
Claire	1	
Total	536	100.00

12.1.6 Perspective taking in other curricular areas, by session

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	352	65.67
Beginning of the session	128	
Food intake	7	
PSHCE	38	
Work experience in kitchen	29	
PE	20	
Music	47	
Art	30	
Café	21	
Library	10	
Relaxing at the end of the session	22	
Initiating interaction	135	25.19
Beginning of the session	69	
Work experience in kitchen	15	
PSHCE	11	
Music	17	
Art	14	
Café	3	
Library	3	
Relaxing at the end of the session	3	
Reciprocating emotionally	27	5.04
Beginning of the session	9	
Work experience in kitchen	4	
PE	1	
Music	4	
Art	2	
Café	2	
Library	3	
Relaxing at the end of the session	2	
Spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people	17	3.17
Beginning of the session	3	
PSHCE	3	
Music	4	
Art	1	
PE	1	
Library	5	
Engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe	5	0.93
Art	1	
Library	2	
Relaxing at the end of the session	2	
Total	536	100.00

12.1.7 Perspective taking with peers in other curricular areas, by student

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	38	80.85
Claire	9	
Fran	6	
Alice	5	
Gina	5	
Ben	4	
Jacob	3	
Deborah	3	
Isy	2	
Eddie	1	
Initiating interaction	9	19.15
Alice	6	
Deborah	2	
Gina	1	
Total	47	100.00

12.1.8 Perspective taking with peers in other curricular areas, by session

Aspect of perspective taking	Number	Percentage
Reciprocating socially	38	80.85
Beginning of the session	16	
Music	11	
Art	4	
Café	2	
Food intake	1	
PE	1	
PSHCE	1	
Library	1	
Relaxing at the end of the session	1	
Initiating interaction	9	19.15
Art	6	
Beginning of the session	2	
PSHCE	1	
Total	47	100.00

12.2 Means of assistance

12.2.1 Means of assistance in drama, by student

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	407	51.07
Claire	74	
Deborah	52	
Ben	50	
Alice	44	
Isy	37	
Fran	34	
Gina	34	
Jacob	30	
Harry	28	
Eddie	24	
Questioning	181	22.71
Claire	32	
Alice	28	
Fran	28	
Ben	27	
Deborah	25	
Harry	15	
Gina	11	
Isy	7	
Eddie	5	
Jacob	3	
Instructing-modelling	129	16.12
Harry	24	
Deborah	22	
Alice	16	
Claire	15	
Ben	10	
Gina	11	
Isy	11	
Eddie	7	
Fran	7	
Jacob	6	
Modelling	48	6.02
Claire	11	
Deborah	11	
Eddie	7	
Harry	6	
Isy	6	
Gina	3	
Jacob	2	
Alice	1	
Ben	1	
Fran	0	
Instructing and explaining	10	1.25
Claire	5	
Deborah	1	
Fran	1	
Gina	1	
Harry	1	
Jacob	1	
Instructing and breaking down tasks	5	0.63
Claire	4	
Deborah	1	
Questioning and encouraging	4	0.50
Fran	2	
Alice	1	
Claire	1	

Instructing and encouraging	3		0.38
Eddie		1	
Gina		1	
Jacob		1	
Instructing, modelling, breaking down tasks	3		0.38
Alice		1	
Harry		1	
Jacob		1	
Instructing and giving feedback	3		0.38
Claire		1	
Eddie		1	
Harry		1	
Explaining	2		0.25
Alice		1	
Fran		1	
Instructing and questioning	1		0.13
Claire		1	
Encouraging	1		0.13
Claire		1	
Total	797		100

12.2.2 Means of assistance in drama, by part of session

Means of assistance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	407	51.07
Rehearsing for a performance	129	
Learning drama and dance skills	111	
Playing drama and movement games	82	
Warming up	42	
Beginning of the session	27	
Going through the timetable	10	
Relaxing at the end of the session	5	
Questioning	181	22.71
Beginning of the session	45	
Going through the timetable	20	
Warming up	13	
Playing drama and movement games	43	
Learning drama and dance skills	16	
Rehearsing for a performance	29	
Relaxing at the end of the session	15	
Instructing and modelling	129	16.12
Warming up	61	
Learning drama and dance skills	23	
Rehearsing for a performance	23	
Playing drama and movement games	16	
Beginning of the session	3	
Going through the timetable	2	
Relaxing at the end of the session	1	
Modelling	48	6.02
Rehearsing for a performance	32	
Learning drama and dance skills	11	
Warming up	3	
Going through the timetable	1	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Instructing and explaining	10	1.25
Rehearsing for a performance	6	
Learning drama and dance skills	2	
Going through the timetable	1	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Instructing and breaking down tasks	5	0.63
Learning drama and dance skills	4	
Going through the timetable	1	
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Questioning and encouraging	4	0.50
Rehearsing for a performance	3	
Beginning of the session	1	
Instructing and encouraging	3	0.38
Warming up	1	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Instructing, modelling, breaking down tasks	3	0.38
Going through the timetable	2	
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Instructing-giving feedback	3	0.38
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Explaining	2	0.25
Rehearsing for a performance	2	
Instructing and questioning	1	0.13
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Encouraging	1	0.13
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Total	797	100.00

12.2.3 Means of assistance by peers in drama, by student

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	65	74.71
Alice	15	
Claire	13	
Gina	11	
Eddie	7	
Deborah	5	
Ben	4	
Fran	3	
Isy	3	
Harry	2	
Jacob	2	
Modelling	8	9.12
Deborah	3	
Harry	3	
Gina	1	
Isy	1	
Questioning	7	8.05
Alice	2	
Fran	3	
Gina	1	
Harry	1	
Instructing and modelling	5	5.75
Alice	2	
Gina	2	
Harry	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	2.30
Alice	1	
Harry	1	
Total	87	100

12.2.4 Means of assistance by peers, by part of session

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	65	74.71
Rehearsing for a performance	20	
Warming up	11	
Beginning of the session	8	
Going through the timetable	8	
Playing drama and movement games	8	
Learning drama and dance skills	6	
Relaxing at the end of the session	4	
Modelling	8	9.12
Rehearsing for a performance	4	
Learning drama and dance skills	3	
Going through the timetable	1	
Instructing and modelling	7	8.05
Warming up	5	
Playing drama and movement games	2	
Questioning	5	5.75
Beginning of the session	3	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Learning drama and dance skills	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	2.30
Going through the timetable	2	
Total	87	100

12.2.5 Means of assistance in other curricular areas, by student

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	156	47.85
Deborah	28	
Gina	24	
Isy	23	
Claire	17	
Alice	15	
Jacob	15	
Fran	12	
Harry	12	
Eddie	10	
Ben	-	
Questioning	129	39.57
Claire	24	
Fran	18	
Gina	17	
Alice	16	
Harry	13	
Jacob	12	
Eddie	11	
Isy	9	
Deborah	7	
Ben	2	
Instructing-modelling	33	10.12
Eddie	11	
Deborah	7	
Gina	4	
Harry	4	
Isy	3	
Jacob	2	
Claire	1	
Fran	1	
Alice	-	
Ben	-	
Modelling	7	2.15
Gina	2	
Harry	2	
Deborah	1	
Eddie	1	
Isy	1	
Alice	-	
Ben	-	
Claire	-	
Fran	-	
Jacob	-	
Instructing-modelling-breaking down tasks	1	0.31
Harry	1	
Alice	-	
Ben	-	
Claire	-	
Deborah	-	
Eddie	-	
Fran	-	
Gina	-	
Isy	-	
Jacob	-	
Total	326	100

12.2.6 Means of assistance in other curricular areas, by part of session

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	156	47.85
Beginning of the session	55	
Music	22	
PSHCE	18	
Work experience in the kitchen	15	
Art	13	
Café	10	
PE	8	
Relaxing at the end of the session	8	
Food intake	5	
Library	2	
Questioning	129	39.57
Beginning of the session	63	
PSHCE	13	
Art	10	
Relaxing at the end of the session	10	
Café	9	
Library	9	
Work experience in the kitchen	7	
Music	6	
PE	1	
Food intake	1	
Instructing-modelling	33	10.12
Beginning of the session	1	
PE	10	
Work experience in the kitchen	3	
PSHCE	5	
Music	9	
Art	4	
Relaxing at the end of the session	1	
Modelling	7	2.15
Relaxing at the end of the session	3	
Beginning of the session	1	
PSHCE	1	
PE	1	
Music	1	
Instructing-modelling-breaking down tasks	1	0.31
Music	1	
Total	326	100

12.2.7 Means of assistance by peers in other curricular areas, by student

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	11	100.00
Eddie	4	
Gina	3	
Fran	1	
Deborah	3	
Alice	-	
Ben	-	
Claire	-	
Harry	-	
Isy	-	
Jacob	-	
Total	11	100

12.2.8 Means of assistant by peers in other curricular areas, by part of session

Means of assisted performance	Number	Percentage
Instructing	11	100.00
Art	4	
Beginning of the session	3	
Work experience in the kitchen	3	
Café	1	
Total	11	100

12.3 Means of participation

12.3.1 Means of participation in drama, by student

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	284	60.81
Alice	106	
Claire	72	
Deborah	31	
Fran	26	
Gina	16	
Ben	12	
Jacob	10	
Isy	7	
Harry	4	
Eddie	-	
Questioning	94	20.13
Claire	32	
Alice	22	
Deborah	14	
Ben	6	
Fran	6	
Gina	5	
Jacob	5	
Isy	4	
Eddie	-	
Harry	-	
Instructing	68	14.56
Alice	22	
Fran	18	
Deborah	12	
Ben	7	
Gina	5	
Claire	1	
Harry	1	
Isy	1	
Jacob	1	
Eddie	-	
Explaining	13	2.78
Claire	4	
Alice	3	
Ben	3	
Fran	3	
Modelling	3	0.64
Fran	2	
Isy	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	0.43
Alice	1	
Ben	1	
Giving feedback, modelling, instructing	2	0.43
Alice	2	
Encouraging		1
Claire	1	0.21
Total	467	100

12.3.2 Means of participation in drama, by part of session

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	284	60.81
Rehearsing for a performance	106	
Beginning of the session	84	
Warming up	27	
Relaxing at the end of the session	23	
Playing drama and movement games	22	
Learning drama and dance skills	19	
Going through the timetable	3	
Questioning	94	20.13
Rehearsing for a performance	34	
Beginning of the session	25	
Relaxing at the end of the session	14	
Learning drama and dance skills	9	
Warming up	7	
Playing drama and movement games	4	
Going through the timetable	1	
Instructing	68	14.56
Warming up	26	
Playing drama and movement games	13	
Rehearsing for a performance	9	
Beginning of the session	8	
Learning drama and dance skills	8	
Going through the timetable	2	
Relaxing at the end of the session	2	
Explaining	13	2.78
Rehearsing for a performance	10	
Going through the timetable	2	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Modelling	3	0.64
Beginning of the session	1	
Going through the timetable	1	
Warming up	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	0.43
Going through the timetable	2	
Giving feedback, modelling, instructing	2	0.43
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Going through the timetable	1	
Encouraging	1	0.21
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Total	467	100

12.3.3 Means of participation concerning peers in drama, by student

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	129	59.17
Alice	61	
Claire	22	
Deborah	10	
Gina	9	
Ben	7	
Isy	5	
Jacob	5	
Fran	5	
Harry	2	
Eddie	-	
Instructing	50	22.83
Fran	17	
Alice	16	
Deborah	6	
Ben	4	
Gina	4	
Claire	1	
Harry	1	
Jacob	1	
Questioning	20	9.17
Deborah	6	
Claire	5	
Alice	2	
Ben	2	
Gina	2	
Jacob	2	
Fran	1	
Eddie	-	
Harry	-	
Isy	-	
Explaining	11	5.05
Alice	3	
Ben	3	
Fran	3	
Claire	2	
Modelling	3	1.34
Fran	2	
Isy	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	0.92
Alice	1	
Ben	1	
Giving feedback, modelling, instructing	2	0.92
Alice	2	
Encouraging	1	0.46
Claire	1	
Total	218	100

12.3.4 Means of participation concerning peers in drama, by session

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	129	59.17
Rehearsing for a performance	61	
Beginning of the session	26	
Warming up	12	
Playing drama and movement games	10	
Relaxing at the end of the session	9	
Learning drama and dance skills	8	
Going through the timetable	3	
Instructing	50	22.83
Warming up	20	
Playing drama and movement games	7	
Rehearsing for a performance	9	
Beginning of the session	6	
Learning drama and dance skills	4	
Going through the timetable	2	
Relaxing at the end of the session	2	
Questioning	20	9.17
Rehearsing for a performance	9	
Learning drama and dance skills	6	
Beginning of the session	4	
Warming up	1	
Explaining	11	5.05
Rehearsing for a performance	8	
Going through the timetable	2	
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Modelling	3	1.34
Beginning of the session	1	
Going through the timetable	1	
Warming up	1	
Instructing and explaining	2	0.92
Going through the timetable	2	
Giving feedback, modelling, instructing	2	0.43
Playing drama and movement games	1	
Going through the timetable	1	
Encouraging	1	0.21
Rehearsing for a performance	1	
Total	218	100

12.3.5 Means of participation in other curricular areas, by student

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	140	66.67
Alice	45	
Fran	29	
Claire	18	
Deborah	14	
Gina	13	
Jacob	7	
Isy	6	
Ben	5	
Harry	3	
Eddie	-	
Questioning	58	27.62
Deborah	17	
Alice	12	
Claire	11	
Jacob	7	
Gina	5	
Fran	4	
Harry	1	
Isy	1	
Instructing	8	3.81
Deborah	4	
Alice	1	
Claire	1	
Gina	1	
Isy	1	
Modelling	4	1.90
Claire	3	
Fran	1	
Total	210	100

12.3.6 Means of participation in other curricular areas, by part of session

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	140	66.67
Beginning of the session	56	
Music	20	
Art	15	
Work experience in the kitchen	13	
Relaxing at the end of the session	9	
PSHCE	9	
Library	8	
Café	6	
PE	3	
Food intake	1	
Questioning	58	27.62
Beginning of the session	26	
PSHCE	8	
Music	8	
Work experience in the kitchen	6	
Art	5	
Library	3	
Café	1	
Relaxing at the end of the session	1	
Instructing	8	3.81
Beginning of the session	3	
Work experience in the kitchen	1	
Music	3	
Relaxing at the end of the session	1	
Modelling	4	1.90
Beginning of the session	1	
Music	3	
Total	210	100

12.3.7 Means of participation concerning peers in other curricular areas, by student

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	28	77.78
Alice	7	
Claire	6	
Ben	4	
Fran	3	
Isy	2	
Jacob	3	
Deborah	2	
Gina	1	
Eddie	-	
Harry	-	
Modelling	4	11.11
Claire	3	
Fran	1	
Questioning	2	5.56
Deborah	1	
Gina	1	
Instructing	2	5.56
Deborah	2	
Total	36	

12.3.8 Means of participation concerning peers in other curricular areas, by session

Means of participation	Number	Percentage
Giving feedback	28	77.78
Beginning of the session	9	
Music	5	
Art	3	
Relaxing at the end of the session	3	
PSHCE	3	
Library	2	
Café	1	
PE	1	
Food intake	1	
Modelling	4	1.90
Beginning of the session	1	
Music	3	
Questioning	2	5.56
Beginning of the session	2	
Instructing	2	5.56
Work experience in the kitchen	1	
Music	1	
Total	210	100

Appendix 13: Model drama lesson plan

Model lesson plan

Objectives

- To harness group interaction and flexible thinking through beanbag games
- To create a movement scene using parameters
- To self-assess achievements and communicate feelings about the lesson

Activity sequence

- **Sitting**
 - The teacher welcomes the students.
 - The teacher asks the students to sit in a circle.
- **Greeting**
 - The teacher greets each student in turn by shaking her/his hand and asking her/him questions about spare time and the previous lesson.
 - The teacher asks the students to guess the structure of the lesson supported by Widget symbols.
- **Drama game**
 - The teacher initiates a beanbag game and asks the students which colour beanbag should start.
 - The teacher turns on some music.
 - The teacher asks the students to stand in a circle and explains that s/he is going to throw the beanbag and say the name of the person to whom the beanbag is aimed. S/he demonstrates throwing the beanbag and encourages the recipient of the beanbag to do the same with someone else. The teacher prompts students where necessary by asking them to say a name or by giving a choice of names for the student to choose from.
 - If a student does something different with the beanbag, the teacher builds on what they do. If students continue the game as is, the teacher differentiates it by doing something different on catching the beanbag.
 - The teacher brings the game to a close at the end of a song / piece of music and switches the music off.
- **Drama**
 - The teacher asks the group to sit on the floor and sits on the floor with them.
 - The teacher explains that each student is going to show a performance. S/he asks who wants to be number one, number two and so-on until each student has their own number.
 - Using the name of the student who is number one, the teacher explains that that student is going to show a performance. S/he is going to choose a song and a piece of material and perform to the group.
 - The teacher demonstrates the task explaining as s/he does the action that s/he chooses a song and a piece of material s/he likes. When the music starts, s/he performs to the group sometimes including group members in her performance. When her/his song finishes, s/he switches off the music and returns to the group.
 - The teacher says the name of the student who is number one and explains the task again asking the student to choose a song and a piece of material and then to perform something. S/he asks each student to perform in turn. The teacher supports students, where necessary starting with open questions by asking what they may want to do and moving on to choices where an open question may be more difficult. The teacher encourages the group to watch their peers as they

perform. S/he gives encouragement to students during their performances and encourages the group to clap at the end of each performance.

- **Evaluation of session**
 - Once every student has had a turn the teacher brings the group to a close and asks each student in turn how they feel supported by Widgit literacy symbols and asks what they liked about the lesson.
- **Relaxation**
 - The teacher explains that it is relaxation. S/he asks the students to lie on the floor, puts quiet music on and closes the curtains. If students talk to her/him, s/he responds to them but keeps the volume of talk very low.

Resources

- CD player and a selection of music which can include music brought in by the students themselves
- Widgit literacy symbols for the timetable and emotions
- Selection of pieces of material of different colours, patterns and sizes
- Beanbag

Appendix 14: Glossary

Affect / affective

Affect refers to the emotional interpretation of perceptions, information, or knowledge. Questions about affect ask, “how do I feel about this person/knowledge/information?”

Asperger syndrome

Asperger syndrome is a mild form of autism. It was first described by an Austrian physician, Hans Asperger in 1944. Those diagnosed as having Asperger syndrome often experience social difficulties such as reading facial expressions or interpreting intonation in speech. Compared with many with autism, people with Asperger syndrome tend not to have a learning difficulty and many can be highly intelligent.

Aspect of perspective taking

An **aspect of perspective taking** in this thesis refers to perspective taking that is reflected in everyday behaviour. Aspects of perspective taking include reciprocating socially; initiating interaction with others; spontaneously seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people; engaging in varied, spontaneous make-believe; reciprocating emotionally; forming relationships with peers.

Auditability

Auditability is an approach to judging the quality of qualitative research and refers to the clear demonstration to readers of how data have been collected, analysed and findings reached.

Authenticity

Authenticity is an approach to judging the quality of qualitative research and refers to both the demonstration of a clear correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoint and where the description of the phenomenon captures what is happening in a way that is ‘true’ to the experience.

Autism Accreditation

Autism Accreditation is an autism-specific quality assurance programme. Its mission is to improve the quality of provision for people with autism and it works with over 300 organisations throughout the UK and across the globe.

Autism	Autism is a multifarious condition which can be talked about and understood in a variety of ways. It refers to a complex range of life-long neurological and developmental conditions which affect the way an individual interacts with other people and her/his environment. The term is often used synonymously with Autistic Spectrum Disorder(s) / Autistic Spectrum Condition (s).
Case study methodology	Case study methodology is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.
Classical autism	Classical autism corresponds with the condition identified by Leo Kanner in the 1940s and refers to a more severe form of autism.
Cognition / cognitive	Cognition concerns the mental process of coming to know and understand. Questions about cognition ask, "what happened/what is happening/what does it mean?"
Collaborative learning	Collaborative learning is where teachers and students work together.
Conation / conative	Conation is synonymous with motivation/will/drive. Questions about conation ask, "why?"
Curricular areas apart from drama	Curricular areas apart from drama include taught and community activities that students participate in aside from their drama sessions. These are also referred to in this thesis as other curricular areas.
Dependability	Dependability is an approach to judging the quality of qualitative research and refers to the demonstration of a consistent, systematic approach to individual data collection and analysis methods.
DIR Floortime	DIR Floortime is a form of play therapy that uses interactions and relationships to teach individuals with developmental delay. The approach is called the D evelopmental, I ndividual-difference, R elationship-based model. DIR Floortime has many similarities with Options, also known as the Son-Rise Program.

Drama	Drama in this thesis concerns drama as an art which involves the enactment of different characters or situations and reflects how individuals make sense of the world around them. Enactment in drama draws on performance practices and is focused towards an audience. These performance practices can be broad and include movement, dance, singing as well as traditional practices associated with drama including stage conventions related to plays.
Drama education	Drama education involves learning about and working with performance practices, and may include preparation for a performance. Drama education is broad and is seen in different guises within and outside of a school context. In this thesis, drama is primarily concerned with learning about performance practices and these include a broad understanding of drama which incorporates within it dance and musical theatre. Drama activities involve warming up, playing drama and movement games; learning drama and dance skills and rehearsing for a performance.
Drama for learning	Drama for learning , synonymous with drama-in-education, refers to drama as a teaching tool.
Drama-in-education	Drama-in-education , synonymous with drama for learning, refers to drama as a teaching tool.
DSM IV-TR	DSM IV-TR is the American Psychiatric Associations Diagnostic Statistical Manual, 4 th edition. The manual includes all recognised mental health disorders at the time of publication. DSM V is in development and is expected to be published in 2012.
Factor	A factor refers to a component or ingredient that contributes to a particular outcome. Factors in this thesis can refer to general principles as well as specific strategies.
Guided participation	Guided participation refers to the varied ways that individuals learn as they participate in and are guided by the values and practices of their communities.
High functioning autism	High functioning autism is a mild form of autism.

ICD-10	ICD-10 is the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision published by the World Health Organisation in 1990. DSM IV-TR is designed to correspond with ICD-10.
Instance of perspective taking	An instance of perspective taking in this thesis is an isolated code within an aspect of perspective taking captured in the data or the first in a series of the same code within an aspect of perspective taking.
Integrated Play Groups	Integrated Play Groups are designed to support individuals with autism in mutually enjoyed play experiences with typical peers and siblings.
Intensive Interaction	Intensive Interaction is an approach to teaching the fundamentals of communication to individuals who have severe learning difficulties and/or autism.
Interactive educational approaches and interventions	Interactive educational approaches and interventions focus on developing reciprocal relationships through interaction. The term 'interactive' is interchangeable with 'social pragmatic' and 'transactional' when used in this context.
Interactive model of disability	An interactive model of disability appreciates that a disability may have a biological basis but also highlights the influence of society in exacerbating that disability. The disability can be mitigated through a change in the interaction between an individual with a disability and society.
Internalisation	Internalisation refers to the process of transformation through which social processes become embedded in individual thinking. The term was first used in this way by Vygotsky. The process cannot be observed directly but inferences about internalisation can be made through an individual's speech and action.
Interpretative paradigm	Within an interpretative paradigm , social reality is socially constructed and different viewpoints are needed in order to capture its complexity.
Means of assistance	Means of assistance is a term used by Tharp and Gallimore to define ways in which teachers assist students in their learning. In this thesis, it refers to ways in which teachers and peers appear to elicit and/or enable perspective taking in students.

Means of participation	Means of participation relate to ways in which students participate in the social context.
Medical model of disability	A medical model of disability views a disability as a deficit which can be mitigated or ameliorated through external intervention.
Mode of communication	A mode of communication refers to a way in which an individual can communicate. Within an individual, modes of communication include gaze, gesture, movement/stance and speech. Each of these modes can communicate something different and be interpreted differently both on its own and together.
Multiple case study design	When case study research examines a phenomenon across individuals and contexts, it is often referred to as a multiple case study design .
Multimodality	Multimodality refers to a form of social semiotics which regards speech as one of a range of modes of communication through which meaning is made.
Music therapy	Music therapy is an approach to facilitating communication with individuals with autism, through an alternative form of communication.
Non-participant observer	A non-participant observer refers to a researcher observing rather than actively participating in the activities researched.
Other curricular areas	Other curricular areas include taught and community activities that students participate in aside from their drama sessions. These are also referred to in this thesis as curricular areas apart from drama.
Peer tutoring	Peer tutoring is where more capable peers teach their less capable counterparts
Perspective taking	Perspective taking in this thesis is used as a term to encapsulate both the understanding of and relations between the self and other people. Theories about autism which describe the condition as a deficit in theory of mind or a limited concept of persons concern a difficulty in perspective taking in autism.
Positivist paradigm	Within a positivist paradigm there is belief in the reality of an objectively established truth in the social world that can be generalised.

Real world social contexts

Real world social contexts refer to everyday settings where there are people interacting with each other. These contrast with settings that are controlled or manipulated by a researcher. In this research, the real world social contexts are educational contexts and include drama education and other areas of the curriculum at a further education unit for students with autism.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to the ways in which more expert others provide support to enable an individual to bridge the zone of proximal development.

Self-other equivalence

Self-other equivalence refers to an understanding that the self can be similar to other people.

Self-other difference

Self-other difference or self-other diversity refers to an understanding that the self can be different from other people.

Social Communication Questionnaire

The **Social Communication Questionnaire** (SCQ) is a simple 40-item diagnostic tool for autism and is derived from the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised.

Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theory views development as dependant on an individual's interactions with a more capable other. Lev Semenovitch Vygotsky is credited as a founding figure of sociocultural theory.

Social pragmatic approaches

Social pragmatic approaches focus on developing reciprocal relationships through interaction. The term social pragmatic is used interchangeably with 'interactive' and 'transactional' in this context.

Social Stories

Social Stories are a tool for teaching social skills to children with autism and related difficulties developed by Carol Gray. They provide an individual with accurate information about those situations that s/he may find difficult or confusing. The situation is described in detail and focus is given to a few key points: the important social cues, the events and reactions the individual might expect to occur in the situation, the actions and reactions that might be expected of her/him, and why. The goal of the story is to increase the individual's understanding of, make her/him more comfortable in, and possibly suggest some appropriate responses for the situation in question.

SPELL

SPELL, devised by the National Autistic Society, is a framework for understanding and responding to the needs of individuals with autism. It refers to Structure, Positive, Empathy, Low arousal and Links with parents.

Talking Mats

Talking Mats are visual supports which help people with communication difficulties to express their views. The approach uses picture symbols that are presented to an individual according to topic, options about a topic and feelings about the options.

Theory of mind

Theory of mind refers to the ability to understand and attribute mental states to oneself and other people.

Triad of impairments

The triad of impairments refers to qualitative differences in social interaction, social communication and social imagination visible in individuals with autism. The phrase was coined by Wing and Gould (1979) following research investigating the prevalence of autism.

Transactional approaches

Transactional approaches focus on developing reciprocal relationships through interaction. The term 'transactional' is synonymous with 'social pragmatic' and 'interactive' in this context.

Transferability

Transferability is an approach to judging the quality of qualitative research and refers to consideration of the extent to which findings can have wider applicability.

Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales

Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (VABS) measure adaptive behaviour in three domains – daily living (personal, domestic, community), communication (receptive, expressive, written) and socialisation (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, coping skills). They are used as a diagnostic tool in the US but are also useful because of the additional information they can give for treatment and education planning and evaluation.

Widgit literacy symbols

Widgit literacy symbols, formerly known as Rebus, have developed over the past 20 years and are used in many countries worldwide. The symbols illustrate a single concept without adding unnecessary information and follow a schematic structure facilitating independent vocabulary development. There are more than 7,000 images covering a vocabulary which is continually being extended and is already in excess of 40,000 words.

Widgit literacy symbols differ from the Pictorial Communication System symbols which are pictorially based and from Makaton Vocabulary Development Project which is a combination of signs and symbols.

Zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The **zone of proximal development** is the distance between what an individual can do independently and what that same individual can do with the guidance and help of someone more able.