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B.Sc. (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy

Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: An exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Cardiff Metropolitan University for the degree of the Bachelor of Science
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent investigation under the supervision of my tutor. The various sources to which I am indebted are clearly indicated. This dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

Candidate's signature: [signature]

RESEARCH DATA PRIVACY

I acknowledge the issue of research data privacy and undertake not to share research data in any form without the explicit approval of their supervisor.

Candidate's signature: [signature]
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girls have been my rocks over the past four years and I’m so grateful to have shared this journey together.

To my parents; thank you so much for your unconditional and constant support, encouragement and belief in me. It means everything. Thank you to my boyfriend for keeping things in perspective and always making me laugh through even the toughest of times.
Abstract

An abundance of literature emphasises poorer academic attainment at school-leaving age for adolescents with language impairment (LI). The number of pupils with LI entered for GCSE examinations continues to rise, yet there is little research available on their perceptions of exams and exam preparation. To address this, the current study investigated GCSE exams from the perspectives of adolescents in their final year of compulsory schooling.

Three Year 11 pupils with LI participated in the study. A semi-structured interview was conducted to explore their perceptions on support for GCSE exams and exam preparation. Data were analysed according to Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis, permitting exploration and interpretation of the themes that emerged. The participants discussed the types of support provided in preparation for, and during, exams, alongside how they engage with this support. Overall, opportunities provided by school and teachers were largely considered positive, but some barriers to effective support were also highlighted. Positive aspects included practice tests and revision sessions, providing past papers, and access arrangements. Limited recapping of curricular content and fast-paced teaching styles were exposed as barriers. This study provided interesting insights into support for adolescents with LI at key stage 4. With the current change to the nature of GCSEs, such as introducing more demanding content, adolescents’ perceptions are particularly important to inform timely, appropriate and effective support. Findings from this study would benefit from further development, particularly as insights can have implications for provision and subsequent academic attainment and employment outcomes for adolescents with LI.

(Child Language Teaching and Therapy)
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1. Introduction and Review of the Literature

1.1 Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) comprise a heterogeneous group (Bercow, 2008). SLCN is an umbrella term, encompassing those with difficulties across several domains, including understanding, verbal expression, attention and listening, memory, and social interaction (Bishop, Snowling, Thompson & Greenhalgh, 2016). Lee’s (2013) paper specifies that SLCN increased by approximately 70% in the six years preceding the report, and is one of the most prevalent types of special educational needs (SEN) in schools. Depending on the nature of individuals’ difficulties, SLCN can alter throughout the lifespan. Difficulties may resolve in childhood with intervention, or persist through to adolescence and adulthood; it is suggested that 10% of children with SLCN will have persistent difficulties (Lee, 2013).

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is a subset of SLCN (Bishop et al, 2016). DLD encompasses individuals for whom language is their primary need; their difficulties are not attributed or secondary to an associated medical condition, cognitive disorder or neurological status, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, global learning difficulties or Cerebral Palsy (Bishop et al, 2016). DLD affects various components of language with differing levels of severity. These typically include persistent difficulties acquiring and using language, such as reduced vocabulary knowledge and ability to use vocabulary within discourse, and limited linguistic skills, such as difficulties producing grammatically and syntactically correct sentences (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists – RCSLT, 2009). There are likely to be functional consequences resulting from these difficulties, for
example with educational development, academic attainment, emotional wellbeing and social participation (Lee, 2013).

Due to the heterogeneity of those with SLCN, discussions around speech, language and communication difficulties are often coalesced. Therefore, when the term SLCN is used within the review of the literature, this is with a focus on the commonality of educational, employment and personal challenges ensuing young people’s SLCN, with an emphasis on language. Corresponding with the current research on language difficulties, DLD and language impairment (LI) are also highlighted and discussed.

1.2 Adolescents with SLCN

Language development is continuous throughout adolescence, with skills emerging and refining during pupils’ secondary school years (I CAN, 2017; Nippold, 2007). These skills include verbal reasoning, understanding complex instructions, using language to problem-solve, learning abstract vocabulary, and understanding and communicating increasingly complex ideas (I CAN, 2017; Nippold, 2007; Spencer, Clegg & Stackhouse, 2010). For typically developing (TD) adolescents, there may be little concern around developing and enhancing these skills necessary to the curriculum. Adolescents with LI, however, are without this advantage. An abundance of literature identifies common characteristics of adolescents with LI, such as difficulties with forming explanations and narratives (Wetherell, Botting & Conti-Ramsden, 2007), understanding vocabulary (Wilson, Nash, & Earl, 2010) and pragmatic difficulties, such as appropriate interactions and group discussions (I CAN, 2017). Further difficulties include problem-solving and using language for increasingly
sophisticated actions, such as negotiation (I CAN, 2017), and processing and retaining information (Starling, Munro, Togher & Arciuli, 2012).

School-life is constructed around language (Bercow, 2008; Bercow, 2018). Pupils with LI are therefore an academically and socially vulnerable group. Moreover, Starling et al (2011) assert that secondary schools have additional barriers to learning in comparison to primary education, such as busier, noisier, and more distracting classroom environments. This potentially affects pupils’ abilities to understand, process and retain curricular information (Starling et al, 2011), heightening the vulnerability of adolescents with LI. Moreover, demands increase as pupils transition into Key Stage 4 (KS4); their GCSE examination years. Competent language skills are integral to exam success (I CAN, 2017), and support is essential to ensure pupils with LI achieve their optimal potential. It is important that pupils’ language abilities and progress, such as vocabulary, are monitored throughout secondary school as this can inform appropriate and timely intervention or adjustments (Dockrell, Ricketts & Lindsay, 2012), and thus improve overall outcomes. This is not always the situation, however (Bercow, 2018). The needs of some secondary school pupils with LI therefore potentially remain unmet.

1.3 Secondary School provision

The advantages of early identification of LI are well documented. These include improved communication outcomes, enhanced educational progress and academic attainment, increased employment opportunities, and reduced risk of criminality (Bercow, 2008). Support for SLCN is more available and accessible during children’s early years with the aim to develop, improve or eradicate difficulties (Lindsay, Soloff, Law, Band, Peacey, Gascoigne
& Radford, 2002; Wilson et al, 2010). However, it is widely recognised that SLCN can persist into adolescence and adulthood, even after intervention. Therefore, the expectation is that continuing support would be available. This does not appear to be the case, however, with a considerable reduction in the percentage of pupils classified with SLCN post-Key Stage 2 (Dockrell, Ricketts & Lindsay, 2012), and 43% of adolescents at Key Stage 3 with unidentified SLCN (Lee, 2013). Moreover, provision is reported to decrease throughout secondary school (Bercow; 2008; Dockrell, Lindsay & Cullen, 2007; Wilson et al, 2010), which is said to reflect the transient and temporary nature of support (Dockrell et al, 2012).

Difficulties may be overlooked for several reasons, for example non-referral to speech and language therapy (SLT) services, poor attendance in school or clinic (Bercow, 2008; Bercow, 2018), identification of difficulties only as the curriculum becomes more complex (Leahy & Dodd, 2002), or misinterpretation of SLCN as behavioural difficulties (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills – Ofsted, 2010). The extent of unsupported and unidentified SLCN has substantial and potentially detrimental implications for educational achievements, social outcomes, and personal wellbeing. Difficulties are often associated with negative social and emotional consequences. Amongst these consequences are lowered self-esteem, social withdrawal, behavioural problems, and fewer job opportunities (Dockrell et al, 2011; Dockrell, Lindsay, Roulstone & Law, 2014; Lee, 2013; Joffe, 2013; Wilson et al, 2010). It is crucial, therefore, that identification is continuous throughout the increasingly complex environment with its new curricular demands as adolescents transition into, and through, secondary school.
Adolescents with LI are heterogeneous with diverse difficulties and strengths (Bercow, 2008). All young people should be supported to have equal access to the curriculum (Bercow, 2008) and thus support needs to be flexible and adaptable to ensure individuals receive the best possible provision. As asserted in a report by the Welsh Assembly Government – WAG (2006), schools should ensure all learning is individually tailored to meet pupils’ needs and enable success. Pupils with SLCN attend specialist units or, as a result of increasing inclusion, mainstream schooling (Bercow, 2008; Lindsay, 2007). Mainstream schools may have specialist facilities attached, internal resources and professionals specifically for SLCN, and/or require support from external services such as SLT.

Exploration into support received in these settings reveals contrasting results. In their explorations into support satisfaction, academic attainment and post-16 outcomes of young people with SLCN, Dockrell et al (2007), Palikara, Lindsay and Dockrell (2009), and Simkin and Conti-Ramsden (2009) found the majority of young people generated positive responses towards the support they had received at school. The young people attended either mainstream schools or schools with specialist facilities and occasionally transferred between these settings. Additional explanations and discussion, one-to-one help from a learning support assistant (LSA), one-to-one help from teachers, and access to SLT were valued support systems during their secondary years. Furthermore, a high proportion of the participants progressed into further education (FE). Their gratitude is highlighted within the studies; several young people express they may not have had the same opportunities were it not for the support they received.
Dockrell and Lindsay (2008) assert, however, that support is often dependent on factors such as staff proficiency, school resources and Statementing, which are known to be variable amongst local educational authorities. Discussion within Dockrell et al (2007) and Palikara et al’s (2009) studies reveals that support can be sporadic, and was occasionally only offered to pupils in primary school. For the young people with persisting difficulties, they assert that continuous support throughout secondary school would have been advantageous. Moreover, lack of continuity resulted in a plateau of skills that often deteriorated with the increasingly demanding educational system. Dockrell et al (2007) provide spelling as an example. Their report reveals the pupils’ spelling abilities either showed no progress or deteriorated throughout Key Stage 3 and KS4. In comparison to when they transitioned to secondary school, it is emphasised that the cohort’s spelling abilities were notably poorer at school-leaving age.

Literacy abilities are central to education and, simultaneously, challenging for those with LI, necessitating appropriate and consistent provision (Dockrell, Lindsay & Palikara, 2011). There is a strong correlation between literacy abilities, such as spelling, and academic attainment (Dockrell et al, 2007; Dockrell et al, 2011; Joffe, 2013). It is known that adolescents with LI are susceptible to difficulties with reading comprehension, difficulties understanding complex sentences and abstract concepts, restricted working memory, and inadequate verbal and written expression (Botting, Simkin, & Conti-Ramsden, 2006; Dockrell et al, 2011; Dockrell & Lindsay, 2008). This can hinder their literacy development. Correspondingly, parents also acknowledge their children’s vulnerability. Parents express concern around limited employment opportunities as a consequence of poorer qualifications (Lewis, Davidson, Ellins, Parsons & Robertson, 2007; Roulstone, Coad, Ayre,
Hambley & Lindsay, 2012). This is mirrored within Law, Rush, Schoon and Parsons’ (2009) study; poor vocabulary skills double young people’s unemployment risk. Thus, to ensure optimal access to the curriculum and exam success, supporting literacy skills is a priority (Dockrell et al, 2011). These skills are transferrable across various social and work environments, and effective support can improve young people’s academic, social and employment outcomes (Dockrell et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009; Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009).

A small number of young people are dissatisfied with the support offered in their mainstream secondary schools (Dockrell et al, 2007) and specialist units (Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009). Within mainstream settings, emphasis is primarily around insufficient or inadequate provision. According to Dockrell et al (2007) this is due to teachers’ reduced awareness of the pupils’ difficulties and needs, larger classes, and lack of additional personal support with the classroom, such as allocated time with an LSA. In addition to insufficient support, mainstream schooling has potential challenges. These include multiple teachers with variable teaching styles and pace, more independent working, and complex written and expressive tasks (Joffe, 2013). Inclusive education requires acknowledgement of individuals’ needs and appropriate liaison between professionals and services (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2008). Furthermore, according to Lindsay et al (2002), therapy allocated to pupils within specialist units is superior to therapy provided in mainstream inclusive settings.

However, more recent studies assert benefits of mainstream schooling. Parents within Lewis, Parsons and Robertson’s (2007) report, for example, state that mainstream contexts provided their children with the environment to become independent learners. Moreover,
despite potential mainstream challenges, issues are raised around whether pupils within specialist units are provided with the same opportunities as pupils who attend mainstream schools, such as the proportion of entries for GCSE examinations (Dockrell et al, 2007), and forming peer relationships (Lewis et al, 2007). Reflected within Durkin et al’s (2009) study, they also assert that pupils who attend language units were entered for far fewer exams than TD peers.

1.4 Examinations and outcomes

There remains a considerable gap between exam performance of pupils with SLCN and their TD peers (Bercow, 2008; Bercow, 2018; Conti-Ramsden & Durkin, 2008; Durkin, Simkin, Knox & Conti-Ramsden, 2009). Pupils with SLCN are entered for less examinations and attain far fewer qualifications at school-leaving age, with qualifications in core subjects of Mathematics, English and Science being particularly limited (Dockrell et al, 2007; Dockrell et al, 2011). Pupils with SLCN are reported to be entered for half the number of GCSEs as their TD peers (Dockrell et al, 2011), achieving an average of 5 GCSEs typically within the D-G grade boundary (Dockrell et al, 2007). Although higher grade boundaries are documented within the 2008 Bercow Review, with 15% of pupils with SLCN achieving 5 GCSEs grades A*-C, this is compared to 57% of TD pupils.

Exams can be challenging for those with SLCN (Bercow, 2008). There are several prerequisites to academic success and, if pupils with SLCN have difficulties with these, appropriate and effective exam support is crucial. As pupils transition into KS4 there is increasing emphasis on language skills, such as acquiring new and complex vocabulary, understanding abstract concepts, independent working, retaining information, critical
thinking, reasoning, and pragmatic development (Dockrell et al, 2007; Joffe, 2013; Wilson et al, 2010). Pupils themselves have subjectively commented on how limited memory abilities are a disadvantage during exams (Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009).

Spencer, Clegg, Low and Stackhouse (2017) investigated curriculum vocabulary and acknowledged that vocabulary can be abstract, complex and transposes across different subjects and contexts. Examples include *summarise, introduce and evaluate* (Spencer et al, 2017). This is also acknowledged in Ayre and Roulstone’s (2009) report on transition through secondary school; mathematics is confirmed to be largely language based, with questions utilising terms such as *analyse*. GCSE exam papers employ this style of terminology, particularly in core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science, and academic achievement is dependent on its knowledge and use. Access arrangements, such as extra time or a reader during examinations (Durkin et al, 2009), are offered to pupils with SLCN. However, there is little literature that offers adolescents’ outlooks on the effectiveness of such arrangements and if this supports understanding of vocabulary and terminology utilised within papers. The young people within Durkin et al’s (2009) study were not asked to provide their opinions on access arrangements.

Support is not confined to the classroom, however. Family and peers are asserted to be additional effective support systems (Dockrell et al, 2007; Lewis et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009). However, in comparison to internal school provision, these additional forms of support do not appear as fundamental to educational outcomes. Although such support networks have the potential to positively affect adolescents’ educational, social and personal outcomes, it can be questioned how effective they are in enhancing pupils’
academic attainment for the broader population of adolescents with SLCN. Nonetheless, family and peer support remains an important topic for consideration. Additionally, pupils asserted the importance of their own actions. Several expressed that attitudes, such as being motivated, determined and hard-working, positively affected their achievements (Dockrell et al, 2007). Studies, however, do not detail how pupils with SLCN motivate themselves or undertake preparation for exams, such as revision strategies. This is also worth exploring, as potential commonality of strategies may help to inform future provision.

Ultimately, it is unanimous that fewer or poorer qualifications can restrict further education and future employability opportunities, with individuals often considered to remain behind their peers in college and less independent when seeking work (Conti-Ramsden & Durkin, 2008; Dockrell et al, 2011; Palikara et al, 2009). However, it is important to note that Entry Level Qualifications are offered as an alternative for those likely to have difficulty accessing GCSE requirements. Pupils are entered for GCSEs if the school considers they will achieve a qualification in that subject. Alongside the rise in mainstream inclusion (Bercow, 2008; Lindsay, 2007), the number of approved applications for access arrangements is increasing (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation – Ofqual, 2017b) as, consequently, are the exam opportunities for adolescents with language difficulties. It is important to explore the effectiveness of KS4 provision provided in preparation for sitting exams and of access arrangements, thus is the focus of the present study.

1.5 Recent changes to GCSE examinations

In addition to the general demands of examinations, there have been recent changes to GCSEs across England and Wales that include less coursework, increased emphasis on
exams, more challenging course content, and increased complexity of exam style questions (Ofqual, 2017a; WJEC, 2015). Accordingly, KS4 teaching and GCSEs may be more demanding for pupils with LI. Coursework, for example, has fewer time constraints, can be completed at different stages during the school year, and does not rely on immediate performance. Detracting coursework from core subjects places a greater reliance on exam performance, where requirements such as reasoning, understanding abstract language, problem-solving, interpreting meanings, and recalling information need to be instantaneous.

1.6 Pupils’ perceptions

There has been an increasing amount of literature that emphasises the importance of views around provision, outcomes and preferences of young people with SLCN (Bercow, 2018; Dockrell et al, 2007; Joffe, 2013; Lewis et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009; Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009), and research has demonstrated they are able to share their perceptions on schooling. Gathering self-reports and evaluating pupils’ perceptions can enhance understanding by providing more comprehensive insight into their own difficulties (Joffe, 2011; Palikara et al, 2009). For example, according to Dockrell et al’s (2007) research, additional support from teaching assistants is regarded the most beneficial support system in school. Furthermore, two pupils with DLD within Spencer et al’s (2010) interviews discussed their language difficulties, such as processing and retaining information, and commented on school support, such as repetition and visual cues.

In comparison to Dockrell et al’s (2007) report, Spencer et al’s (2010) study revealed that, although the young people suggested limited language skills may affect future employability outcomes, they declined the idea of having one-to-one assistance. Alternatively, they
emphasised their own independence and expressed they wanted to avoid becoming reliant on support. Autonomy is also emphasised in Lewis et al’s (2007) report. The young people were motivated to be more independent when support was unavailable and it encouraged them to balance self-sufficiency with asking for assistance.

Gathering accurate and reliable data from participants with LI, such as valid responses (Palikara et al, 2009; Spencer et al, 2010) and honest accounts (Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009), is not without its challenges. It is therefore essential to consider how best to facilitate discussion and address information. For example, concepts around provision are potentially difficult for adolescents with LI to comprehend. Within Dockrell et al’s (2007) report, for example, a small number of young people found it difficult to provide discussion around types of support they would have benefitted from in school.

Nonetheless, obtaining qualitative data from subjective accounts is advantageous for informing future support and interventions, such as setting individualised targets (Palikara et al, 2009; Spencer et al, 2010). This may be particularly true of the adolescent population; it is important to ensure individuals are part of the decision-making process around maximising their functional language skills (Spencer et al, 2010). Involvement in their educational and provision choices is an aspect also highlighted in Lewis et al’s (2007) report; they note their surprise at the lack of opportunities for participation from young people regarding their needs. They conclude that the focus of support should not solely involve factors such as one-to-one provision, but should also include aspects such as individuals’ preferences and collaborative decision-making.
More recently, this is highlighted within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015). This topical Act recognises that voices of young people can help to shape future generations (Howe, 2017). Equality and choice are emphasised, with statements around including young people in decisions. Through engagement with and exploration into pupils’ perspectives within their final year of schooling, demands and challenges of the KS4 curriculum and GCSE exams can be discussed and analysed. Adolescents’ own insights are thus a considerably important area for research.

1.7 Summary

Overall, the positive perceptions and outcomes of adolescents with SLCN represented in the literature are very encouraging. Only a small number of young people within recent research appear to express dissatisfaction with the support they received during school, and within their current educational or employment outcomes.

Of the literature exploring adolescents’ academic outcomes there appears to be a focus, however, on studies of a specific nature, including analysis of intervention provided for SLCN and discussion around educational challenges and outcomes with little exploration into adolescents’ views on the exam process. Moreover, research is often conducted retrospectively, after those with SLCN have progressed on from compulsory schooling. Although these undoubtedly provide valuable data, it is also important to acquire insight from the adolescents themselves whilst they are immersed within the educational environment and preparing for exams.

1.8 Aim and objectives of the present study
Although discussed within the review of the literature, the terms SLCN and DLD are not used within the present study. Corresponding with the participants’ Statement of educational needs and to ensure consistency, the researcher utilises the term language impairment (LI).

The aim of the present study is to explore the perceptions of adolescents with LI towards GCSE examinations during their final year of compulsory schooling. This research intends to address gaps within the literature, such as pupils’ perceptions on the exam process whilst they currently attend Year 11.

The study’s objectives are to broadly investigate the perceptions of adolescents with LI towards:

- Support received during KS4 and in preparation for exams.
- Approaches to revision.
2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

To explore pupil perceptions towards GCSE examinations, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate method for data collection. Rich and Ginsburg (1999) discuss the use of qualitative approaches within adolescent age-groups and assert that these approaches go beyond simply identifying outcomes of their diagnoses. Through exploration into views and feelings around adolescents’ circumstances, qualitative methods support a richer understanding. The method utilised within the present study is comparable to Palikara et al’s (2009) study, who explored perspectives of young people within their first year of post-16 education with emphasis around providing a voice to young people. They sought to empower professional-pupil collaboration regarding pupils’ provision and outcomes. A qualitative approach will encourage personal exploration into individuals’ experiences, which is integral to the present study.

2.2 Design

A semi-structured group interview was conducted to collect data. Coolican (2013) states that semi-structured interviews permit flexibility. Although questions were formed prior to the interview, a semi-structured format allows the researcher to respond to dialogue provided by participants and support further discussion (Rich & Ginsberg, 1999).

There are several further advantages to semi-structured interviews. The researcher can clarify information, ensuring accuracy within analysis and interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), verify participants’ comments, and utilise both verbal and nonverbal communication.
to facilitate discussion (Merriam, 2014). Due to the nature of language difficulties, these advantages are necessary to ensure optimum participation and discussion from the pupils. It was important to the researcher that the participants were not overwhelmed at any stage of interview process, and thus semi-structured interviews were considered more practical than structured forms of data collection.

Questionnaires arguably elicit limited data (Gillham, 2000). Data from a larger sample could be achieved through their use, but questionnaires can be restrictive (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) and the researcher felt this may limit the breadth of information elicited from participants. For example, aspects that may not have been previously considered by the researcher would be omitted within questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews allow for more exploration than structured methods of data collection and facilitate novel thoughts and ideas (Wilkinson, Joffe & Yardley, 2004).

Conducting the interview as a group also created the opportunity for discussion between participants. Group interviews allow for a naturalistic and unrestricted process of discussion (Wilkinson et al, 2004). Simultaneously, as the participants have LI, a group situation potentially supports individuals in discussing information and describing ideas. The researcher hypothesised that response from one participant would encourage dialogue amongst others, and additionally would allow for a more informal approach to the research that would result in honest descriptions of their perceptions. Use of prompts and probes were also considered important to allow for clarification or encouragement to uncover further details where necessary. The researcher thus undertook a facilitative role within data collection.
In addition to information gathering, Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty and Hendry (2011) state that richer analysis can be achieved with smaller numbers of participants. Semi-structured interviews facilitate greater elicitation of descriptive data that enables a better understanding of participants’ experiences, which were considered imperative for this research. The researcher therefore felt this warranted the study’s small sample size.

2.3 Participants

Participants were established through purposive sampling using several inclusion criteria. As the present study required specific participants, purposive sampling ensured the aim and objectives of the research were met (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The following criteria were applied: currently attending Year 11, Statement of educational needs that includes provision for language difficulties, and entry for at least one GCSE examination.

Moreover, as the participants have LI, further methodology considerations were also required. The researcher considered it important to conduct face-to-face interviews to allow for building rapport, flexibility through prompts and repetitions where necessary, and observation of nonverbal cues such as confusion around the interview questions.

Three male Year 11 pupils with LI participated in the study. Two participants attend mainstream school and one participant attends the school’s specialist facility unit with inclusion in some mainstream classes.

2.4 Materials
To ensure accuracy of data collection and transcription, the group interview was audio and video recorded using a Zoom recorder and DVD recorder. Video recordings are, arguably, intrusive (Polgar & Thomas, 2013) and may influence the participants and their responses (Jewitt, 2012). However, video recording ensured accuracy when transcribing the participants’ dialogue within the group setting and nonverbal language could additionally be included in the transcription.

Prior to the interview, four questions were prepared by the researcher (Table 1), with corresponding prompts and cues for further information (appendix 11). Alongside conditions of the study, such as being able to leave the room at any point, participants were reminded of the research topic before the interview commenced, and advised to ask questions where necessary during the interview. The researcher endeavoured to make the whole process as comfortable as possible for the participants and obtain as much data as possible. This was particularly important due to the participants’ language difficulties.

<table>
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<th>Interview questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What, if anything, do you find hard about exams?</td>
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<td>2. What help, if any, do you have for/during exams?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. How do you revise for exams?</td>
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<td>4. How important are exams/grades to you?</td>
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Table 1: Interview questions.

2.5 Data collection procedure

The process of obtaining participants initially involved contacting local secondary schools via email (appendix 1). Following further email correspondence with one Additional Education
Needs Coordinator (AENCo), a meeting was arranged at the school to discuss the study and establish appropriate participants. Participants were established and, following ethical approval, information forms were sent to participants and their parents/guardians (appendix 2). Following advice from the researcher’s project supervisor, the participant information sheets referred to the researcher by her first name; although unusual, due to the nature of the participants’ difficulties it was hypothesised that this would eliminate any confusion that potentially may have ensued if written in the third-person.

Following the initial meeting, the AENCo provided parents/guardians with consent forms on the researcher’s behalf (appendix 3), and these were returned to the researcher prior to commencing the group interview. Participants were met by the researcher prior to the interview process to verbally explain the study, answer questions, clarify information where necessary, and gain consent (appendix 4). Moreover, this also provided the opportunity to form rapport; the researcher considered it appropriate that the pupils were familiar with her prior to interviewing. Subsequently, a mutually convenient date was arranged to conduct the group interview. During this meeting with the AENCo it was decided that it would be appropriate for a LSA familiar with the pupils to also attend the interview.

The interview process took approximately one hour. This included set-up, reiteration of the study and its conditions, and data collection, which lasted approximately 35 minutes. The interview was conducted within a private room. Present were the researcher, participants and LSA. The AENCo was present at the start of the process whilst the researcher reiterated details from the information sheets. Once participants gave verbal consent to proceed, the AENCo left the room. All participants remained throughout the whole process.
interview the researcher allocated time for the pupils to ask any questions. This was considered important to ensure the participants could express any apprehensions or clarify any stage of the process. The researcher wanted the participants to feel comfortable upon leaving the interview and with what would ensue from the data they provided.

The use of open-ended questions was considered appropriate. Open-ended questions encourage unrestricted responses (Coolican, 2013). The interview schedule contained only open-ended questions and, throughout the discussion, the researcher endeavoured to avoid closed questions. These were only implemented when the researcher considered them necessary to uncover specific information or clarify a participant’s response.

The group interview was then transcribed in preparation for data analysis (appendix 5). The interview was formatted for ease of discussion and to maintain anonymity. Each page and line is assigned with a number and a single initial is used to identify participants.

2.6 Data Analysis

Following data collection, the group interview was transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed in accordance with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1996) (appendix 6). IPA is experiential and involves two interpretative stages; a double hermeneutic, as illustrated by Smith (1996) (Pringle et al, 2011). Initial interpretation emanates from the individual’s exploration of their experiences, and the following stage involves interpretation of these experiences by the researcher. As the researcher seeks to understand and describe the meanings participants attach to experiences (Rich & Ginsburg,
IPA was considered the most appropriate approach to alleviate any potential limitations arising from the participants’ language difficulties.

Therefore, the researcher plays an active role within IPA. Analysis involves several stages; following meticulous transcription, the researcher must allocate time to thoroughly read and re-read the transcript whilst noting interpretations of the text, identifying emergent and recurring themes, and describing connections between themes and dialogue (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Salient themes are clustered together and labelled with a subordinate theme and, subsequently, assigned a superordinate theme (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the Health Care and Food Ethics Panel at Cardiff Metropolitan University prior to commencing the study (appendix 7). Contact details of the researcher’s supervisor were included on the parent/guardian information sheet in the event of any queries, and the researcher allocated time with pupils to answer queries and clarify information both preceding and following the interview. Written consent was gained from the AENCo, the three participants and their parents and, following guidance from the ethics panel, the school’s head teacher.

Participants were interviewed within a familiar room in their school and, as they attend the same year group, were already acquainted with each other. Before commencing the interview, the participants were reminded that they could opt to leave the room at any point without expressing a reason, and anything they said prior to leaving would be withdrawn from the study. No pupils chose to leave the room throughout the duration of
the process. Following data collection, the participants were reminded that they would receive a copy of the transcript with a two-week timeframe in which to amend or withdraw any information.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the process of the study. Consent forms were stored securely at the researcher’s university, audio and video recordings were stored securely in a lock-box during transportation from the interview location to the researcher’s home, data were kept on a password-protected computer, and one initial of each participant is included within the transcription, results and discussion to ensure anonymity.
3. Results

3.1 Introduction

Following transcription of the group interview (appendix 5), data were thoroughly analysed for themes (appendix 6). Several emergent themes surfaced (labelled as subordinate themes) (appendix 7). The subordinate themes were subsequently clustered together into three main categories and allocated a superordinate theme (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate themes</th>
<th>Subordinate themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Facilitators to academic success | 1.1 Experiential learning  
1.2 Teachers’ awareness of needs  
1.3 Sibling support |
| 2. Pressure during teaching and exams | 2.1 Aspects that alleviate pressure  
2.2 External barriers |
| 3. Approaches to exam preparation | 3.1 Motivation to engage with learning  
3.2 Independence |

*Table 2: List of superordinate and subordinate themes.*

3.2 Themes

Superordinate themes are discussed according to IPA. To support data results, verbatim quotations are provided for reference alongside the first initial of the participant, and the page number and line number to ensure straightforward referral to original transcription; for example [W, p2, 10] refers to participant W, page 2 and line 10.
Although upmost care was taken when selecting themes, these must be approached tentatively. As data were analysed according to IPA, there is a focus on the researcher’s own interpretations of the data and alternative interpretations are plausible.

1. **Facilitators to academic success**

1.1 **Experiential learning**

Through practice tests and past papers, the notion of learning through experience surfaced.

Whilst discussing practice tests, participant N stated:

> “Once you’ve done them in Year 10 (1) you know the experience (1) and then in Year 11 (.) you doing it again (1) and now you know what to do” [N, p16, 351-352].

This demonstrated that through the experience of Year 10 practice tests, participant N feels more prepared the following year. Participant N specifically related this to understanding “what to do”, indicating enhanced awareness of exam expectations. Similarly, this was mentioned by participant W in relation to Science GCSE:

> “We do um (.) a prac test in Science (1) so we can get ready for when we do it in our (.) when we do it in our exams” [W, p17, 384-385].

The experience of practice tests helps the participants comprehend what is expected within exams, enabling them to feel more assured with the process. This assurance did not appear restricted to the exam process; the participants also seemed more confident with exam
content. Through encouraging a calmer, more confident approach to exams, experiential learning heightens success.

Past papers were also highlighted, with a similar advantage:

“So if like you’re struggling... Or see the past papers but you might you know (. ) one of these questions might come up in the exam” [N, p4, 81, 83-83].

The process of practicing past papers appeared to support participant N’s understanding of the content and style of exam questions. He demonstrated awareness that questions can recur across the years. Through experiences of exam-style questions, he becomes familiar with how questions are worded, empowering a more competent approach to his answers.

Practice tests and past papers enable the participants to feel comfortable with exam conditions, content, and structure. Certain qualities are required for exam success, such as appropriately applying, inferring and analysing information. Experience-based learning not only supports the participants’ understanding of exams, it also helps them learn, develop and adapt these qualities.

The notion of repetition also emerged as an essential aspect of experiential learning. It appeared that these opportunities were frequent, which likely facilitates retention of curricular content, enhancing their ability to answer exam questions and overall achievement. The more frequent these experiences are, the more their abilities will develop.
Furthermore, past papers were provided during revision sessions and lessons:

“*You get .) help (1) and .) you get (1) past papers to do*” [N, p3, 49].

“*In some lessons (. ) we um (. ) we do (. ) the papers in some lessons*” [W, p7, 139].

It is reassuring that past papers are provided in both revision sessions and lessons.

Participant W stated he did not attend after-school revision sessions, and thus demonstrated that pupils who could not attend are granted similar opportunities.

1.2 Teachers’ awareness of needs

It emerged that Science revision sessions were accompanied by regular informal testing:

“*In Science every (. ) five lessons and then we have a test... The teacher sees (. ) where you at right now (. ) he’s testing us (. ) where you at (. ) if you understand a bit more next time*” [N, p17, 371, 379-380].

Ensuing participant N’s comment, each participant confirmed informal tests were beneficial. It is encouraging that teachers monitor the pupils’ abilities. Participant N’s comment also suggested that aspects were subsequently tailored to individuals. If, following these sessions, the subject teacher establishes any challenges, pupils’ needs can be addressed in future lessons and re-evaluated in preparation for GCSEs.
Moreover, similarity can be drawn between individualised support throughout teaching and during exams. It is known that access arrangements are available to those who require additional support during exams depending on their level of need, and participant N’s comment indicated that support within Science teaching is also individualised to their needs.

Familiarity was mentioned by participant W:

“I will go to teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (.) who helped you with (.) with questions” [W, p6, 119-120].

Participant C agreed he “would do the same” [C, p6, 122]. Familiarity is advantageous for two reasons. Firstly, teachers who are familiar with a pupil’s needs are likely to be more accustomed to the support required. Additionally, the participants may be more responsive to support from teachers they are familiar with. This could be due to feeling at ease with familiar teachers, particularly if they have taught the pupils previously. Awareness of their difficulties also reduces the need for the pupils to announce they find something challenging, easing any potential burden or embarrassment.

1.3 Sibling support

During discussion around family support for exams, siblings were considered stronger support networks than parents. In comparison to only one participant asserting they go to parents for support, all participants expressed they would seek advice from siblings. For example:
“I would talk to my sister about it and then she (. ) talk to me through it (. ) about revising (1) and then (1) tell me to get out my books” [N, p26, 592-593].

“Your siblings who (. ) done exams (. ) give you some (. ) advice (. ) on what to do and if you can do it” [W, p25, 570-571].

Ensuing further discussion, it emerged that two participants currently live at home with their siblings, but the other participant’s sibling lives away from the family home and he did not see her regularly:

“I only got one older sister (. ) and I don’t see her that much (. ) but I (. ) text her (. ) can you like help me with this maths revision (. ) and (. ) she does” [C, p26, 597-598].

This was not disadvantageous, however. Participant C stated he contacted his sister via text message and she would respond with advice. This demonstrated that support is not confined to specific contexts and alternatives to face-to-face contact, such as text-messaging, can also be advantageous when obtaining help.

All participants valued support received from siblings. Sibling support provides an increased number of opportunities to share experiences and ideas whilst enhancing awareness of exam expectations, ultimately facilitating their potential for exam success.

2. Pressure during teaching and exams

2.1 External barriers
During the participants’ discussion around revision sessions, it surfaced that these are restricted to Year 11:

“Started in 11... But they should’ve done it for Year 10 (1) I don’t know why (.)... But in 11 yeah (.) it started” [N, p3, 43, 45].

Although participant N did not comment further or expand on this statement, this demonstrated the ability to identify his own needs. Participant N evidently felt that revision sessions throughout Year 10 would have been beneficial, and thus his needs were potentially unmet.

This theme was mirrored in comments from participants C and W. Both asserted they become “stressed” [p15, 330, 334] during exams. Reflecting on Math GCSE, participant W said:

“’cause it’s things you done like in Year 10 or Year 7 (.) that you just (.) you forget... So you have to try remember it all from like (.) a couple of years ago” [W, p15, 337-338, 340].

The participants’ comments revealed a lack of continuity throughout Years 10 and 11. It seemed the participants felt vulnerable to forgetting content taught within the Year 10 curriculum, resulting in pressure to recall this information during Year 11 exams.

Although discussion around school support was predominantly positive, it became apparent that some teachers occasionally overlook difficulties:
“And sometimes... you don’t know what you’re doing (1) because the teacher just springs it on you... You don’t know what you’re doing and teachers (.) and you ask the teacher for help and they just (.) tell you what to do (.) and you just forget” [W, p7, 151-152, 154-155].

Participant W’s comment suggested that teaching is occasionally abrupt with limited preparation and lack of processing time, ultimately affecting his ability to recall information. This appeared a barrier to effective learning. His comment implied that certain aspects, such as providing sufficient time and support, are inconsistent throughout teaching. This can have adverse effects. If pupils do not fully understand what to do, this likely affects how they engage with learning.

Although, for two of the participants, parents were not acknowledged as people they would go to for support, one appeared concerned around his parents’ opinions of exam results:

“If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (.) you haven’t tried your best” [W, p29, 656-657].

“’Cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (.) for failing your exams” [W, p29, 655].

Participant W seemed concerned about how his parents would act in the event he failed exams. This suggested he did not want to disappoint his parents, representing an external pressure to succeed. Pupils with LI already experience academic pressure due to the nature of their difficulties, and added parental pressure may be detrimental.
2.2 Alleviation of pressure

Access arrangements aided in alleviating pressure during exams for all participants. They discussed the benefits of extra time and the allocation of a reader, which appeared to be the sole two access arrangements assigned to them.

Whilst discussing extra time, participant N expressed he:

“*Might go through (1) through the pages (.) that I’m struggling with... and then come back to it*” [N, p12, 274, p13, 279]

Extra time relieves pressure around completing exam papers within the typical timeframe. Participant N found it beneficial to return to questions once he had time to process the necessary information. Two of the participants confirmed it is beneficial to know they have additional time to utilise whilst sitting an exam, particularly to return to questions they initially found difficult.

Participants concurred that access to a reader is beneficial in assisting with the wording of questions:

“I get stuck I do... On the words... And I just tell Miss” [C, p7, 144, 147, 149]

“It’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (.) you can tell miss (.) what’s that word say?” [C, p12, 263-264].
“Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something like that (.) they tell you what it means (.) so you can just get on and do it” [W, p12, 269-270].

Multimodal strategies therefore appeared useful. Their comments implied that hearing a word, as opposed to attempting to read the word, facilitated their understanding of that term. This subsequently supported them to answer the question, enabling a higher chance of success. Simultaneously, this assisted in alleviating pressure around the need to read a word or comprehend meaning from its written form.

3. **Approaches to exam preparation**

3.1 Motivation to engage with learning

Varying levels of engagement generated throughout their discussion. For example, two participants stated that they practised past papers at home, whilst the third participant stated he did not attend revision sessions where past papers are made available.

Additionally, he did not request past papers from teachers. This reflected diversity amongst their motivation to engage with learning.

Regarding the benefits of practising past papers, one participant asserted:

“Or see the past papers but you might know (.) one of these questions might come in the exam” [N, p4, 83-84].

Past papers enhance awareness of exam expectations. Participant N’s comment suggested he was aware that exam questions can be relatively consistent and he was conscious to
practise in preparation. Moreover, participant C specified he studied past papers at home. Their commitment to practising past papers demonstrated their motivation to achieve.

Furthermore, it was identified that revision sessions are occasionally out of compulsory school hours and not mandatory; it is the pupils’ choice to attend or forego these sessions. Only three participants were involved in the group interview and two pupils asserted they stayed after school for these sessions. The third participant stated that he did not have the time to attend after-school sessions, also reflecting differences in their motivation.

In addition to the opportunities provided in school, participants stated that they also request support from teachers:

“*I will go to a teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (. ) who helped you with (. ) with questions*” [W, p6, 119-120].

“The subject (1) the teacher that’s like (…) or you know (.) end of the lesson (.) like you know (1) go and see her and ask (.) how I’m struggling with this question” [N, p6, 123, 125-126].

To approach teachers for support, participants seemed motivated to achieve. This also suggested they are aware of their needs and aim to develop their knowledge and skills.

Qualifications were also highlighted:
“The better grades you have the better job you can get you know... Some jobs you need uh (1) the qualifications you need (.) for the job like (1) you have to get the qualifications” [N, p18, 412, 421-422].

“If you want to get like (.) into a course (.) or a course you want to do (.) you need to get (.) good (.) good grades to go do it” [W, p19, 417-418].

Participants considered qualifications important for future aspirations; they felt that higher grades result in greater FE and job opportunities. Obtaining certain grades thus appeared a motivator for engaging with preparation for exams and utilising access arrangements.

3.2 Independence

Independence and responsibility emerged on several occasions. For example, access arrangements are available to the pupils, but it is their decision whether to utilise or disregard these. Correspondingly, teachers provided opportunities for revision sessions and past papers, and independence was established through the way the two of the three participants made use of these opportunities.

When discussing terminology, all participants stated they sought support from a reader when unsure of a word’s meaning:

“It’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (.) you can tell miss (.) what’s that word say?” [C, p12, 263-264].
“Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something like that (.) they tell you what it means (.) so you can just get on and do it” [W, p12, 269-270].

“When I see a teacher goes past (.) I’ll ask her” [N, p12, 272].

All participants affirmed they made use of this opportunity, confirming independence in seeking support during exams. This may be attributable to two possibilities; potentially, utilising a reader is familiar to the pupils and a process they use frequently or, alternatively, school staff encourage pupils to be confident with asking for support.

Moreover, access to a reader allows the pupils to take responsibility; if unsure of a word, it is the pupils’ choice to request help. Participant W’s comment indicated that, in addition to autonomously requesting support, he was also self-sufficient. He acknowledged that support was available to him to utilise where necessary and, following this, proceeded independently.

Independence also emerged when all participants asserted they felt confident to approach teachers for support. For example, this was mentioned by participant N regarding vocabulary in lessons:

“Sometimes I might not know what’s the meaning of a word (1) And (.) sometimes you might come across that word again (1) make sure ask the teacher what’s (.) like (1) what’s that big word” [N, p8, 163, 165-166].
Overall, the participants’ comments indicated they do not overlook their difficulties. They recognise when they need help and are proactive with this, which are considered independent attributes to learning.

3.3 Summary of main findings

All participants spoke positively of the opportunities they receive from teaching staff, such as delivering revision sessions and practice tests, providing past papers, and allocating access arrangements. It is encouraging that teachers appear aware of the participants’ needs and offer a range of opportunities for additional provision. Moreover, the pupils also independently pursue support from school and siblings to enhance their learning and awareness of exam expectations. However, some aspects of schooling, such as limited recapping of information and abrupt explanations from teachers, hinder their learning.
4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of Year 11 adolescents with LI towards GCSE examinations, with objectives to investigate support received during KS4 in preparation for exams and revision approaches. Meeting the objectives, three superordinate themes were identified within the data: Facilitators to exam success, Pressure during teaching and exams, and Approaches to exam preparation. As the study’s objectives are embedded throughout the findings, results and literature are coalesced according to the superordinate themes that emerged. Gaps within the literature are addressed and limitations of the present study are noted, alongside considerations for future research.

4.2 Facilitators to academic success

The participants discussed aspects that facilitate or hinder their learning. As exams can be challenging for pupils with SLCN (Bercow, 2008), the support they receive is fundamental in maximising their potential for success. The present study revealed predominantly positive outlooks on support received in preparation for GCSE exams, which corresponds with research into support satisfaction by Dockrell et al (2007), Palikara et al (2009) and Simkin and Conti-Ramsden (2009).

Support was considered most effective when teachers acknowledged and responded to the pupils’ needs through providing regular revision sessions, past papers and practice tests. Owing to difficulties for adolescents with LI, such as understanding vocabulary (Wilson et al, 2010) and processing and retaining information (Simkin & Conti-Ramsden; Starling et al,
2012), this was considered particularly relevant. These opportunities ensure additional time for pupils with Li to process and retain curricular content, develop the knowledge and skills needed for exam success, and recall information during exams.

Past papers and practice tests also enhance awareness of exam expectations, enabling participants to become accustomed with the structure of exams and exam questions. The notion of learning through experience thus surfaced, which appears an unexplored area within the research. Support generally focuses on one-to-one help from teachers or LSAs and access to SLT (Dockrell et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009; I CAN, 2017; Simkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2009). Contrastingly, the mention of practice tests and revision sessions demonstrates a further component to learning, with positive findings.

It appeared that individualised support ensued from informally testing the pupils’ progress. Owing to the heterogeneous nature of language difficulties (Bercow, 2008), individualised provision is crucial prior to exams, and it is positive if this occurs following evaluation of their progress. Simultaneous with teachers’ awareness of needs, discussion suggests teachers also recognise that needs may change over time. Consistent with research by Dockrell et al (2012), recurrently monitoring pupils’ language abilities and progress aids to inform timely support and adjustments.

Furthermore, Starling et al (2011) assert that secondary school classes are noisier and more distracting, which can negatively affect how efficiently pupils with Li understand, process and retain information. In contrast, revision sessions are likely to be quieter and less distracting, and such environments likely enhance their capacity for learning. Providing
opportunities for revision sessions also maximises exam success by removing reliance on solely revising at home, which one participant in the present study asserted he did not do.

Teaching staff emerged as stronger support systems than parents or peers, which reflects other young people’s perceptions (Dockrell et al, 2007; Lewis et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009). This emphasises the importance of school provision in the pupils’ educational development. Siblings were also considered facilitators to exam success within the present study. Conflicting with literature where sibling support is not strongly emphasised (Lewis et al, 2007; Palikara et al, 2009), in the present study siblings were notably influential during exam preparation. They were highlighted as a strong support network, with all participants stating they sought exam advice from siblings.

4.3 Pressure during teaching and exams

Consistent with literature (Bercow, 2018; Dockrell & Lindsay, 2008; Palikara et al, 2009; Spencer et al, 2010; Starling et al, 2011), the current findings demonstrate barriers to effective learning. Although teachers’ awareness of needs is established as a facilitator, reduced awareness is also addressed, resembles findings from Dockrell et al’s (2007) study where teachers were unaware of challenges faced by adolescents with SLCN. In line with a report into inclusion and pupil support by the WAG (2006), it is schools’ responsibility to adapt to pupils’ needs. However, abrupt teaching styles were mentioned by one participant. He commented that teachers occasionally overlook sufficient time and preparation, and consequently he forgets what to do.
This is comparable to statements within Spencer et al’s (2010) study. Their participants were also in KS4 at the time of the research, and both expressed they found teaching fast-paced, neglecting processing time and repetition. This was predominantly in relation to successfully learning vocabulary. Reflected in the present study, the participants were also aware of their difficulties with vocabulary, particularly in relation to answering exam questions. As adolescents transition into adulthood, these skills are crucial; Law et al (2009) assert that poor vocabulary skills put young people at twice the risk of unemployment. Developing the necessary vocabulary skills for adolescents with LI therefore needs to be efficacious throughout KS4.

Reflecting Joffe’s (2013) research into variable teaching styles, Participant W’s comment suggested that not all teachers conduct lessons effectively for those with LI. Moreover, this was echoed throughout the group discussion; an absence of revision sessions during Year 10 and recapping curricular content during Year 11 surfaced. There is the expectation that pupils will retain information and vocabulary throughout their education. However, as adolescents with LI are known to have memory limitations (Bishop et al, 2016), lack of exam practice and repetition may be disadvantageous. Perspectives from young people within Palikara et al’s (2009) study confirmed that continual support would be beneficial. Mirroring this, findings indicated the participants would benefit from regular revision sessions during Year 10 and reiteration of previous curricular content during their final GCSE year.

Parents’ views and concerns around support are reported within the research (Dockrell et al, 2007; I CAN, 2017). There is little insight, however, into their influence on adolescents with SLCN. Parents’ expectations of exam results were mentioned by a participant,
highlighting a potential external pressure. Moreover, only one participant confirmed support from his parents and did not elaborate on this. A potential factor arose from the absence of discussion around parental support; support is a two-way interaction and it is possible their parents do not offer advice and support for revision or exams. Arguably, this may increase feelings of pressure. School support is greatly valued by all participants, and it is perhaps discouraging this did not extend into their home environment.

Current research and government guidelines confirm access arrangements for pupils with SLCN who meet the required eligibility criteria (Durkin et al, 2009; Ofqual, 2017b). However, there is a paucity of literature that investigates pupils’ perceptions of these. Through exploring participants’ views of access arrangements, the present study aimed to address this gap. Two access arrangements were discussed by the participants; the allocation of a reader and extra time. The concept of a reader did not arise naturally from the participants’ dialogue, however. This is important to note as it demonstrates the potential implications for data collection from those with LI, such as sufficient understanding of questions. With prompting from the LSA present during the interview, the participants engaged in discussion around this.

All participants confirmed their use of a reader when uncertain of a word. Discussion demonstrated the benefits of multimodal learning styles (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Fleming and Mills (1992) discuss the varying learning styles of pupils, where some report difficulty with written forms. Adolescents with LI are vulnerable to difficulties with reading comprehension (Botting et al, 2006), and thus it is unsurprising that reading questions in
exam papers can be problematic. Access to a reader, however, assists in reducing this pressure.

Similarly, extra time aids to alleviate pressure. One participant asserted he utilised extra time to return to questions he initially found difficult, with two participants confirming it was beneficial to know they are allocated extra time. Their discussion confirmed they utilise access arrangements accordingly and conscientiously, which is encouraging. No participants asserted not to find access arrangements beneficial or declined using them. It is positive that findings revealed the effectiveness of access arrangements, alongside how the pupils utilise these to maximise their exam success.

4.4 Approaches to exam preparation

Data establish common themes amongst the participants and all sought advice and support to some extent.

Research by Dockrell et al (2007) and Palikara et al (2009) highlights pupils’ own attitudes, with pupils confirming their determination and hard-work key to academic outcomes. Asking for help was considered a positive personal action. Similarly, a pupil within Spencer et al’s (2010) study asserted that she requested repetition when she did not understand vocabulary. Echoed within the present study, participants asserted they ask teachers for help if they find something difficult, with vocabulary also emphasised. Encouragingly, findings from previous research and the present study demonstrate that adolescents with LI are often aware of their difficulties and needs, and endeavour to improve their skills.
Determination and independence emerged through the way participants engage with revision sessions, practice past papers, request support, and make use of access arrangements. These are not obligatory, yet all participants requested a reader where they consider it necessary, utilised extra time in exams, sought support from teachers, and two of the three participants attended revision sessions and practiced past papers. Importantly, this demonstrated that they are proactive in their learning and exam success. Self-sufficiency also surfaced and a comparison is drawn with Lewis et al’s (2007) report, where young people balanced autonomy with asking for help. Participants within the present study shared similar values; they sought support where necessary, and this enabled them to continue with exam questions independently.

4.5 Considerations for future research

The study was small-scale. For generalisation to the broader population of adolescents with LI, a larger-scale study would be required. It must also be acknowledged that findings were potentially constrained due to a singular discussion. Simultaneously, participants’ utterances were relatively short, which was considered attributable to their language difficulties and unfamiliarity with the interview situation. It was therefore necessary for the researcher to facilitate discussion more than would be anticipated if, for example, investigating teachers’ views on provision for pupils with LI. Consequently, these factors may have affected the validity of the research.

To address this, future recommendations would be made, such as larger-scale research and opportunities for participants to become more familiar with the interview process. Additionally, following-up group discussions with individual interviews would expand on
details initially uncovered, ultimately providing richer data for analysis and interpretation. Due to limitations recruiting participants, a pilot study was not conducted. In hindsight, this may have resulted in the decision to carry out individual interviews.

4.6 Conclusion

In response to the research aim, findings reveal Year 11 pupils’ perceptions of GCSE exam preparation and support. Exposure to experience and practice, teachers’ awareness of needs, access arrangements, and siblings surfaced as the most advantageous forms of support. The study highlighted fast-paced teaching styles and limited reiteration of curricular content during their KS4 years as barriers to effective learning. Reinforcing the literature (Bercow, 2018; Dockrell & Lindsay, 2008; Palikara et al, 2009), participants considered school provision to greatly influence their educational development and success. Therefore, findings have implications for teaching and support during pupils’ GCSE years. Through exploring adolescents’ views, successful learning strategies implemented by both teaching staff and pupils can be addressed, and subsequently advocated throughout KS4.

The study elicited interesting insights from adolescents younger than those typically involved in qualitative research about LI, emphasising a need to embrace their perceptions towards the GCSE process. Adolescents with LI are vulnerable to poorer academic and employment outcomes (Bercow, 2018), thus further development of the present study would be highly valuable to inform optimal provision required for pupils with LI to succeed at KS4, before they transition into FE or employment. Such research is considered particularly relevant at a time of change to GCSE exams, increasing mainstream inclusion, and growing number of GCSE entries for pupils with LI.
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**Appendix 1**

*Initial recruitment email sent to schools*

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Hi,

My name's [Name] and I'm a speech and language therapy student at Cardiff Metropolitan University. As part of my final year project I am to conduct research into an area of my choice, which I have chosen to be adolescents with language difficulties, specifically those within their final GCSE year.

To carry out my research I need to find a secondary school that would be willing for me to talk to 3-5 pupils with language difficulties (e.g. with a statement of SEN) regarding GCSE examinations, which would be audio and video recorded then later transcribed and analysed. I would be looking to carry this out during the first school term if possible.

My research has yet to go to the ethics committee and so this is just a preliminary e-mail to see whether this would be possible in your school. If your school would be willing to help me with my research I would provide further information following approval from the ethics committee, including participation letters and consent forms for the pupils and parents. If it is more appropriate, I am more than happy to discuss this over the phone or meet with a member of staff to explain further and provide more information.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Kind regards,

[Name]
Appendix 2

Participant information form

Research project title: Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

Researcher: Yvette Davey

Ethics approval reference number: 9479

Participant name or Study ID Number:

Participant Information Sheet

My name’s Yvette and I am a student at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Please read the information below. It explains the project and will help you decide if you would like to take part.

Thank you for reading.

What’s the project about?

The project explores the views of Year 11 pupils who have language difficulties. Research shows that pupils with language difficulties now sit more exams and achieve better marks than they used to in previous years. However, there is little research into how pupils with language difficulties feel about exams.

The project will look at two main areas:

1. The support you have for exams.
2. How you revise for exams.

**Why have you been asked to take part?**

You are in Year 11.

You have a Statement of additional educational needs.

**What will happen?**

You will be visited in school by Yvette. She will discuss information about the study and answer any questions you have. If you are happy to take part, then Yvette will ask you to sign a consent form and arrange another visit with you in school.

**What will happen if you agree to take part in the project?**

If you agree to take part, this is what will happen:

1. Yvette will visit you in school again. This visit will be as a group and you will be in a room with two other pupils from your year at school.

2. You will be asked some questions. These questions will be about exams, revision and what you would like to do after you leave Year 11. You can talk individually and as a group. You choose what you would like to say and how much you would like to say.

3. The group interview will be audio and video recorded to help Yvette write up what you have said.

4. Yvette will type up the interview and you can read it if you would like to. You can read it through with a family member, or you can read it on your own. If you would
like to change anything then please let Yvette know. You have 2 weeks to let Yvette know if anything needs changing.

It is your decision to stay during the interview. If you want to leave at any time, you can. You do not have to say why.

**How long will the group interview be?**

It will last about an hour.

**What happens next?**

Yvette will keep the audio and video recordings safe. The recordings will be put onto a computer. Yvette will type up the group interview and only Yvette and her supervisors will see what has been typed.

When Yvette types up the interviews, your name will not be used. If you talk about people or places, Yvette will also take these out. If you decide that you do not want to take part during the interview, you can leave the room and Yvette will not use anything that you have already said in the project.

No-one will be able to identify you or what you have said.

You will be able to read the group interview and review what you have said. You will be able to alter or withdraw what you have said up to 2 weeks after you receive the written interview.

**Are there any risks?**

I do not expect there to be any risks.

You can choose to leave the room at any point during the group interview.
The group interview will be in a room in your school. We will carry out the group interview on a day and time that is suitable for everyone in the group.

**Further questions**

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Hannah Plumpton on:

hplumpton@cardiffmet.ac.uk

02920417287
Research project title: Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

Researcher: [name redacted]

Ethics approval reference number: 9479

Participant name or Study ID Number:

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**Parent/Guardian Information Sheet**

My name’s [name redacted] and I am a final year speech and language therapy student at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Please read the information below. It provides an explanation of the project and why I have asked your child to take part.

Thank you for reading.

**What’s the project about?**

The project explores the views of Year 11 pupils who have language difficulties. Research shows that pupils with language difficulties now sit more exams and achieve better marks than they used to in previous years. However, there is little research into how pupils with language difficulties feel about exams.

The project will look at two main areas:

1. The support your child has for exams.

**Why your child has been asked to take part?**

Your child is in Year 11.

They have a Statement of additional educational needs.

**What will happen if your child agrees to take part in the project?**

If they agree to take part, this is what will happen:

1. Your child will be visited in school by the researcher. She will discuss information about the study and answer any questions they have. If your child would like to take part, then the researcher will arrange another visit with them in school.

2. The researcher will visit your child in school again. This visit will be as a group and your child will be in a room with two other pupils from their year at school.

3. Your child will be asked some questions. These questions will be about exams, revision and what they would like to do after you leave Year 11. Your child can talk individually and as a group. Your child decides what they would like to say and how much they would like to say.

4. The group interview will be audio and video recorded to help the researcher write up what was said.

5. Your child will receive a written transcript of the interview to review and check for accuracy within 4 weeks of the interview being carried out. They will have 2 weeks after receiving the transcript to make any corrections or changes and inform the researcher. After this point, the data cannot be withdrawn or altered.

It is your child’s decision to stay during the interview. If they want to leave at any time, they can, and they do not need to provide a reason for leaving.
**How long will the group interview be?**

It will last about an hour.

**What happens next?**

The researcher will keep the audio and video recordings safe in a lock-box. The recordings will then be transferred onto a password-protected computer. The researcher will type up the group interview and only the researcher and her supervisors will see what has been typed.

When the researcher types up the interviews, your child’s name will not be used. If they talk about people or places, the researcher will also take these out. If your child decides that they do not want to take part during the interview, they are able to leave the room and none of the information they have given will be used in the project.

No-one will be able to identify your child or what they have said.

Your child will be able to read the group interview and review what they have said. They will be able to alter or withdraw their data up until 2 weeks after they receive the transcript.

**Are there any risks?**

I do not expect there to be any risks.

Your child can choose to leave the room at any point during the group interview. The group interview will be in a room in your child’s school. We will carry out the group interview on a day and time that is suitable for your child.

**Further questions**
If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Hannah Plumpton on:

02920417287
Appendix 3

Parent/Guardian consent form

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Research project title: Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

Researcher: [Redacted]

Ethics approval reference number: 9479

Participant name or Study ID Number:

Parent/Guardian to complete this section: Please put your initials in each box.

1. I confirm that I have read the parent/guardian information sheet for the above project and understand what will happen during the group interview.

2. I understand that anything my child says during the group interview may be used in the project and in future written work.

3. I understand that my child’s participation in the project is voluntary and they can leave the interview at any time.

4. I agree that my child can take part in the group interview.

5. I am aware that, as part of the project, an audio and video recording is required.
6. I am aware that my child may withdraw from the study before, during or up to 2 weeks after they have read the transcript.

7. I agree that the data collected from the interview may be used in publications.

_________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian        Date
Appendix 4

Participant consent form

Participant Consent Form

Research project title: Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

Researcher:

Ethics approval reference number: 9479

Participant name or study ID number:

______________________________

Participant to complete this section: Please put your initials in each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the project. I have been given time to think about the project and the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand what will happen during the group interview and that it is my choice to take part. I understand that I can leave the group interview at any time.

3. I understand that anything I say during the group interview may be used in the project.

4. I agree to take part in the group interview.

5. I agree to the interview being audio and video recorded.

6. I understand that I can choose not to take part before, during and up to 2 weeks after I have read what I have said in the interview.
7. I agree to the information from my interview to be used in further publications if appropriate.

_________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Participant                 Date

_________________________________  ____________________
Name of person taking consent            Date

_________________________________
Signature of person taking consent
Appendix 5

Interview transcript

Transcript key

Participants          C, W, N, All
Researcher          R
Learning support assistant    LSA
Pause, less than one second (.)
Pause, one second (1)
Pause, two seconds (2)
Pause, three seconds (3)
Pause, five seconds (5)
Speaker trails off (...)
Unintelligible [unintelligible]
Laughter [L]
External disruption, removed from transcript [D]
Non-verbal e.g. yes/no [nodding] [shaking head]

1  R: Okay we’ll go (.) this way (.) just need to say your name (.)
2  C (.)
3  W (.)
4  N (.)
5  R: Great thank you (2) Okay so to start (.) can you just tell me what subjects (1) you’re studying this year (.) and we’ll go this way again
6  C: I’m doing Maths (1) I’m doing Art (1) PE (2) Agriculture (1) and (1) I can’t remember all
7  the rest (.)
8  R: [L] That’s fine (1) okay and you
9  W: I’m doing Maths (1) Science (1) English (1) Drama (1) Horticulture (3) and that’s it (.)
10  that’s that’s all I can remember
11  R: Okay (.) yeah?
12  N: Um (1) Maths English Science (.) speech Drama (.) RE (3) and that’s it I think
13  R: That’s quite a lot of subjects that you’re studying then really
14  N: 6 or 7
R: Yeah (1) okay (2) so we’re gonna talk about exams (2) is there anything you find hard (.)

about exams?

N: Studying (.)

R: The studying bit (. so revising?

N: Yeah

C: Yeah

W: [nodding]

R: Yeah?

W: Yeah

N: The focusing and the work like

R: Okay

N: Uh you have to go (.) revision every (.) Monday (.) Wednesday and Thursday

[ D] (AENCo walks into room, brief discussion with LSA)

LSA: Right when were your revision (.) when did you have to do the revision?

N: Mondays Wednesdays and Thursdays (.) Mondays is uh (1) Science (.) and Wednesday is

maths (.) and then (. ) Thursday it’s (1) English yeah

R: Okay so is that the same for all of you?

All: Yeah

R: Okay (.) how many people

LSA: But when do you go (.) when do you actually go?

N: After school (2)

R: After school you go to that revision?

N: 3:30-4:30
R: Okay (.) and how (.) long have you been (1) going to these revisions (.) are they (1) since
you went into Year 10 (.) or is this something that’s more (.) recent?
N: Started in 11
R: Okay (.) started in Year 11
N: But they should’ve done it for Year 10 (1) I don’t know why (.)
R: Okay
N: But in 11 yeah (.) it started (...) R: Okay (.) do you find that helpful?
N: Yes
C: Yes
N: Because you get (.) help (1) and (.) you get (1) past papers to do
R: Okay (2) okay so past papers are helpful? (.) Would you boys agree with that?
C: Yeah
R: Yeah (.) Do you do the past papers in that session?
N: [nodding]
C: [nodding]
W: I don’t go
R: You don’t go? (1) So is it there for you (.) that you could go if you wanted to?
W: Yeah
R: Why don’t you go?
W: I I (.) I don’t have (.) time
R: Okay (1)
C: I take them home I do
R: Yeah so you take them home?
C: I study them in the house
R: Do you do them at home?
C: [nodding]
R: That's really good
N: I do both you know
R: Yeah?
N: School and (.) home
R: Okay so who does them (.) when you take them home (.) you'll do them when you take them home
C: Yeah
R: Will you do them?
W: [shaking head]
R: Okay so does anyone give you (.) these papers (.) even though you don't go to the revision session?
W: No
R: Okay so if you don't go you don't get (1) the past papers?
N: You can ask the teacher
R: Okay
N: So if you're like you're struggling (1)
R: Yeah
N: Or see the past papers but you might know (.) one of these questions might come in the exam (.) so can (.) just (.)
R: Yeah (2) that's really good to know that past papers help you (1) that's really good (1) so do you do them at home then as well?
N: Yeah (,) and look at the books (1)
R: Okay (2) what about you boys with books?
W: [shaking head]
C: I don’t have any books in my house I don’t
R: No?
C: No I just go on my laptop and figure it out (1)
R: Do you use your laptop then to look (...)
C: Yeah
R: For things?
C: Yeah (1) it’s easier
R: Yeah (1) is that for (.) school work (.) and revision?
C: Yeah (.) both
R: Yeah (1) do you have a laptop at home?
W: No
R: No? So what do you do if (2) there was (1) a question in class (.) or a past paper question (.) that (.) you didn’t (1) quite know (.) what it was asking you to do (1) would you google it or (.) would you ask friends (.) would you ask a teacher?
C: I do (.) both
R: Yeah
C: Ask teacher ask friends
R: Yeah
C: Or go on the laptop (.) or something
R: Yeah (,) okay what about you two?
W: I ask a (,) I will ask a teacher
R: Yeah? That’s good

N: Same

R: Yeah?

N: Yeah

R: So you feel like you can go to your teachers (.) to talk to them

W: Yeah

R: That’s really good (1) Would you (.) go to a teacher that (1) um (.) taught a subject (.) or

would you go to a teaching assistant (.) or (.) to someone else

W: I will go to teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (.) who helped you with (.) with

questions

R: Okay

C: Yeah (.) I would do the same

N: The subject (1) the teacher that’s like (...)

R: Okay great (.) thank you

N: Or you know (.) end of the lesson (.) like you know (1) go and see her and ask (.) how I’m

struggling with this question

R: Yeah (1) how about (.) um (.) feeling confident with doing that (.) with saying that you

might find something a bit hard (.) because we all find things hard (.) everyone does (1)

would you feel confident to say (1) I’m struggling a bit with this (.) can I have a bit of help?

N: Yeah

All: [nodding]

R: You all do (.) yeah? (2)

All: [nodding]
R: That’s really good I think that’s really positive that (.) you would feel like that (.) and that
you can put your hand up or go and see a teacher (1) that’s really good (1) um (2) so what
about with these past papers (.) that (1) have you all seen past papers?
All: [nodding]
R: So a couple of you get them from revision sessions (.) have you seen past papers?
W: In some lessons (.) we um (.) we do (.) the papers in some lessons
R: Okay (.) so when you’re looking at these past papers (1) is there anything that you find
difficult (.) um (.) if we think about (1) how (1) it’s worded (.) so the words they use or
maybe how (.) short or long a sentence is (.) is there anything (.) that you ever get stuck with
(1) or can you (.) read the question (.) and answer it (.) and you find that pretty easy?
C: I get stuck I do
W: [nodding]
R: Yeah?
C: On the words
N: Sometimes
C: And I just tell Miss (...) (.)
R: Okay (.) so some of the words?
W: And sometimes (.) you (.) you don’t know what you’re doing (1) because the teacher just
springs it on you
R: Okay
W: You don’t know what you’re doing and teachers (.) and you ask the teacher for help and
they just (.) tell you what to do (.) and you just forget (2)
R: Okay (1) So do you do anything if um (.) if you think you might forget (.) do you ever write
it down?
W: No I've got terrible handwriting
R: [L]
W: I probably wouldn't understand it
R: Okay (.) and what about you with how things are worded or remembering (.) what you're meant to be doing?
N: Sometimes I might not know what's the meaning of a word (.)
R: Okay
N: And (.) sometimes you might come across that word again (1) so to make sure ask the teacher what's (.) like (.) what's that big word
R: Yeah (1) so will you ask someone if you're not sure about a word?
C: Yeah
W: [nodding]
R: Yeah? (.) That's really good (2) yeah (1) and if you come across that word again (1) do you think you're likely to remember what that word meant (1) or (1)
W: [nodding]
C: I do sometimes (.) I do remember the words
N: [nodding]
R: Yeah? (.) Because specific subjects (.) they have different words they use
C: Yeah
R: So maths (.) maths is quite difficult in the terms (2) like (.) I've looked at past papers and it'll say things like (.) estimate and analyse (.) and some of these are quite difficult
W: [nodding]
C: Yeah
R: And then (.) with your other subjects (.) especially if you’re all studying (.) about 7
subjects (.) it’s gonna be different words (1) that each of them (.) use
C: Yeah
R: So do you ever (.) write things down?
C: No
W: No
N: Just in your head
R: Yeah? So you’re relying on your memory?
N: Yeah
All: [nodding] Yeah
R: What about when you sit down in the exam then (1) will it come back to you?
N: Yeah (.) sometimes
C: Yeah (.) sometimes
W: Yes (.) sometimes (1) but sometimes it gets (.) muddled up (.) like it (.) it get jumbled in
my head so I make mistakes (1)
R: Right okay (.) so what gets jumbled in your head?
W: Like if I (.) if I (.) if I like if I study too much (.) it get (.) it all go (.) jumbled (.) I just (.) I just
make mistakes and stuff (.)
R: Okay so if you’re studying too much?
W: [nodding] Yeah
R: So then your (.) brain might be getting tired (1) and you’re not giving yourself a break (1)
W: Yeah
R: Yeah (.) So do you think that’s important before exams (.) to make sure you’ve given
yourself a bit of a break?
W: [nodding]
C: [nodding] Yeah
N: Yeah (...)
R: Yeah (.)
N: Yeah (.) give yourself a little (.) break yeah (...)
R: Yeah (1) So if you’re revising (2) pretend you had a GCSE next week (1) I know you all said you’ve done (.) Maths?
All: Yeah
N: And English and Science
W: Most of us have done Maths (1) all the higher sets have done maths (.)
R: Yeah?
W: My class we’re doing it in the summer (...)
R: Right okay (1) so (.) pretend that you’re (.) going to be sitting (.) a maths GCSE (.) next week (1) what would you be doing now (.) to kind of (1) prepare yourself (.) to get ready (2) to do this exam? (.) Would you be (1) looking at your books from school (.) would you be using the internet (.) would you be talking to friends?
N: Just go to the library
R: Go to the library (.) is there a library in school?
All: [nodding] Yeah
R: Okay (2) Who uses the library in school?
N: No one I just work outside
R: Okay
R: Is there a room (.) that you can go in?
N: Yeah there’s a library in (.) the school library
229  R: Yeah?
230  N: Yeah
231  R: Okay or (.) who would be revising at home?
232  C: I will (.) revise at home
233  N: School and at home (.) both
234  R: School and at home (1) would you revise at home?
235  W: No
236  R: So you don’t tend to revise? [L]
237  All: [L]
238  R: That’s the gist I’m getting? [L] okay
239  W: [nodding] Yeah
240  R: So what would you do if you (.) had an exam next week (1) are you saying that you
241  wouldn’t revise (.) you would just turn up to the exam (.) and (.) and do it?
242  W: [nodding] Yeah
243  R: Yeah? [L]
244  N: [unintelligible]
245  W: I just (1) guess (.) just do it (.) guess (.)
246  R: Guess
247  W: [nodding]
248  R: Would some of the stuff that you’ve learnt in school come back to you?
249  W: [nodding] Yeah
250  R: Yeah? (2) Do you have any um (1) support during exams (.) does anyone write for you (.)
251  or (.) anything like that
252  All: [shaking heads]
R: No? (.) Okay (.) do you have extra time (.) or do you know if you have extra time?

All: [nodding] Yeah we get extra time

R: Okay (1) Do you think that helps?

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: [nodding]

LSA: They sometimes get a reader as well miss (.) if they want it (.) some things (.) in Maths

we can read the questions

R: Okay (.) so you have a reader (.) So if you have a reader and you have extra time (1) do

both of those things help? (1)

N: Yeah (1)

C: Yeah (.) It’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (.) you can tell miss (.) what’s

that word say?

R: Okay and then they’ll say the word to you?

C: Yeah

R: And does that (1) help you to understand the word?

All: Yeah

W: Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something that (.) they tell you what it means

(.) so you can just get on and do it

R: Okay (.) that’s really good to know (1) do you have a reader as well?

N: Sometimes (1) When I see a teacher go past (.) I’ll ask her

R: Yeah

N: And (.) extra time (1) might go through (1) through the pages (.) that I’m struggling with
R: Okay (1) okay (1) So if you’re (1) doing an exam then (.) ’cause you have that extra time (1) will you (. ) try and do every question (1) like number one number two number three (1) or if something was (. ) hard (. ) would you skip past that (. ) and move on to the next one (1) 

A: [nodding] Yeah 

N: And then come back to it (...) 

C: And come back to it 

R: And come back to it? 

R: So is that extra time 

N: Yeah yeah yeah 

R: Helps to know (.) that you’ve got that time there (.) 

C: [nodding] 

R: To go back over things (1) That’s really good (3) Okay (.) with (2) your support for exams (1) so (. ) you’ve got a reader (. ) um (. ) you’ve got extra time (1) is there anything else (.) that you think would be helpful for you for exams (. ) or (. ) in the (.) lead up to exams (1) so this could be (1) in school (. ) this could be revision (1) this could be while you’re doing your exams (1) Have a little think (.) and think if there’s anything (3) that would be helpful (5) No? 

A: [looking at each other] 

R: There doesn’t have to be (1) 

N: Can you say that question again? 

R: So if (1) um (. ) is there anything that would be helpful (3) when you’re revising (. ) or when you’re doing your exams? 

N: Yeah (1) uh (. ) flash (.) flashcards 

R: Okay
N: Write ( ) write it down (1) and then see

C: Pictures can help you as well

R: Okay ( ) so these are really good answers (1) so flashcards pictures (1) Do pictures help you remember things?

N: [nodding]

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: Yes

N: Sometimes

R: Because some people are visual learners (1) so ( . ) a picture will help to (1) spark something (1) and you’ll go oh that’s it (1) or when you’re answering a question you might see the picture? (1) That’s how some people (1) well that’s how lots of people learn (1) um so with flashcards would those be ( ) words ( ) that are maybe used in exams ( ) or

N: I read over the question and then write the answer ( . )

R: Okay (2) With visuals ( . ) with pictures then (3) can you say a bit more about that ( . ) you don’t have to I’m just wondering if you’ve got a bit more to say about what would be helpful ( . ) with pictures

LSA: Miss is asking what type of pictures (1) you say for a maths exam maybe (1) so what type of picture ( . ) would you have?

C: Shapes

W: [unintelligible] a picture of a triangle with a long side and two short sides (1) so you remember ( ... )

R: Because that’s how it is in textbooks ( . ) isn’t it?

W: [nodding] Yeah

C: [nodding]
R: In your school books (1) so it would be helpful (. ) in exams (1) to (. ) for something to look (. ) back on (1) because that's the way that you (1) you learn it?

All: [Nodding]

R: Okay that's really good (. ) you're saying some great points here (. ) really good (1) Um (. ) so we've kind of covered (. ) the next thing I was going to ask you (. ) about how your revise for exams (3) How confident are you when it comes to exams (. ) do you feel like you cope well (. ) or do you get stressed?

C: [noddng] I get stressed I do

N: Fifty-fifty (1)

R: Yeah? (1) Does that depend on the subject?

All: [nodding] Yeah

W: Where the subject is (1) like say it's Maths I (1) I get stressed with Maths exams (1) like sometimes I just get stressed

R: Yeah? (.) Why do you get stressed in Maths exams?

W: 'cause (.) I dunno (.) 'cause it's things you done like in Year 10 or Year 7 (.) that you just (. ) you forget

R: Yeah

W: So you have to try remember it all from like (.) a couple of years ago (1)

R: Okay (1) So things that you might have learnt (. ) In Year 10 when you go into your GCSE year (. ) you'll have lessons (. ) and you'll learn some things (1) and then (.) in Year 11 (. ) or when you do your Maths exam (. ) you're expected to remember (1) those things from a long time ago?

N: Last year (.) because (1) since like (.) if you failed the last Maths test (.) you do it again (1) this year (.) so the last year's work (.) was doing it this year (1)
R: Okay
N: And it’s all about the timing (.)
R: Right (2) okay (2) do you feel more confident doing exams (1) in Year 10 or in Year 11?
W: [shaking head] Dunno
N: In Year 11 (.) once you’ve done them in Year 10 (1) you know the experience (1) and then
in Year 11 (.) you doing it again (1) and now you know what to do
R: Okay so are they like a (.) a practice test?
N: Hmm (2) if you fail in Year 10 you go to Year 11 and do it again
R: Okay (1) do you have things called mocks in school?
All: Yeah
R: Yeah? You have a mock test (1) Do those help?
N: Hmm (1) sometimes
W: Sometimes we go to a hall and (.) um (.) subject teachers do a PowerPoint to help us
learn (.) and write things down on (.) and write flash (.) like flashcards as well
R: Oh okay like a PowerPoint (.) and you all sit there?
W: [nodding] Yeah
C: [nodding]
R: Oh that’s good (.) so that’s like a (1) a group revision session?
C: [nodding]
W: The whole (.) the whole year
R: Yeah
W: Like in Year 11 we all go to a hall (.) and just learn for (.) for a hour
All: [unintelligible] (discussion between participants)
R: So it sounds
N: We do that every (.) in Science every (2) five lessons and then we have a test
R: Ah (1) oh to test on what (.) you’ve learnt (.) in that time?
All: Yeah
R: Okay (2) Do you find that that helps you to remember things (.) ’cause you’ve had that
test
C: [noding] Yeah
W: [noding] Yeah
R: On that stuff
N: The teacher sees (.) where you at right now (.) he’s testing us (.) where you at (1) if you
understand a bit (.) more next time
R: Oh okay (.). and you think that’s helpful?
All: [noding] Yeah
R: Yeah
W: And we do um (.) a prac test in Science (1) so we can get ready for when we do it in our
(.) when we do it in our exams (2)
R: Okay (2) so that kind of helps I guess getting to know what’s (1) gonna happen as well?
C: [noding] Yeah
R: Because exam conditions can be quite scary
All: [noding] You’re sat in the hall it’s all really quiet
C: Yeah
R: And you know they last quite a long time (2)
N: [noding]
R: Something popped into my head then that I was going to ask you and now it’s gone out
my head (1) So it sounds like you’ve got (1) um (1) quite a lot of things to help you (.) so you
have (.) practice tests
C: [noddng]
R: You have (1) um subject teachers going through some things that you’ve learnt
N: [noddng]
R: You have the revision sessions that you can go to (2)
C: [noddng]
W: [noddng]
R: Okay (.) that’s really good (2) How important are (.) exams (.) or the results (.) that you
get from them the grades so like (3) I know it’s in a bit of a change isn’t it
All: Yeah
R: So some results (.) some grades are letters and some are (.) numbers?
N: Oh we don’t have numbers
All: No
R: You don’t have numbers? (.) So it’s all just letters
N: [noddng]
C: [noddng] Yeah
R: Okay (1) so how important is it for you to get (1) good grades? (3)
N: Uh (1) the better grades you have the better job you can get you know
R: Okay (1) How do you boys feel about that (.) do you think that’s true what he said (.) or
W: [noddng] Yeah
C: [noddng] Yeah (1) it is true
R: Okay
W: If you want to get like (.) into a course (.) or a course you want to do (.) you need to get
( .) good ( .) good grades to go do it
N: Yeah
R: Okay (1) and you all think that ( .) that’s the case?
N: Some jobs you need uh (1) the qualifications you need (. ) for the job like (1) you have to
give the qualifications
R: Okay (1) so if we’re thinking about jobs (1) do you think a lot of jobs ask for (3) um (.)
certain grades (1) so maybe a good grade
W: [nodding]
C: [nodding] Yeah
R: Or do you think there’s jobs out there that it doesn’t matter what grade you have? (2)
N: Both
R: Yeah? (1) So (. ) do you say (. ) would you say that’s something that ( .) worries you (. ) or
doesn’t worry you at all (. ) about getting a job
C: [shaking head]
W: [shaking head] It doesn’t worry me at all
R: No? (2) No (1) Do you know what you want to do when you finish Year 11?
W: Yeah
C: Yeah
R: Yeah? Okay (.) We’ll go in a ( .) row with this one ( .) so what do you think you want to do?
C: I might have a ( .) two jobs
R: Okay
C: Working with my mother (.) in Tescos
R: Yeah?
C: And working with my uncle in buses
R: Okay
C: Yeah
R: And that’s what you’ll think you’ll do then when you finish school?
C: Yeah (1) and I’ll go to college as well
R: And what (.) do you know what you want to do in college?
C: No (.) not yet
R: Okay so you want to work (.) is there a reason that you want to work (.) and go to college?
C: Yeah because it helps me like (3) understand (.) like (.) about buses (.) and stuff
R: Yeah
C: And (.) how to fix (.) and stuff (.) and Tesco as well (...)
R: Okay yeah
LSA: So what do you mean (1) do you mean learning while doing the job
C: Yeah
R: Yeah (1) yeah (.) Would college be (.) um (.) linked (1) to (.) those jobs?
C: Yeah (1)
R: Yeah?
C: That’s right (.)
R: Okay (.) and what about you?
W: I want go to a army (.)
R: You want to go to the army? (1) Okay is that (.) have you (.) would you apply for that when you leave school (.) or is that something that you’ve looked into already?
W: I’m gonna apply when I leave school
R: Okay (2) and what about you?

N: Um (1) go to college (1) to do (.) motor engineering

R: Yeah (2)

N: If (.) before that I think I might go in this (.) course (.) where you can (.) have a taste in every (2) I don’t know what it’s called (.) DTL (.) or LTD (.)

R: Okay is that like a taster?

N: Yeah (.) yeah yeah a taster yeah

R: Of different (.) subjects or courses

N: Yeah (1) and then (.) from there (.) if I (.) like one of them (.) I might go into that (.) and then go (.) go to engineering

R: Okay (2) yeah (.) sounds like you’ve given it some thought already (2) because it’s quite (.) quite soon really that you’ll be leaving Year 11

C: [nodding] Yeah

N: 5 or 6 months (.)

R: Yeah? (1) Are you excited to leave school?

C: Yeah

All: [L]

R: [L] was that a silly question?

N: Yes

R: What about you?

C: Yes and no

R: Yeah (.) you looked a bit more hesitant then

C: Yeah (1)
R: What (1) okay (.s) so if we go through (.s) what are you (1) um (.s) excited to be leaving
school for (.s) or excited to be (1) is there anything you’d be excited to not have to do
anymore? (.s) We’ll go through (1) anything
C: I’m glad to be almost leaving (.s) because (.s) in college it’s different to comp (.s) as well (.s)
’cause can go like (.s) don’t wear school uniform or nothing
R: Okay
C: And when you have a job (.s) you can get paid and stuff
R: So money?
C: Yeah
R: And not having to (1) wear school uniform (1) is it a bit of independence then as well?
C: [nodding] Yeah (1) yeah (.s) and ’cause you allowed to say their first name (.s) teachers
R: Yeah (.s) okay (.s) so all those little bits (.s) that you’re not allowed to do in school (.s) yeah (.s)
okay (.s) and what about you?
W: When (.s) I’m happy to leave school because (.s) feel independent like (.s) doing on your
own
R: Yeah (.s) yeah okay that’s good
N: I don’t know
All: [L]
R: [L]
N: Kind of (1) um (2) yeah (.s) I’m kind of leave school (1) or just miss school (.s) then like you
know (...)
R: Yeah
W: I’ll miss school as well (.s) I’ll miss the teachers that (.s) that help me in my subjects
R: Yeah? (.s) yeah
W: Because it's got like (.) it's got like (.) it's got like (.) it's going from primary to comp is like a big change so you know (2)

C: [nodding]

R: So are you saying that you get that support here from those (.) teachers and you know that you can go to them?

C: [nodding]

W: [nodding]

N: Because when you leave school you have to work hard

C: [L]

R: I'm sure you work hard now [L] (3) I've heard very positive things (2) Okay let me see if there's anything else I wanted to (1) ask you (2) Okay if we go back to (.) revision a little bit (.) um (2) do you talk about things with your friends if you've got exams coming up or (.) when you have exams coming up (1) do you think you'll talk to each other about it?

C: [shaking head] No

N: I would

R: You would? (1) You two wouldn't?

C: [shaking head]

Okay (.) what kind of things would you talk to your friends about? (.)

N: Uh (.) what you going to do when (.) you go home are you gonna revise (.) or (1) go to library together (.) like (...)

R: Yeah

N: [unintelligible]

R: So is that (.) like you'd kind of get some support (.) from your friends then as well (.) if they were going to the library are you more likely to go?
N: Yeah, or ring them like [1] both could revise in the library
R: Okay, does that help you
N: [nodding]
R: If you’re doing it, and a friend is there as well?
N: Yeah [1]
R: Okay what about you boys, you don’t talk to your friends about it?
W: [shaking head]
C: No, just revise at home ...
R: Yeah, okay do you put time aside then to revise if you get home from school?
W: 4 o’clock
N: Yeah
R: So all of you about 4?
W: Yeah 4-ish
R: If you had an exam, or in a couple of days, would you put time aside to revise? I’m going to revise for 30 minutes or I’m going to revise for an hour
C: No
W: No
N: Yeah
R: No? Yes? No? Okay
N: [unintelligible]
R: Would you write notes?
W: [shaking head] No
C: [shaking head]
R: No (.) yes (.) no (.) Okay (1) would you write notes?

C: [shaking head] no

R: This is really good information to know (.) really good (1) um (1) I think we might be almost done really (2) you boys have been great (.) you’ve given me a lot of information (.) it’s been really good (2) um (1) and we’ve covered (2) pretty much all (.) I wanted to ask (3) is there anything you wanted to (.) say (1) anything you wanted to say about (.) um (1) about exams as we’ve been talking about (.) or (.) revising or anything you want to add?

N: I also talk to my family and friends about exams

R: Okay (1)

N: Like my sister (.) gives me some help (1) with revision

W: Gives some like (.) like your siblings who (.) done exams (.) give you some (.) advice (.) on what to do and if you can do it and stuff

R: That’s really good to bring up (.) thank you (.) for bringing that up (.) so (.) have you all got brothers or sisters (1) or cousins (.) or that kind of thing

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Have they (.) are they older than you?

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Yeah? (.) So they’ve done these exams (.) before?

C: [nodding]

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: Will they (.) give you hints (.) will they talk to you about it?

All: Yeah

C: Yeah they do

R: Okay
W: My um my sisters hate me
R: Right [L] (2) Will they put that aside to talk to you about exams or no?
W: [shaking head] No
R: Right
W: My older sister used to swear at me (1) my older sister would just tell me to go
R: Oh so you can’t ask them? Okay
N: [L] Kick you out the room
All: [L]
N: I would talk to my sister about it and then she talk to me through it about revising (1) and then tell me to get out my books and show she’ll help me out yeah...
R: Yeah? (1) That’s really good (1) What about you?
C: I don’t see my sister that much
R: Okay
C: I only got one older sister and I don’t see her that much but I text her can you like help me with this maths revision and she does
R: Okay
C: She’ll send me like photos as well
R: Yeah (1) so you find that that helps then having siblings to help you through it?
All: [nodding]
C: Yeah
R: That’s really good (1) What about um who you live do you all live with mum or dad or nan or grandad or
N: Family
R: Yeah (1) Do you find that they help (.) like someone who’s a bit older (1) but (.) so they’ve been out of school for a while (.) would you go to them (.) if you were struggling?

N: Yeah

W: [shaking head] No

R: No? (.) You would (.) you wouldn’t (1)

C: Well (.) they always busy

R: Okay

C: So (1) they (.) kind of (...)

R: So they have (.) their own life going on?

C: Yeah

R: And then

C: Yeah (...)

R: Okay (2) okay (.) Do you feel that then you have to do it (1) for yourself and then (1) maybe and get help then (.) through friends or siblings or teachers (.) and you’re kind of doing that (1) yourself?

C: Yeah

R: So that’s quite an independent thing to be doing (1)

C: [nodding] Yeah (1)

R: Okay (1) Is there anything else any of you wanted to add? (1) That was really great to bring up about (1) brothers and sisters (.) that was really good (.) is there anything you’d like to (1) to bring up (.) about exams or revision (.) that help (2) is there anything that doesn’t help? (5) No? (1) So the (.) things that the school offers you (1) the practice and (.) like recapping over a subject (.) those things (1) they help

C: [nodding]
R: There’s nothing that (2) doesn’t help (.) okay (2) um (1) okay for 5 minutes then we’ll just
talk about (1) a bit more about the future (.), so we’ll go back to that (1). That’s the thing with
conversations (.), they go off on different kind of areas (.), so if we go back to that (.). So we’ve
talked about (.), what you (.), want to do when you leave (1) um (2) and we talked a little bit
about how important exams and grades (1) are (1). If you (.), did really well (2) or if you did
well and were really proud of yourself (.), how do you think that would make you feel?
W: Sad
All: [L]
R: Why would that make you feel sad?
W: Because I (.), because if I pass I just feel sad
R: Okay (.), is there a reason for that?
W: [shaking head] No
R: No? (1) What about you two? (.), if you
N: I feel happy
C: I’d feel really happy
R: Yeah? (1) And what about (.), which I know is never a nice thing to think about (.), but on
the flip side (.), if you thought oh I didn’t do as well as I wanted to do? (.)
N: Regret
R: You’d feel regret?
N: Yeah (1)
C: [nodding]
R: Yeah? (1) Would you (1) if that happened (1) do you think you’d (1) go back and do it
again (.), do you think if you had chance to resit would you go and resit?
N: Yeah
C: [nodding] Yeah

W: [nodding] If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (...) you haven’t tried your best (...)

R: Right okay (1) What about you boys on that?

N: [nodding]

R: Do you think your parents would say something (.) or would they not?

N: Uh (2) you need get the grades for a good job (...)

R: Okay (.) yeah (.) so you think that you would resit (.) if you could then resit

W: [nodding] Yeah

C: [nodding]

W: ’cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (.) for failing your exams

R: Okay

N: I think when you go in college you can re-sit them (1)

R: Yeah? (.)

N: [nodding]

Yeah (1) okay (3) Right (2) I think I’m done (1) So there’s nothing more you want to (.) add (.)

before I go and switch everything off (.) I don’t wanna miss anything

All: No
Appendix 6

Analysed interview transcript

R: Okay we’ll go this way (.) just need to say your name (.)
C (.)
W (.)
N (.)
R: Great thank you (2) Okay so to start (.) can you just tell me what subjects (1) you’re studying this year (.) and we’ll go this way again
C: I’m doing Maths (1) I’m doing Art (1) PE (2) Agriculture (1) and (1)
I can’t remember all the rest (.)
R: [L] That’s fine (1) okay and you
W: I’m doing Maths (1) Science (1) English (1) Drama (1)
Horticulture (3) and that’s it (.) that’s that’s all I can remember
R: Okay (.) yeah?
N: Um (1) Maths English Science (. ) speech Drama (.) RE (3) and that’s it I think
R: That’s quite a lot of subjects that you’re studying then really
N: 6 or 7
R: Yeah (1) okay (2) so we’re gonna talk about exams (2) is there anything you find hard (.) about exams?
N: Studying (.)
R: The studying bit (.) so revising?
N: Yeah
W: [nodding]

R: Yeah?

W: Yeah

N: The focusing and the work like

R: Okay

N: Uh you have to go (. ) revision every (. ) Monday (. ) Wednesday and Thursday

[D] (AENCo walks into room, brief discussion with TA)

LSA: Right when were your revision (. ) when did you have to do the revision?

N: Mondays Wednesdays and Thursdays (. ) Mondays is uh (1) Science (. ) and Wednesday is maths (. ) and then (. ) Thursday it's English yeah

R: Okay so is that the same for all of you?

All: Yeah

R: Okay (. ) how many people

LSA: But when do you go (. ) when do you actually go?

N: After school (2)

R: After school you go to that revision?

N: 3-30-4:30

R: Okay (. ) and how long have you been (1) going to these revisions (. ) are they (1) since you went into Year 10 (. ) or is this something that’s more (. ) recent?

N: Started in 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of revision sessions in Year 10</th>
<th>R: Okay (.) started in Year 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N: But they should’ve done it for Year 10 (1) I don’t know why (.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: But in 11 yeah (.) it started (…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay (.) do you find that helpful?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: Because you get (.) help (1) and (.) you get (1) past papers to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay (2) okay so past papers are helpful? (.) Would you boys agree with that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Yeah (1) Do you do the past papers in that session?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: [nodding]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: [nodding]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: I don’t go</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: You don’t go? (1) So is it there for you (.) that you could go if you wanted to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Yeah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Why don’t you go?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: I I (.) I don’t have (.) time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Okay (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past papers a form of revision they can take home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: I take them home I do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Yeah so you take them home?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C: I study them in the house

R: Do you do them at home?

C: [nodding]

R: That’s really good

N: I do both you know

R: Yeah?

N: School and (.) home

R: Okay so who does them (.) when you take them home (.) you’ll do them when you take them home

C: Yeah

R: Will you do them?

W: [shaking head]

R: Okay so does anyone give you (.) these papers (.) even though you don’t go to the revision session?

W: No

R: Okay so if you don’t go you don’t get (1) the past papers?

N: You can ask the teacher

R: Okay

N: So if you’re like you’re struggling (1)

R: Yeah

N: Or see the past papers but you might know (.) one of these questions might come in the exam (.) so can (.) just (.)

R: Yeah (2) that’s really good to know that past papers help you (1) that’s really good (1) so do you do them at home then as well?
N: Yeah (.) and look at the books (1)

R: Okay (2) what about you boys with books?

W: [shaking head]

C: I don’t have any books in my house I don’t

R: No?

C: No I just go on my laptop and figure it out (1)

R: Do you use your laptop then to look (…)

C: Yeah

R: For things?

C: Yeah (1) it’s easier

R: Yeah (1) is that for (.) school work (. ) and revision?

C: Yeah (. ) both

R: Yeah (1) do you have a laptop at home?

W: No

R: No? So what do you do if (2) there was (1) a question in class (. )
or a past paper question (.) that (.) you didn’t (.) quite know (.) what
it was asking you to do (. ) would you google it or (.) would you ask
friends (.) would you ask a teacher?

C: I do (.) both

R: Yeah (.)

C: Ask teacher ask friends

R: Yeah

C: Or go on the laptop (.) or something

R: Yeah (.) okay what about you two?
W: I ask a (. ) I will ask a teacher
R: Yeah? That’s good
N: Same
R: Yeah
N: Yeah
R: So you feel like you can go to your teachers (. ) to talk to them
W: Yeah
R: That’s really good (1) Would you (. ) go to a teacher that (. ) um (. ) taught a subject (. ) or would you go to a teaching assistant (. ) or (. ) to someone else
W: I will go to teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (. ) who helped you with (. ) with questions
R: Okay
C: Yeah (. ) I would do the same
N: The subject (1) the teacher that’s like (...) R: Okay great (. ) thank you
N: Or you know (. ) end of the lesson (. ) like you know (1) go and see her and ask (. ) how I’m struggling with this question
R: Yeah (1) how about (. ) um (. ) feeling confident with doing that (. ) with saying that you might find something a bit hard (. ) because we all find things hard (. ) everyone does (1) would you feel confident to say (1) I’m struggling a bit with this (. ) can I have a bit of help?
N: Yeah
All: [nodding]
R: You all do (. ) yeah? (2)

All: [nodding]

R: That’s really good I think that’s really positive that (. ) you would feel like that (. ) and that you can put your hand up or go and see a teacher (1) that’s really good (1) um (2) so what about with these past papers (. ) that (1) have you all seen past papers?

All: [nodding]

R: So a couple of you get them from revision sessions (. ) have you seen past papers?

W: In some lessons (. ) we um (. ) we do (. ) the papers in some lessons

R: Okay (. ) so when you’re looking at these past papers (1) is there anything that you find difficult (. ) um (. ) if we think about (. ) how (1) it’s worded (. ) so the words they use or maybe how (. ) short or long a sentence is (. ) is there anything (. ) that you ever get stuck with (1) or can you (. ) read the question (. ) and answer it (. ) and you find that pretty easy?

C: I get stuck I do

W: [nodding]

R: Yeah?

C: On the words

N: Sometimes

C: And I just tell Miss (...) 

R: Okay (. ) so some of the words?
W: And sometimes (. ) you (. ) you don’t know what you’re doing (1) because the teacher just springs it on you

R: Okay

W: You don’t know what you’re doing and teachers (. ) and you ask the teacher for help and they just (. ) tell you what to do (. ) and you just forget (2)

R: Okay (1) So do you do anything if um (. ) if you think you might forget (. ) do you ever write it down?

W: [shaking head] No I’ve got terrible handwriting

R: [L]

W: I probably wouldn’t understand it

R: Okay (. ) and what about you with how things are worded or remembering (. ) what you’re meant to be doing?

N: Sometimes I might not know what’s the meaning of a word (. )

R: Okay

N: And (. ) sometimes you might come across that word again (1) so to make sure ask the teacher what’s (. ) like (. ) what’s that big word

R: Yeah (1) so will you ask someone if you’re not sure about a word?

C: Yeah

W: [nodding]

R: Yeah? (. ) That’s really good (. ) yeah (1) and if you come across that word again (1) do you think you’re likely to remember what that word meant (1) or (1)
W: [nodding]

C: I do sometimes (.). I do remember the words

N: [nodding]

R: Yeah? (.). Because specific subjects (.). they have different words they use

C: Yeah

R: So maths (.). maths is quite difficult in the terms (1) like (.). I’ve looked at past papers and it’ll say things like (.). estimate and analyse (.). and some of these are quite difficult

W: [nodding]

C: Yeah

R: And then (.). with your other subjects (.). especially if you’re all studying (.). about 7 subjects (.). it’s gonna be different words (.). that each of them (.). use

C: Yeah

R: So do you ever (.). write things down?

C: No

W: No

N: Just in your head

R: Yeah? So you’re relying on your memory?

N: Yeah

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: What about when you sit down in the exam then (1) will it come back to you?
N: Yeah (.) sometimes

C: Yeah (.) sometimes

W: Yes (.) sometimes (1) but sometimes it gets (.) muddled up (.)
like it (.) it get jumbled in my head so I make mistakes (1)

R: Right okay (.) so what gets jumbled in your head?

W: Like if I (.) if I (.) if I like if I study too much (.) it get (.) it all go (.) jumbled (.) I just (.) I just make mistakes and stuff (.)

R: Okay so if you’re studying too much?

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: So then your (.) brain might be getting tired (1) and you’re not
giving yourself a break (1) W: Yeah

R: So do you think that’s important before exams (.) to make sure
you’ve given yourself a bit of a break?

W: [nodding]

C: [nodding] Yeah

N: Yeah (...) 

R: Yeah (.)

N: Yeah (.) give yourself a little (.) break

R: Yeah (1) So if you’re revising (2) pretend you had a GCSE next
week (1) I know you all said you’ve done (.) Maths?

All: Yeah

N: And English and Science

W: Most of us have done Maths (1) all the higher sets have done
maths
W: My class we’re doing it in the summer

R: Right okay (1) so (. ) pretend that you’re (. ) going to be sitting (. ) a maths GCSE (. ) next week (1) what would you be doing now (. ) to kind of (. ) prepare yourself (. ) to get ready (1) to do this exam? (. ) Would you be (. ) looking at your books from school (. ) would you be using the internet (. ) would you be talking to friends?

N: Just go to the library

R: Go to the library (. ) is there a library in school?

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Okay (1) Who uses the library in school?

N: No one I just work outside

R: Okay

R: Is there a room (. ) that you can go in

N: Yeah there’s a library in (. ) the school library

R: Yeah?

N: Yeah

R: Okay or (. ) who would be revising at home?

C: I will (. ) revise at home

N: School and at home (. ) both

R: School and at home (1) would you revise at home?

W: No

R: So you don’t tend to revise? [L]

All: [L]
R: That’s the gist I’m getting? [L] okay

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: So what would you do if you (. ) had an exam next week (1) are you saying that you wouldn’t revise (. ) you would just turn up to the exam (. ) and (. ) and do it?

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: Yeah? [L]

N: [unintelligible]

W: I just (1) guess (. ) just do it (. ) guess (. )

R: Guess

W: [nodding]

R: Would some of the stuff that you’ve learnt in school come back to you?

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: Yeah? (1) Do you have any um (1) support during exams (. ) does anyone write for you (. ) or (. ) anything like that

All: [shaking heads]

R: No? (. ) Okay (. ) do you have extra time (. ) or do you know if you have extra time?

All: [nodding] Yeah we get extra time

R: Okay (1) Do you think that helps?

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: [nodding]
TA: They sometimes get a reader as well miss (.) if they want it (.) some things (.) in Maths we can read the questions

R: Okay (.) so you have a reader (.) So if you have a reader and you have extra time (1) do both of those things help?

N: Yeah (1)

C: Yeah (.) it’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (.) you can tell miss (.) what’s that word say?

R: Okay and then they’ll say the word to you

C: Yeah

R: And does that (1) help you to understand the word?

All: Yeah

W: Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something that (.) they tell you what it means (.) so you can just get on and do it

R: Okay (.) that’s really good to know (1) do you have a reader as well?

N: Sometimes (1) When I see a teacher go past (.) I’ll ask her

R: Yeah

N: And (.) extra time (1) might go through (1) through the pages (.) that I’m struggling with

R: Okay (1) okay (1) So if you’re (1) doing an exam then (.) because you have that extra time (1) will you (.) try and do every question (1) like number one number two number three (1) or if something was (.) hard (.) would you skip past that (.) and move on to the next one
All: [nodding] Yeah

N: And then come back to it (…)

C: And come back to it

R: And come back to it?

R: So is that extra time

N: Yeah yeah yeah

R: Helps to know (.) that you’ve got that time there (.)

C: [nodding]

R: To go back over things (1) That’s really good (3) Okay (.) with (2) your support for exams (1) so (.) you’ve got a reader (.) um (.) you’ve got extra time (1) is there anything else (.) that you think would be helpful for you for exams (.) or (.) in the lead up to exams (1) so this could be (1) in school (.) this could be revision (.) this could be while you’re doing your exams (1) Have a little think (.) and think if there’s anything (3) that would be helpful (5) No? [L]

All: [looking at each other]

R: There doesn’t have to be (1)

N: Can you say that question again?

R: So if (1) um (.) is there anything that would be helpful (2) when you’re revising (.) or when you’re doing your exams?

N: Yeah (1) uh (.) flash (.) flashcards

R: Okay

N: Write (.) write it down (1) and then see
C: Pictures can help you as well

R: Okay (. ) so these are really good answers (1) so flashcards pictures (1) Do pictures help you remember things?

N: [nodding]

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: Yes

N: Sometimes

R: Because some people are visual learners (1) so (. ) a picture will help to (1) spark something (1) and you’ll go oh that’s it (1) or when you’re answering a question you might see the picture? (1) That’s how some people (. ) well that’s how lots of people learn (1) um so with flashcards would those be (. ) words that are maybe used in exams (. ) or

N: I read over the question and then write the answer ( . )

R: Okay (2) With visuals (. ) with pictures then (3) can you say a bit more about that (. ) you don’t have to I’m just wondering if you’ve got a bit more to say about what would be helpful (. ) with pictures

LSA: Miss is asking what type of pictures (1) you say for a maths exam maybe (1) so what type of picture (. ) would you have?

C: Shapes

W: [unintelligible] a picture of a triangle with a long side and two short sides (. ) so you remember ( . )

R: Because that’s how it is in textbooks (. ) isn’t it?

W: [nodding] Yeah
C: [nodding]

R: In your school books (1) so it would be helpful in exams (1) to (.) for something to look (.) back on (1) because that’s the way that you (.) you learn it?

All: [nodding]

R: Okay that’s really good (.) you’re saying some great points here (.) really good (1) Um (.) so we’ve kind of covered (.) the next thing I was going to ask you (.) about how your revise for exams (3) How confident are you when it comes to exams (.) do you feel like you cope well (.) or do you get stressed?

C: [nodding] I get stressed I do

N: Fifty-fifty (1)

R: Yeah? (1) Does that depend on the subject?

All: [nodding] Yeah

W: Where the subject is (1) like say it’s Maths I I (. ) I get stressed with Maths exams (1) like sometimes I just get stressed

R: Yeah? (.) Why do you get stressed in Maths exams?

W: ‘cause (. ) I dunno (. ) because it’s things you done like in Year 10 or Year 7 (. ) that you just (. ) you forget

R: Yeah

W: So you have to try remember it all from like (. ) a couple of years ago (1)

R: Okay (1) So things that you might have learnt (. ) In Year 10 when you go into your GCSE year (. ) you’ll have lessons (. ) and you’ll learn
some things (1) and then (.) in Year 11 (.) or when you do your
Maths exam (.) you’re expected to remember (1) those things from
a long time ago?

N: Last year (.) because (1) since like (.) if you failed the last Maths
test (.) you do it again (1) this year (.) so the last year’s work (.) was
doing it this year (1)

R: Okay

N: And it’s all about the timing (.)

R: Right (2) okay (2) do you feel more confident doing exams (1) in
Year 10 or in Year 11?

W: [shaking head] Dunno

N: In Year 11 (.) once you’ve done them in Year 10 (1) you know the
experience (1) and then in Year 11 (.) you doing it again (1) and now
you know what to do

R: Okay so are they like a (.) a practice test?

N: Hmm (2) if you fail in Year 10 you go to Year 11 and do it again

R: Okay (1) do you have things called mocks in school?

All: Yeah

R: Yeah? You have a mock test (1) Do those help?

N: Hmm (1) sometimes

W: Sometimes we go to a hall and (.) um (.) subject teachers do a
PowerPoint to help us learn (.) and write things down on (.) and
write flash (.) like flashcards as well

R: Oh okay like a PowerPoint (.) and you all sit there?
W: [nodding] Yeah

C: [nodding]

R: Oh that’s good (.) so that’s like a (1) a group revision session?

C: [nodding]

W: The whole (.) the whole year

R: Yeah

W: Like in Year 11 we all go to a hall (.) and just learn for (.) for a hour

All: [unintelligible] (discussion between participants)

R: So it sounds

N: We do that every (.) in Science every (2) five lessons and then we have a test

R: Ah (1) oh to test on what (.) you’ve learnt (.) in that time?

All: Yeah

R: Okay (2) Do you find that that helps you to remember things (.) ‘cause you’ve had that test

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: On that stuff

N: The teacher sees (.) where you at right now (.) he’s testing us (.) where you at (1) if you understand a bit (.) more next time

R: Oh okay (.) and you think that’s helpful?

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Yeah
W: And we do um (.) a prac test in Science (1) so we can get ready for when we do it in our (. ) when we do it in our exams (2)

R: Okay (2) so that kind of helps I guess getting to know what’s (1) gonna happen as well?

C: [nodding] Yeah

R: Because exam conditions can be quite scary

All: [nodding] You’re sat in the hall it’s all really quiet

C: Yeah

R: And you know they last quite a long time (2)

N: [nodding]

R: Something popped into my head then that I was going to ask you and now it’s gone out my head (1) So it sounds like you’ve got (1) um (1) quite a lot of things to help you (. ) so you have (. ) practice tests

C: [nodding]

R: You have (1) um subject teachers going through some things that you’ve learnt

N: [nodding]

R: You have the revision sessions that you can go to

C: [nodding]

W: [nodding]

R: Okay (.) that’s really good (2) How important are (. ) exams (. ) or the results (. ) that you get from them the grades so like (1) I know it’s in a bit of a change isn’t it
All: Yeah

R: So some results (.) some grades are letters and some are (.) numbers?

N: Oh we don’t have numbers

All: No

R: You don’t have numbers? (.) So it’s all just letters

N: [nodding]

C: [nodding] Yeah

R: Okay (1) so how important is it for you to get (1) good grades?

N: Uh (1) the better grades you have the better job you can get you know

R: Okay (1) How do you boys feel about that (.) do you think that’s true what he said (.) or

W: [nodding] Yeah

C: [nodding] Yeah (1) it is true

R: Okay

W: If you want to get like (.) into a course (.) or a course you want to do (.) you need to get (.) good (.) good grades to go do it

N: Yeah

R: Okay (1) and you all think that (.) that that’s the case?

N: Some jobs you need uh (1) the qualifications you need (.) for the job like (1) you have to get the qualifications

R: Okay (1) so if we’re thinking about jobs (1) do you think a lot of jobs ask for (3) um (.) certain grades (1) so maybe a good grade
W: [nodding]

C: [nodding] Yeah

R: Or do you think there’s jobs out there that it doesn’t matter what grade you have?

N: Both

R: Yeah? (1) So (. ) do you say (. ) would you say that’s something that (. ) worries you (. ) or doesn’t worry you at all (. ) about getting a job

C: [shaking head]

W: [shaking head] It doesn’t worry me at all

R: No? (1) No (. ) Do you know what you want to do when you finish Year 11?

W: Yeah

C: Yeah

R: Yeah? Okay (. ) We’ll go in a (. ) row with this one (. ) so what do you think you want to do?

C: I might have a (. ) two jobs

R: Okay

C: Working with my mother (. ) in Tescos

R: Yeah?

C: And working with my uncle in buses

R: Okay

C: Yeah
R: And that’s what you’ll think you’ll do then when you finish school?

C: Yeah (1) and I’ll go to college as well

R: And do you know what you want to do in college?

C: No (.) not yet

R: Okay so you want to work (.) is there a reason that you want to work (.) and go to college?

C: Yeah because it helps me like (3) understand (.) like (.) about buses (.) and stuff

R: Yeah

C: And (.) how to fix (.) and stuff (.) and Tesco as well

R: Okay yeah

LSA: So what do you mean (1) do you mean learning while doing the job

C: Yeah

R: Yeah (1) yeah (.) Would college be (.) um (.) linked (1) to (.) those jobs?

C: Yeah (1)

R: Yeah?

C: That’s right (.)

R: Okay (.) and what about you?

W: I want go to a army

Future aspirations
R: You want to go to the army? (1) Okay is that (.) have you (.) would you apply for that when you leave school (.) or is that something that you’ve looked into already?

W: I’m gonna apply when I leave school

R: Okay (2) and what about you?

N: Um (1) go to college (1) to do (. ) motor engineering

R: Yeah (2)

N: If (.) before that I think I might go in this (.) course (.) where you can (.) have a taste in every (2) I don’t know what it’s called (.) DTL (.) or LTD (.)

R: Okay is that like a taster?

N: Yeah (.) yeah yeah a taster yeah

R: Of different (.) subjects or courses

N: Yeah (1) and then (.) from there (.) if I (.) like one of them (.) I might go into that (.) and then go (.) go to engineering

R: Okay (2) yeah (.) sounds like you’ve given it some thought already (2) because it’s quite (.) quite soon really that you’ll be leaving Year 11

C: [nodding] Yeah

N: 5 or 6 months (.)

R: Yeah? (1) Are you excited to leave school?

C: Yeah

All: [L]

R: [L] was that a silly question?
N: Yes

R: What about you?

C: Yes and no

R: Yeah (.) you looked a bit more hesitant then

C: Yeah (1)

R: What (1) okay (.) so if we go through (.) what are you (1) um (.) excited to be leaving school for (.) or excited to be (1) is there anything you’d be excited to not have to do anymore? (.) We’ll go through (1) anything

C: I’m glad to be almost leaving (.) because (.) in college it’s different to comp (.) as well (.) ’cause can go like (.) don’t wear school uniform or nothing

R: Okay

C: And when you have a job (.) you can get paid and stuff

R: So money?

C: Yeah

R: And not having to (1) wear school uniform (1) Is it a bit of independence then as well?

C: [nodding] Yeah (1) yeah (.) and because you allowed to say their first name (.) teachers

R: Yeah (.) okay (.) so all those little bits (.) that you’re not allowed to do in school (.) yeah (.) okay (.) and what about you?

W: When (.) I’m happy to leave school because (.) feel independent like (.) doing on your own
R: Yeah (.) yeah okay that’s good

N: I don’t know

All: [L]

R: [L]

N: Kind of (1) um (2) yeah (.) I’m kind of leave school (1) or just miss school (.) then like you know (…)

R: Yeah

W: I’ll miss school as well (.) I’ll miss the teachers that (.) that help me in my subjects

R: Yeah? (.) yeah

W: Because it’s got like (.) like (.) it’s got like (.) like (.) going from primary to comp is like a big change so you know (2)

C: [nodding]

R: So are you saying that you get that support here from those (.) teachers and you know that you can go to them?

C: [nodding]

W: [nodding]

N: Because when you leave school you have to work hard

C: [L]

R: I’m sure you work hard now [L] (3) I’ve heard very positive things (2) Okay let me see if there’s anything else I wanted to (1) ask you (2) Okay if we go back to (.) revision a little bit (.) um (2) do you talk about things with your friends if you’ve got exams
coming up or (.) when you have exams coming up (1) do you think you’ll talk to each other about it?

C: [shaking head] No

N: I would

R: You would? (1) You two wouldn’t?

C: [shaking head]

Okay (.). what kind of things would you talk to your friends about?

N: Uh (.). what you going to do when (.). you go home are you gonna revise (.). or (1) go to library together (.). like (...)

R: Yeah

N: [unintelligible]

R: So is that (.). like you’d kind of get some support (.). from your friends then as well (.). if they were going to the library are you more likely to go?

N: Yeah (.). or ring them like (1) both could revise in the library

R: Okay (.). does that help you

N: [nodding]

R: If you’re doing it (.). and a friend is there as well?

N: Yeah (1)

R: Okay what about you boys (.). you don’t (1) talk to your friends about it?

W: [shaking head]

C: No just revise at home (...)

Peer support – only one talks to peers about exams; differences between pupils

Revising at home

Differences between pupils and peer support

Peer support

2 Ps don’t seek peer support

Revision

Peers do not appear as key in support in comparison to school

Peer support
R: Yeah (1) okay (1) do you put time aside then to revise (.) if you
(1) What kind of time do you get home from school?
W: 4 o’clock
N: Yeah
R: So all of you about 4?
W: Yeah 4-ish
R: If you had an exam (.) the next day (.) or (.) in a couple of days
(.) would you (.) put time aside to revise say (.) I’m going to revise
for 30 minutes or I’m going to revise for an hour
C: No
W: No
N: Yeah
R: No? Yes? (.) No? (.) Okay
N: [unintelligible]
R: Would you write notes
W:( [shaking head] No
C: [shaking head]
R: No (.) yes (.) no (.) Okay (1) would you write notes?
C: [shaking head] no
R: This is really good information to know (.) really good (1) um (1)
I think we might be almost done really (2) you boys have been
great (.) you’ve given me a lot of information (.) it’s been really
good (2) um (1) and we’ve covered (2) pretty much all (.) I wanted
to ask (3) Is there anything you wanted to (.) say (1) anything you

Not a set way C
and W revise

N will set time
aside to revise

Ps don’t write
notes whilst
revising - ? not
encouraged, not a
method they find
useful

Different
approaches to
revision
wanted to say about (.) um (1) about exams as we’ve been talking about (.) or (.) revising or anything you want to add?

N: I also talk to my family and friends about exams

R: Okay (1)

N: Like my sister (.) gives me some help (1) with revision

W: Gives some like (.) like your siblings who (.) done exams (.) give you some (.) advice (.) on what to do and if you can do it and stuff

R: That’s really good to bring up (.) thank you for bringing that up (.) so (.) have you all got brothers or sisters (1) or cousins (.) or that kind of thing

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Have they (.) are they older than you?

All: [nodding] Yeah

R: Yeah? (.) So they’ve done these exams (.) before?

C: [nodding]

W: [nodding] Yeah

R: Will they (.) give you hints (.) will they talk to you about it?

All: Yeah

C: Yeah they do

R: Okay

W: My (.) um (.) my sisters hate me

R: Right [L] (2) Will they put that aside to talk to you about exams (.) or no?

W: [shaking head] No
W: My older sister used to swear at me (1) my older sister would just (. ) tell me to go

R: Oh so you can’t ask them? (. ) Okay

N: [L] Kick you out the room

All: [L]

N: I would talk to my sister about it and then she (. ) talk to me through it (. ) about revising (1) and then (1) tell me to get out my books (1) and show (1) she’ll help me out yeah (...)

R: Yeah? (1) That’s really good (1) What about you?

C: I don’t see my sister that much (. )

R: Okay

C: I only got one older sister (. ) and I don’t see her that much (. ) but I (. ) text her (. ) can you like help me with this maths revision (. ) and (. ) she does

R: Okay

C: She’ll send me like photos as well

R: Yeah (. ) so you find that that helps then having siblings to (. ) to help you through it?

All: [nodding]

C: Yeah

R: That’s really good (1) What about (. ) um (1) who you live (. ) do you all live with (. ) mum or dad (. ) or nan or grandad or

N: Family
R: Yeah (1) Do you find that they help (.) like someone who’s a bit older (1) but (.) so they’ve been out of school for a while (.) would you go to them (.) if you were struggling

N: Yeah

W: [shaking head] No

R: No? (.) You would (.) you wouldn’t

C: Well (.) they always busy

R: Okay

C: So (1) they (.) kind of (...)

R: So they have (.) their own life going on?

C: Yeah

R: And then

C: Yeah (...)

R: Okay (2) okay (.) Do you feel that then you have to do it (1) for yourself and then (1) maybe and get help then (.) through friends or siblings or teachers (.) and you’re kind of doing that yourself?

C: Yeah

R: So that’s quite an independent thing to be doing

C: [nodding] Yeah

R: Okay (1) Is there anything else any of you wanted to add? (1) That was really great to bring up about (1) brothers and sisters (.) that was really good (.) Is there anything you’d like to (1) to bring up (.) about exams or revision (.) that help (2) Is there anything
that doesn’t help? (5) No? (1) So the (.) things that the school offers you (1) the practice and (.) like recapping over a subject (.) those things (1) they help
C: [nodding]
R: There’s nothing that (1) doesn’t help (.). okay (1) um (1) okay for 5 minutes then we’ll just talk about (.) a bit more about the future (.). so we’ll go back to that (1) That’s the thing with conversations (.) they go off on different kind of areas (.) so if we go back to that (.). So we’ve talked about (.) what you (.) want to do when you leave (1) um (1) and we talked a little bit about how important exams and grades (1) are (1) If you (.) did really well (2) or if you did well and were really proud of yourself (.) how do you think that would make you feel?
W: Sad
All: [L]
R: Why would that make you feel sad?
W: Because I (.) because if I pass I just feel sad
R: Okay (.) is there a reason for that?
W: [shaking head] No
R: No? (1) What about you two? (.) If you
N: I feel happy
C: I’d feel really happy
R: Yeah? (1) And what about (.) which I know is never a nice thing to think about (.) but on the flip side (.) if you thought oh I didn’t do as well as I wanted to do?

N: Regret

R: You’d feel regret?

N: Yeah (1)

C: [nodding]

R: Yeah? (1) Would you (1) if that happened (1) do you think you’d (1) go back and do it again (.) do you think if you had chance to resit would you go and resit?

N: Yeah

C: [nodding] Yeah

W: [nodding] If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (.) you haven’t tried your best (.)

R: Right okay (1) What about you boys on that?

N: [nodding]

R: Do you think your parents would say something (.) or would they not?

N: Uh (2) you need get the grades for a good job (…)

R: Okay (.) yeah (.) so you think that you would resit (.) if you could then resit

W: [nodding] Yeah

C: [nodding]
W: ‘cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (.) for failing your exams

R: Okay

N: I think when you go in college you can re-sit them

R: Yeah? (.)

N: [nodding]

Yeah (1) okay (3) Right (2) I think I’m done (1) So there’s nothing more you want to (.) add (.) before I go and switch everything off (.) I don’t wanna miss anything

All: No
Appendix 7

Ethical approval

Dear Applicant

Re: Application for Ethical Approval: Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations

Project Reference Number: 9479

Your ethics application, as shown above, was considered by the Health Care and Food Ethics Panel on 02/11/2017.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for ethical approval was APPROVED.

Minor issues may still need addressing before you commence any work – if so these will be listed below.

N/A

Where changes to the information sheet, consent form and/or procedures are deemed necessary you must submit revised versions to the relevant ethics inbox. If you are a student – your supervisor must do this on your behalf.

Note: Failure to comply with any issues listed above will nullify this approval.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Your Ethics Application has been given a Project Reference number as above. This MUST be quoted on all documentation relating to the project (E.g. consent forms, information sheets), together with the full project title.

2. All documents must also have the approved University Logo and the Version number in addition to the reference and project title as above

3. A full Risk Assessment must be undertaken for this proposal, as appropriate, and be made available to the Committee if requested.

4. Any changes in connection to the proposal as approved, must be referred to the Panel/Committee for consideration without delay quoting your Project Reference Number. Changes to the proposed project may have ethical implications so must be approved.

5. Any untoward incident which occurs in connection with this proposal must be reported back to the Panel without delay.
6. If your project involves the use of human samples, your approval is given on the condition that you or your supervisor notify the HTA Designated Individual of your intention to work with such material by completing the form entitled "Notification of Intention to Work with Human Samples". The form must be submitted to the PD (Sean Duggan), BEFORE any activity on this project is undertaken.

This approval expires on 02/11/2018. It is your responsibility to reapply / request extension if necessary.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Chair of Department of Healthcare and Food Ethics Panel
Cardiff School of Health Sciences
Llandaf Campus
Western Avenue, Cardiff CF5 2YB
Tel: 029 2084 2125
E-mail:

[Contact Information]

PLEASE RETAIN THIS LETTER FOR REFERENCE
Appendix 8

Emerging themes and the clustering process

Emergent themes, with examples of verbatim quotations from original transcript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Page and line numbers</th>
<th>Examples of verbatim quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Finding aspects of school difficult – studying, focusing, curriculum content, not understanding vocabulary | 2. 16-22              | R: ...is there anything you find hard (.) about exams?  
N: Studying  
R: The studying bit (.) so revising?  
N: yeah  
C: yeah  
W: [noding]  
N: The focusing and the work like  
C: I get stuck I do... On the words  
N: Sometimes I might not know what's the meaning of a word  
W: Like if I (.) if I (.) if I like if I study too much (.) it get (.) it all go (.) jumbled (.) I just (.) I just make mistakes and stuff |
| • Attending revision sessions for core subjects, after school and during school hours | 2. 25  
7. 144, 147  
8. 163  
9.197-198 | 2. 27, 30-33  
16. 359-360, 368 | N: Uh you have to go (.) revision every (.) Monday (.) Wednesday and Thursday  
N: Mondays Wednesdays and Thursdays (1) Mondays is uh (.) Science (.) and Wednesday is maths (.) and then (.) Thursday is (1) English yeah  
R: So is that the same for all of you?  
All: [noding]  
R: After school you go to that revision?  
N: 3:30-4:30  
W: Sometimes we go to a hall and (.) um (.) subject teachers do a PowerPoint to help us learn... Like in Year 11 we all go to a hall (.) and just learn for (.) for an hour |
<p>| • Lack of revision sessions in Year 10; limited to Year 11 | 3. 39-41, 43. | R: Okay (.) and how long have you been (1) going to these revisions (.) are they (1) since you went into Year 10 (.) or is this something that’s more (.) recent? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practising past papers</td>
<td>3.49, 52-54</td>
<td><em>N:</em> Started in 11... But they should’ve done it for Year 10 (1) I don’t know why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.55-59</td>
<td><em>N:</em> You get (.) help (1) and (.) you get (1) past papers to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.67-69</td>
<td><em>R:</em> So past papers are helpful?...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.78-79</td>
<td><em>C:</em> Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.83-84</td>
<td><em>C:</em> I take them home I do... I study them in the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td><em>N:</em> I do both you know... School (.) and home</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.92, 96</td>
<td><em>W:</em> I don’t go</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>7.139</td>
<td><em>R:</em> ... So is it there for you (.) that you could go if you wanted to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.106</td>
<td><em>W:</em> Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.112</td>
<td><em>R:</em> Why don’t you go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123, 125-126</td>
<td><em>W:</em> I I (.) I don’t have (.) time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.165-166</td>
<td><em>R:</em> Okay so if you don’t go you don’t get (1) the past papers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.110</td>
<td><em>N:</em> You can ask the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123</td>
<td><em>W:</em> In some lessons (.) we um (.) we do (.) the papers in some lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123, 125-126</td>
<td><em>N:</em> Or see the past papers but you might know (.) one of these questions might come in the exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.165-166</td>
<td><em>N:</em> And look at the books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.106</td>
<td><em>C:</em> No I just go on my laptop and figure it out (1)... it’s easier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.110</td>
<td><em>C:</em> Ask teacher ask friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.112</td>
<td><em>W:</em> I ask a (.) I will ask a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123</td>
<td><em>N:</em> Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123, 125-126</td>
<td><em>N:</em> The subject (1) the teacher that’s like... Or you know (.) end of the lesson (.) like you know (1) go and see her and ask (.) how I’m struggling with this question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.123</td>
<td><em>N:</em> And (.) sometimes you might come across that word again (1) so to make sure ask the teacher what’s (.) like (.) what’s that big word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Practising past papers
- Not all attend revision sessions; differences between the pupils
- Past papers not restricted to revision sessions, but pupils need to ask for them if they do not attend sessions
- Benefits of practising past papers
- Using a laptop/books to revise; different routes to revision
- Support systems; feel comfortable to approach teachers for help, awareness of own needs
| 6. 119-120 | W: I will go to a teacher that you’re familiar with (. ) and who (. ) who helped you with (. ) with questions |
| 7. 151-155 | C: And sometimes (. ) you (. ) you don’t know what you’re doing (1) because the teacher just springs it on you… You don’t know what you’re doing and teachers (. ) and you ask the teacher for help and they just (. ) tell you what to do (. ) and you just forget |
| 9. 184-193 | R: So do you ever (. ) write things down? |
| 9. 192 | C: No |
| 9. 193 | W: No |
| 11. 221 | N: Just in your head |
| 11. 232-235 | R: Yeah? So you’re relying on your memory? |
| 11. 250-259 | N: Yeah (. ) sometimes |
| 11. 259 | C: Yeah (. ) sometimes |
| 133 | R: Do you have any um (1) support during exams (. ) does anyone write for you (. ) or (. ) anything like that |
|  | All: [shaking heads] |
|  | R: No? (. ) Okay (. ) do you have extra time (. ) or do you know if you have extra time? |
|  | All: [nodding] Yeah we get extra time |
|  | R: Okay (1) Do you think that helps? |
|  | C: [nodding] Yeah |
|  | W: [nodding] |
|  | LSA: They sometimes get a reader as well miss (. ) if they want it (. ) some |

- Familiarity – a potential factor in asking for support
- Abrupt teaching styles; lack of time for preparation, some aspects of teaching still need to be addressed
- Lack of classroom strategies to help with learning – do not write down information, hesitancy when asked if they remember vocabulary
- Attitudes and approaches to revision
- Access arrangements – extra time, reader
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Access arrangements are beneficial; reduce pressure around having to read a word or complete paper within typical timeframe. Acknowledging own needs | 12. 263-264 | C: Yeah (.) it’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (.) you can tell miss (.) what’s that word say?  
R: Okay and then they’ll say the word to you?  
C: Yeah  
R: And does that (1) help you to understand the word?  
All: Yeah  
W: Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something that (.) they tell you what it means (.) so you can just get on and do it  
N: Sometimes (1) When I see a teacher go past (.) I’ll ask her... And (.) extra time (1) might go through (1) through the pages (.) that I’m struggling with |
| • Getting stressed in exams | 12. 269-270 |  |
| • Lack of recapping information/curricular content in school | 12. 272-274 | C: [noding] I get stressed I do  
N: Fifty-fifty  
W: Where the subject is (1) like say it’s Maths I I (.) I get stressed with Maths exams (1) like sometimes I just get stressed  
W: ‘cause (.) I dunno (.) ‘cause it’s things you done like in Year 10 or Year 7 (.) that you just (.) you forget... So you have to try remember it all from like (.) a couple of years ago |
| • Practice and experience through first exam attempts and regular informal testing testing – teachers gauge pupils’ progress, helps with retention of information and awareness of exam expectations | 15. 330 |  |
| | 15. 331 |  |
| | 15. 334-335 |  |
| | 15. 337-340 |  |
| | 15. 345-346 |  |
| | 16. 351-352 |  |
| | 12. 269-270 |  |

things (.) in Maths we can read the questions
• Their opinion that better grades result in more opportunities

• Future aspirations – further education and job opportunities
Feelings on leaving school – independence, change, different expectations

Peer support; variability

N: Um (1) go to college (1) to do (. ) motor engineering... If ( . ) before that I think I might go in this ( . ) course ( . ) where you can ( . ) have a taste in every (2) I don't know what it's called... Yeah (1) and then ( . ) from there ( . ) if I ( . ) like one of them ( . ) I might go into that ( . ) and then go ( . ) go to engineering

W: When ( . ) I'm happy to leave school because ( . ) feel independent like ( . ) doing on your own

W: I'll miss school as well ( . ) I'll miss the teachers that ( . ) that help me in my subjects... Because it's got like ( . ) like ( . ) it's got like ( . ) like ( . ) going from primary to comp is like a big change so you know

N: Because when you leave school you have to work hard

R: ... do you talk about things with your friends if you've got exams coming up or ( . ) when you have exams coming up (1) do you think you'll talk to each other about it?

C: [shaking head] No

N: I would

R: You would? (1) You two wouldn't?

C: [shaking head]

Okay ( . ) what kind of things would you talk to your friends about?

N: Uh ( . ) what you going to do when ( . ) you go home are you gonna revise ( . ) or (1) go to library together

R: So is that ( . ) like you'd kind of get some support ( . ) from your friends then as well ( . ) if they were going to the library are you more likely to go?

N: Yeah (. ) or ring them like (1) both could revise in the library

R: Okay ( . ) does that help you

N: [nodding]

R: Okay what about you boys ( . ) you don't (1) talk to your friends about it?

W: [shaking head]
• Sibling support; strong network for all participants

N: Like my sister (.) gives me some help (1) with revision
W: Gives some like (.) like your siblings who (.) done exams (.) give you some (.) advice (.) on what to do and if you can do it and stuff

N: I would talk to my sister about it and then she (.) talk to me through it (.) about revising (1) and then (1) tell me to get out my books (1) and show (1) she’ll help me out yeah

C: No just revise at home

• Parental support; differences between the participants, not as strong a support system as school and peers. Parental influence possibly an external pressure

25. 569
N: Like my sister (.) gives me some help (1) with revision
W: Gives some like (.) like your siblings who (.) done exams (.) give you some (.) advice (.) on what to do and if you can do it and stuff

N: I would talk to my sister about it and then she (.) talk to me through it (.) about revising (1) and then (1) tell me to get out my books (1) and show (1) she’ll help me out yeah

25. 570-571
C: No just revise at home

26. 592-593
W: [nodding] If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (.) you haven’t tried your best... ’cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (.) for failing your exams

26. 595-598
C: I don’t see my sister that much... I only got one older sister (.) and I don’t see her that much (.) but I (.) text her (.) can you like help me with this maths revision (.) and (.) she does... She’ll send me like photos as well

27. 612-616
C: Well (.) they always busy
R: Okay
C: So (1) they (.) kind of (.)
R: So they have (.) their own life going on?
C: Yeah
W:[nodding] If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (.) you haven’t tried your best... ’cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (.) for failing your exams
### Clustering of themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinate themes</th>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ awareness of needs</td>
<td>Difficulties at KS4 – studying, focusing, curriculum content, not understanding vocabulary. Familiarity of teachers when asking for support. Advice, support, providing opportunities for revision sessions and practice tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>Enhancing awareness of exam expectations and familiarity with the style of questions through past papers and practice tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External barriers</td>
<td>Absence of recapping of curricular content and the consequences. Lack of revision sessions in Year 10; limited to Year 11. Fast-paced teaching. Parents and parental influence on exam results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects that alleviate pressure</td>
<td>Enhancing awareness of exam expectations and familiarity with the style of questions. Opportunities to revise and individual approaches to these e.g. attending regular, weekly revision sessions after school. Allocation of access arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling support</td>
<td>Benefits of advice and support from siblings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to engage with learning</td>
<td>Commonalities between approaches. Attending revision sessions, practicing past papers. Requesting support. Motivated by opportunities that result from higher grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Commonalities between approaches. Requesting support, utilising access arrangements. Recognising own needs. Ability to discuss own needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9

Superordinate and subordinate themes, with supporting verbatim quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate themes</th>
<th>Subordinate themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facilitators to academic success</td>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ awareness of needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pressure within KS4</td>
<td>External barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspects that alleviate pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Approaches to exam preparation</td>
<td>Motivation to engage with learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate and subordinate themes</th>
<th>Supporting verbatim quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facilitators to academic success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>“Once you’ve done them in Year 10 (1) you know the experience (1) and then in Year 11 (.) you doing it again (1) and now you know what to do” [N, 351-352].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We do um (.) a prac test in Science (1) so we can get ready for when we do it in our (.) when we do it in our exams” [W, 384-385].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You get (.) help (1) and (.) you get (1) past papers to do” [N, 49].</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So if like you’re struggling... Or see the past papers but you might you know (.) one of these questions might come up in the exam” [N, 81, 83-84].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In some lessons (.) we um (.) we do (.) the papers in some lessons” [W, 139].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ awareness of needs</td>
<td>“In Science every (.) five lessons and then we have a test... The teacher sees (.) where you at right now (.) he’s testing us (.) where you at (.) if you understand a bit more next time” [N, 371, 379-380].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I will go to teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (.) who helped you with (.) with questions” [W, 119-120].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling support</td>
<td>“I would talk to my sister about it and then she (...) talk to me through it (...) about revising (1) and then (1) tell me to get out my books” [N, 592-593].</td>
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<td>“Your siblings who (...) done exams (...) give you some (...) advice (...) on what to do and if you can do it” [W, 570-571].</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“I only got one older sister (...) and I don’t see her that much (...) but I (...) text her (...) can you like help me with this maths revision (...) and (...) she does” [C, 597-598].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Pressure within KS4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External barriers</th>
<th>“Started in 11... But they should’ve done it for Year 10 (1) I don’t know why (...)... But in 11 yeah (...) it started” [N, 43, 45].</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“’cause it’s things you done like in Year 10 or Year 7 (...) that you just (...) you forget... So you have to try remember it all from like (...) a couple of years ago” [W, 337-338, 340].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And sometimes... you don’t know what you’re doing (1) because the teacher just springs it on you... You don’t know what you’re doing and teachers (...) and you ask the teacher for help and they just (...) tell you what to do (...) and you just forget” [W, 151-152, 154-155].</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If you fail your parents might have a go at you saying you haven’t (...) you haven’t tried your best” [W, 656-657].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“’Cause you don’t want your parents having a go at you (...) for failing your exams” [W, 665].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects that alleviate pressure</th>
<th>“Might go through (1) through the pages (...) that I’m struggling with... and then come back to it” [N, page, 274, 279]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I get stuck I do... On the words... And I just tell Miss” [C, 144, 147, 149]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Approaches to exam preparation</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation to engage with learning</td>
<td>“Or see the past papers but you might know (. ) one of these questions might come in the exam” [N, 83-84].</td>
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<td>“I will go to a teacher that you’re familiar with (1) and who (. ) who helped you with (. ) with questions” [W, 119-120].</td>
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<td>“The subject (1) the teacher that’s like (. )... or you know (. ) end of the lesson (. ) like you know (1) go and see her and ask (. ) how I’m struggling with this question” [N, 123, 125-126].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The better grades you have the better job you can get you know... Some jobs you need uh (1) the qualifications you need (. ) for the job like (1) you have to get the qualifications” [N, 412, 421-422].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If you want to get like (. ) into a course (. ) or a course you want to do (. ) you need to get (. ) good (. ) good grades to go do it” [W, 417-418].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>“It’s like when you stuck on a word and can’t read it (. ) you can tell miss (. ) what’s that word say?” [C, 263-264].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Like if you don’t understand a word (1) or something like that (. ) they tell you what it means (. ) so you can just get on and do it” [W, 269-270].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“When I see a teacher goes past (.) I’ll ask her” [N, 272].

“Sometimes I might not know what’s the meaning of a word (1)... And (.) sometimes you might come across that word again (1) make sure ask the teacher what’s (.) like (1) what’s that big word” [N, 163, 165-166].
Appendix 10

*Ethics form*

**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document *Ethics application guidance notes* will help you complete this form. It is available from the [Cardiff Met website](#). The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

**PART ONE**

| Name of applicant: |  
| Supervisor (if student project): |  
| School / Unit: | Cardiff Metropolitan University  
| Student number (if applicable): | st06000861  
| Programme enrolled on (if applicable): | Speech & Language Therapy  
| Project Title: | Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: an exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations  
| Expected start date of data collection: | 23/10/2017  
| Approximate duration of data collection: | 6 months  
| Funding Body (if applicable): | Click here to enter text.  
| Other researcher(s) working on the project: | If your collaborators are external to Cardiff Met, include details of the organisation they represent.  
| Will the study involve NHS patients or staff? | No  
| Will the study involve human samples and/or human cell lines? | No  

**Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:**

| Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain | No  
| Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human samples | No  

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| Practice based not involving human participants (e.g. curatorial, practice audit) | No |
| Compulsory projects in professional practice (e.g. Initial Teacher Education) | No |
| A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) | No |

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

### In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project

Although it is reported that pupils with language impairment (LI) are now achieving more qualifications, they are entered for less examinations and gain fewer qualifications in comparison to typically developing peers, with core subjects particularly limited (Dockrell, Lindsay & Palikara, 2011). This is liable to affect future educational and work opportunities (Dockrell et al., 2011).

Adolescents with LI exhibit difficulties with memory, comprehension, and expression (Archibald & Gathercole, 2006; Dockrell et al., 2011) which can negatively impact learning and assessment at Key Stage 4 (KS4). Recent GCSE changes may increase the challenges with increased emphasis on exams and more challenging course content (DfE, 2017; WJEC, 2017).

This qualitative study will explore the perspectives of adolescents with LI to increase our understanding of the challenges being faced within a changing academic climate. It will further our knowledge of the challenges and support needed for students with LI to succeed at KS4.

### DECLARATION:

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework.

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

**STUDENTS:** I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

| Signature of the applicant: | Date: 13/10/17 |

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

| Name of supervisor: | Date: 13/10/17 |

| Signature of supervisor: |
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?  No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

My project will collect qualitative data from a semi-structured group interview. Data will be analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore and describe the experiences of the participants (Smith, 2011). From the data, emergent themes will be identified and the most salient chosen for discussion.

Participants

Purpose sampling will be used to select the participants for the study. Purposeful sampling is a non-probability style of sampling that selects participants according to their specific attributes. The participants within this study will have a history of language difficulties that resulted in additional mainstream or specialist school support and Statementing. They will be in Year 11 (15/16 years of age), and preparing to sit exams during summer 2018.

The participants will be selected using an established contact; a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) at a mainstream school that has an attached specialist facility for moderate learning difficulties. Reliable contact has been established between the researcher and the SENCo, with agreement to be involved in the study pending ethical approval. Permission has been given by the Head teacher of the school (see appendix A)

Following ethical approval, a meeting with the SENCo will be arranged and participant and parent/guardian information sheets will be provided that explain the project, its purpose and what will happen if the participants agree to take part (see Appendix B & C). The SENCo will distribute these accordingly and contact will be arranged to confirm the participants would like to join the study. The participant information sheet refers to the researcher by her first name; although unusual, due to the nature of the participants, this should eliminate confusion that may ensue if written in the third-person and, due to the questions addressed in the study, will also help to make the project more personal.

1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
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On confirmation of participation, the researcher will arrange another visit at the participants’ school to initially meet each pupil individually to discuss the project, answer any questions and acquire written consent (see Appendix D). Due to the language and communication difficulties posed by adolescents with LI, it is important that a face-to-face meeting is arranged to complete this stage of the project. This will provide the opportunity to discuss the project and any questions on a more personal level, and to build rapport to ensure the participants are familiar with the researcher prior to the interview. Parent/guardian consent forms will also be provided and the researcher will ask the participants to obtain this and inform either the SENCo or herself when this has been completed (see Appendix E).

On receipt of completed consent forms, a suitable date for all persons involved will be arranged to conduct the group interview. The group interview will take place in a room in the participants’ school so they are familiar and comfortable with the setting. To protect anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher will ensure windows and doors are shut and the SENCo will inform other staff/pupils that the room is in use. Anonymity and confidentiality is not an issue amongst the participants as they attend the same year at school and are therefore known to each other.

An interview schedule will be utilised throughout the group discussion, with questions that focus on the support received in preparation for exams, how the participants approach revision, their opinions on the importance of exams, and future aspirations when they leave Year 11 (see Appendix F). Where necessary during the group interview, the researcher will facilitate with appropriate explanations, clarification, prompts, and probes to further explore information. The researcher currently has three years of experience developing her knowledge, understanding and skills working within this setting and with this client group through lectures, tutorials and placement experience. Therefore, the researcher is confident in her abilities to appropriately and comprehensively facilitate the group interview and ensure the participants’ best interests remain central throughout the interview.

Participants will be made aware that they are able to leave the room at any time during the group interview without needing to state a reason why. If the participant chooses to withdraw from the study during the group interview, then their data up until that point will also be withdrawn. This information is provided on both the information sheet and consent forms, and will be explained verbally before commencing the group interview.

To assist with the write-up, such as ensuring accurate transcription and identifying participant’s comments, the interview will be audio and video recorded using a Zoom recorder and DVD recorder. Data will be transcribed verbatim and analysed in accordance with IPA.

Within 4 weeks of the study, participants will be offered the opportunity to review and agree the transcript. Any comments and amendments would need to be provided to the researcher within 2 weeks of the transcript being received.

Data Protection

All data (written, audio, visual) will be stored within a secure lock-box. On completion of the interview, data will be transferred onto a password-protected computer for analysis. All data will be destroyed following ratification at the exam board unless consent has been given for use in further publications (appendix C). In the case of the latter, the original data will be retained in a secure locked box. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher will ensure all names and identifiers are removed from the data. Participant and parent/guardian consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet within the university for ten years following ratification of the project at the exam board. If consent has been given for use in further publications then the consent forms will continue to be held in a locked cabinet at the university for longer than 10 years.

Considerations for Participant Group

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CARDFIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

As stated above, the researcher currently has three years of experience developing her knowledge, understanding and skills working within this setting and with this client group through lectures, tutorials and placement experience. Therefore, the researcher is confident in her abilities to appropriately and comprehensively facilitate the group interview and ensure the participants’ best interests are at the centre of the group interview. Moreover, the researcher’s project supervisor has been a qualified Speech and Language Therapist for sixteen years, and is currently conducting a research project with a similar client group. Thus the researcher feels that her research will be thoroughly supported throughout the project and the researcher will feel comfortable to seek advice where necessary. Furthermore, the researcher has a current DBS certificate.

References


A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research? No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research
A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications? No
A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them
B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?

As part of her university studies in Speech and Language Therapy, the researcher’s experience has developed through lectures, tutorials and work placements over the previous three years. These experiences have provided the researcher opportunities to continually enhance her knowledge and understanding of the specific client group involved and the school environment. Therefore, the researcher is confident that she will be capable of leading and facilitating the group interview, whilst ensuring the participants’ best interests are central to the study.

B2 Student project only

What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?

The researcher’s project supervisor has been a qualified Speech and Language Therapist for sixteen years, and is currently conducting a research project with a similar client group. Thus the researcher is confident that her project will be comprehensively supported throughout the project with appropriate advice and guidance.

C POTENTIAL RISKS

C1 What potential risks do you foresee?

1. There is the potential that, due to their language difficulties, the participants may not fully understand a question during the group interview.
2. The participants will be disclosing information relating to their abilities, perceptions, other persons, and their environment, which will need to be handled sensitively.
3. The group interview will take place during school time, which is likely to be within lesson time.

C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?

1. The researcher will meet with the participants prior to the group interview to provide an overview of the study, describe what will happen, discuss the questions that will be asked, and answer any queries the participants may have. Information will also be provided in writing prior to verbal discussion, which the participants and their parents/guardians can refer to at any time necessary.
2. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the project; all data will be kept secure within a lock-box and on a password-protected computer. Names and references to other persons/places will be removed. No identifiable information will be used within the write-up of the study.
3. The most mutually convenient time will be arranged to conduct the group interview. The interview is expected to take no longer than an hour. The researcher will discuss this with the SENCo, and ensure that the participants are provided the opportunity to catch up on anything they miss due to the interview.

When submitting your application you MUST attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
Appendix A: Consent from Head Teacher

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 19 October 2017 16:38
To: Davey, Yvette
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Re: Research Project

Good afternoon,

I can confirm that this is fine to go ahead. Please liaise directly with [Redacted]

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: Davey, Yvette <st05000861@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk>
Sent: 12 October 2017 08:58
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Research Project

Dear [Redacted]

My name’s Yvette and I have been in contact with [Redacted] regarding my final year Speech and Language Therapy research project. I recently met [Redacted] at your school to discuss the suitability of my project, and he has been extremely helpful in supporting this. As part of my research I wish to conduct a group interview with 3 Year 11 pupils. If you have any questions you’d like to ask regarding my project please feel free to ask, or [Redacted] has more information if that’s easier.

Before I can commence my project I have to gain permission from the university ethics panel. My application was submitted earlier in the week; however, for it to be accepted the panel would like me to gain your consent agreeing that it is okay for me conduct the group interview on school premises. I expect the group interview process to last no longer than 2 hours, including set-up, introductions, and a break if necessary. Prior to the interview consent forms will be sent to the pupils involved and their parents. If you are happy for me to invite these pupils to attend the group interview, could you please consent to this via email?

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Yvette Davey
Appendix 11

*Semi-Structured group interview schedule, included in ethics application*

| Introduction        | Thank you for being here today.  
|                    | As we discussed when I last saw you, we will be talking about exams today.  
|                    | I will ask the questions to each of you, but please feel free to talk about things as a group.  
|                    | I may prompt for more answers during the discussion. If you have any questions at all please just ask me; I want you to feel completely comfortable here.  
|                    | This shouldn’t last any longer than an hour, but you can leave the room at any time if you wish to stop the interview.  
|                    | Okay, let’s get started.  
|                    | (Participants to state names).  
| Questions          | Prompts  
| What exams are you taking this year? | How do you feel about how exams are worded? E.g. the terminology used in exam papers (provide examples if necessary)  
| What, if anything, do you find hard about exams? | Do you always understand what questions are asking you/what to do?  
|                    | How confident do you feel about sitting your exams next summer?  
|                    | How do you feel about coursework?  
| What help, if any, do you have for exams? | Support at school examples: time out of the class, teacher support, 1:1 support, discussions  

How do you revise for exams? | Do you set aside time to revise?
---|---
What do you do when you revise? E.g. make notes, read notes, try to remember things, visual help, alone or with peers, at school or home
How well do you feel you cope with revision? E.g. organisation, timetables, stress, distractions

Conclusion
Thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion today
Do you have anything else you would like to add or any questions?

around school work and exam preparation, outside input e.g. SLT
Further support examples: At home/with family, peer support, additional support provided during exams e.g. extra time, scribe, visual aids, technology; how helpful are these?
Any suggestions of how support could be made better? E.g. anything you would make exams or preparing for exams easier, more support

How important are exams/grades to you?

What do you want to do when you leave Year 11?
Future goals, what opportunities do they think are available
Appendix 12

Rationale for interview questions, included in ethics application

Introduction.
Repeating information from information sheet and initial meetings to ensure understanding of the group interview process and right to withdraw.

Question 1.
It is unanimous that educational settings can be challenging for children and adolescents with LI (Dockrell et al., 2007; Dockrell et al., 2011; Starling et al., 2012). However, the amount of exams pupils with LI are entered into is continually increasing (Dockrell et al., 2011). When comparing difficulties with exam components, we can draw similarities – for example memory, understanding complex language and tasks, and expressing ideas (Archibald & Gathercole, 2006; Dockrell et al., 2011). Furthermore, there has been recent changes to GCSEs, including less coursework, increased emphasis on exams and more challenging course content (DfE, 2017; WJEC, 2017).

Question 2.
Studies show that the quantity and quality of secondary school provision for pupils with LI is increasing and improving (Dockrell et al., 2011; Palikara et al., 2009), with a greater focus on inclusion into mainstream settings (Starling et al., 2012). The researcher will provide some of these examples to demonstrate various support they may have had, to facilitate the participants’ understanding of what the researcher means by support. Involving participants in what would be more beneficial for them. It is increasingly recommended that the perceptions of adolescents themselves are acknowledged and explored (Durkin et al., 2009). Moreover, this may identify commonalities between the participants.

Question 3.
To my knowledge, there is a lack of studies that focus on how pupils with LI approach revision. This is a key factor in exam preparation, and therefore important to explore as part of the group interview.
Question 4.
Several studies suggest that opportunities following compulsory education are limited for those with LI in comparison to TD peers, such as job opportunities and opportunities for further education (Conti-Ramsden & Durkin, 2012; Palikara et al., 2009).

Conclusion.
It is important to provide participants with the opportunity to ask any further questions, add any information, and to clarify confidentially before closing the interview.
Appendix 13

Confidentiality checklist

CONFIDENTIALITY CHECKLIST
Speech and Language Therapy

Student number st06000861  Date 22-04-2018
Module leader Module number SLP6080

Assignment Adolescents with language difficulties in their final year of compulsory education: An exploration into perceptions towards GCSE examinations.

Evaluate your submission and any supporting documentation, appendices etc. by answering the following questions:

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If you have answered ‘yes’ to any questions, please explain why you feel this does not constitute a breach of confidentiality in the space below

The only organisation identified is Cardiff Metropolitan University. The project is submitted to the identified organisation, and thus the researcher does not feel this constitutes a breach of confidentiality.
Word count

Abstract - 247
Introduction and review of the literature - 3452
Methodology - 1704
Results - 2770
Discussion - 2003
Total - 9929