



**The Impact of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Training  
on Teaching Assistants' Own Trait-Emotional Intelligence  
and Self-Efficacy and Their Perceptions in Relation to Their  
Future Role.**

Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)

Thesis

**Carys Rees**

2016

**Part One:** Literature Review

**Part Two:** Empirical Study

**Part Three:** Major Research Reflective Account

## Abstract

The role of TAs has changed considerably from that of supporting teachers and children with additional learning needs to that of providing emotional support and personal and social development (Groom, 2006). Consequently, the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme was developed (Burton, 2009) as a training programme to develop the skills of teaching assistants (TAs) in schools to provide emotional support for children in their schools. However, their effectiveness in delivering this programme is likely to be governed by levels of self-efficacy, that is, the belief they have about their capabilities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Self-efficacy beliefs are predicted by the components of trait-emotional intelligence (Chan, 2004) and there is a need for research exploring the relationship between school staff emotions and efficacy beliefs (Emmer & Hickman, 1991).

This research utilises a multi-methods approach exploring the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs before and after having completed the ELSA training and the perceptions TAs have regarding their future role. Statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires revealed that the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence scores of the participants increased after having completed the ELSA training. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from the focus group revealed that TAs identified issues that influenced their perceptions of their future roles as ELSA both negatively and positively. The four main themes were identified, with sub themes and subordinate themes. The overarching main theme identified was 'systemic issues' as the main concern with the sub themes 'lack of support from school' and 'lack of self-efficacy for the role'. The second occurring main theme was 'improved knowledge and understanding' with the sub themes 'value of the ELSA role & training' and 'a better understanding of the ELSA values'. The third occurring main theme was 'benefits of ELSA for children and TAs', with the sub themes 'developing personal skills' and 'benefits for children'. The final occurring main theme was and 'low self-efficacy and confidence' with the sub themes 'self-efficacy for the ELSA role' and 'fears and loneliness of ELSA role'.

## **Summary**

This thesis is divided into three parts. A description of each part is given below.

### **Part One: Literature Review**

The Literature Review sets the context for the Empirical Study that follows. It begins by presenting definitions of emotional intelligence, emotional literacy and trait-emotional intelligence (and discussing the issues relating to the different definitions). The researcher's reason for exploring trait-emotional intelligence further and the related measures follows. The aetiology of self-efficacy and the related measures are discussed before examining the research that suggests there is a relationship between trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, whilst highlighting their relevance to education. The Literature Review then explores the role of the teaching assistant and the impact of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on outcomes. The Literature Review concludes by summarising the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme and the outline of the current study.

### **Part Two: Empirical Study**

The research is presented in two parts: one is a qualitative investigation exploring the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of teaching assistants (TAs). The analysis examines the difference in scores the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence measures before and after participants complete the ELSA training. The second part explores TAs' perceptions of their future roles as ELSAs by collecting qualitative data via a focus group. Statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires revealed that the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence scores of the participants increased after having completed the ELSA training. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from the focus group revealed that TAs identified 'systemic issues' as the main concern with 'Improved Knowledge & Understanding', 'Benefits of ELSA for Children and TAs', and 'Low Self-Efficacy & Confidence' emerging as important themes respectively.

### **Part Three: Major Research Reflective Account**

This critical appraisal provides an overview and critical account of the development of the research process and the outcomes that are considered to be key contributors to knowledge in the field of educational psychology. The development of the research questions along with the epistemological beliefs that guided the chosen research method and analysis was discussed. The conclusion acknowledged the methodological strengths and limitations of this research which were considered when evaluating its contribution to knowledge. Furthermore, this section included my reflections in relation to the development and learning I experienced as a result of carrying out this research with a focus on the aspects of the research process that I considered to be the most crucial learning points. The aim is to enable a better understanding of the personal and professional development I gained through the research process.

## **Acknowledgements**

*With thanks to my incredibly supportive family and friends for their ongoing support and motivation – who always told me that I could do it!*

*This could not have been achieved without the professional guidance and support from my compassionate and knowledgeable research supervisor, Andrea Higgins.*

*For Robert Smith and Natalie O’Neill for their support during the data collection process*

*And*

*my wonderful proof readers Kate, Katherine and Jenny.*

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Notice of Submission of Thesis</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Contents Page</b>	<b>v</b>
<b><u>Part One –Literature Review</u></b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Overview of the Literature Review.....	2
1.2 Overview of Research Topic.....	2
1.3 Description of Key Sources.....	4
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Interpreting Emotional Literacy, Emotional Intelligence and Trait- Emotional Intelligence.....	5
2.1.1 <i>Emotional Literacy – the definition</i> .....	5
2.1.2 <i>Defining Emotional Intelligence– a trait or an ability?</i> .....	6
2.1.3 <i>The Ambiguity of a Single Concept of Emotional Intelligence</i> .....	9
2.1.4 <i>Measuring Trait-Emotional Intelligence</i> .....	9
2.2 Defining Self-Efficacy.....	12
2.2.1 <i>Developing Self-Efficacy</i> .....	12
2.2.2 <i>Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy</i> .....	13
2.2.3 <i>Research into Self-Efficacy</i> .....	14
2.2.4 <i>Measuring Self Efficacy</i> .....	15
2.3 Trait-Emotional Intelligence & Self-Efficacy: The Link.....	16
2.4 Trait-Emotional Intelligence and Self Efficacy in Schools.....	17
2.5 The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Programme.....	20
2.5.1 <i>Research Exploring the ELSA Programme</i> .....	20
2.6 Teaching Assistants and their Roles.....	22
2.6.1 <i>The Professional Development of Teaching Assistants</i> .....	23
2.7 Trait-Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of Teaching Assistants.....	24
2.7.1 <i>Self-Efficacy of School Staff</i> .....	24
2.7.2 <i>Influencing and Enhancing Self-Efficacy of Teaching Assistants..</i>	25
2.7.3 <i>Teaching Assistants’ Trait-Emotional Intelligence</i> .....	25
2.7.4 <i>Influencing and Enhancing Trait-Emotional Intelligence of Teaching Assistants</i> .....	27
2.7.5 <i>Relevance of Teaching Assistants Self-Efficacy &amp; Trait-Emotional Intelligence in Research</i> .....	28
<b>The Current Study</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Research Rationale.....	29
3.2 Evaluating Teaching Assistants Training Experience .....	29
3.3 Relevance to Educational Psychology .....	30
3.4 Research Questions.....	30
<b><u>Part Two – Empirical Study</u></b>	
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Introduction and Literature Review</b>	<b>33</b>
1.1 Trait-Emotional Literacy & Self-Efficacy: The Link.....	33

1.2 Teaching Assistants and their Role.....	34
1.3 The ELSA Programme .....	34
1.4 Evaluating Teaching Assistants' Training Experience.....	35
1.5 Research Questions.....	35
<b>Epistemology</b> .....	36
2.1 Research Design.....	36
2.2 Ethical Considerations.....	36
2.3 Research Materials.....	36
2.3.1 Measures.....	38
2.4 Sample.....	38
2.5 Procedure.....	38
2.5.1 Questionnaires.....	39
2.5.2 Focus Groups.....	40
2.6 Method of Analysis.....	40
2.6.1 Questionnaire Data.....	40
2.6.2 Focus Group Data.....	41
<b>Results</b> .....	42
3.1 Questionnaire Findings.....	42
3.1.1 <i>H<sub>1</sub> Participants report a change in trait-emotional intelligence from the pre-training levels to the post-training levels.</i>	42
3.1.2 <i>H<sub>2</sub> Participants report a change in self-efficacy from the pre-training levels to the post-training levels.</i>	44
3.1.3 <i>H<sub>3</sub> Scores for self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence, at two stages, pre-and post-testing, will be significantly related.</i>	45
3.2 Focus Group Findings.....	46
<b>Discussion</b> .....	52
4.1 Teaching Assistant Self-Efficacy.....	52
4.2 Teaching Assistant Trait-Emotional Intelligence.....	52
4.3 Teaching Assistant Self-Efficacy & Trait-Emotional Intelligence.....	53
4.4 Teaching Assistants' Perceptions of their Future Role.....	54
4.4.1 <i>Main Theme 1: Systemic Issues.....</i>	54
4.4.2 <i>Main Theme 2: Improved Knowledge &amp; Understanding.....</i>	54
4.4.3 <i>Main Theme 3: Benefits of ELSA for Children and TAs.....</i>	53
4.4.4 <i>Main Theme 4: Low Self-Efficacy &amp; Confidence .....</i>	53
4.5 Implications for Educational Psychologists.....	56
4.6 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research.....	57
<b><u>Part Three - Major Research Reflective Account</u></b> .....	<b>58</b>
<b>Contribution to Knowledge</b> .....	59
Introduction.....	59
1.1 The Development of the Research.....	59
1.2 The Development of the Literature Review.....	59
1.3 The Development of the Research Design.....	61
1.4 The Development of the Research Questions.....	61
1.5 Research Paradigm.....	62
1.6 The Development of the Research Paradigm.....	64
1.7 Methodology.....	64
1.8 Ethics.....	65

1.9 Pilot Study.....	67
1.10 The Findings and Implications for EPs.....	67
<b>Critical Account of the Research Practitioner</b>	<b>68</b>
Introduction	68
2.1 Research Rationale.....	68
2.2 Organisation.....	68
2.3 Research Procedure.....	69
2.3.1 <i>Data Collation of a Multi-Methods Approach</i> .....	69
2.3.2 <i>Analysis of a Multi-Methods Approach</i> .....	70
2.3.3 <i>Reflections of the Research Process</i> .....	71
2.4 The Writing Process.....	71
2.5 My research Stance.....	72
2.6 Influence of the Research on Applied Work.....	73
<b>References</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: Ethical Considerations.....	<b>98</b>
Appendix 2: Questionnaire information sheet.....	<b>101</b>
Appendix 3: Participant consent form – questionnaires.....	<b>102</b>
Appendix 4: Focus group information sheet.....	<b>103</b>
Appendix 5: Participant consent form – focus group.....	<b>104</b>
Appendix 6: Debrief form – questionnaires.....	<b>105</b>
Appendix 7: Debrief form – focus groups.....	<b>106</b>
Appendix 8: TEIQue-SF questionnaire.....	<b>107</b>
Appendix 9: TSES-SF questionnaire.....	<b>108</b>
Appendix 10: Focus group interview schedule.....	<b>109</b>
Appendix 11: Gatekeeper letter.....	<b>110</b>
Appendix 12: Action Plan.....	<b>111</b>
Appendix 13: SPSS output for quantitative data .....	<b>112</b>
Appendix 14: Transcription of focus groups.....	<b>115</b>

## List of Tables

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table 1:</b> 15 Facets & 4 subscales of the TEIQue that guide the principles of the TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2008)	<b>11</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Descriptive statistics of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy scores both pre and post ELSA training.	<b>42</b>
<b>Table3:</b> Paired Samples Test of TSES-SF1 – TSES-SF2 and TEIQue-SF1 – TEIQue-SF2	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> The rated themes and the corresponding quotes from the focus group data.	<b>48</b>



## List of Figures

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Figure 1:</b> Bandura's (1997) model of self-efficacy adapted by Enderlin-Lampe (2002)	<b>14</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b> The Prosocial Classroom Model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).	<b>26</b>
<b>Figure 3:</b> Questionnaire Completion Criteria for Inclusion for Data Analysis	<b>41</b>
<b>Figure 4:</b> A scatterplot illustrating the correlation between the pre and post scores of the TEQue-SF questionnaire.	<b>44</b>
<b>Figure 5:</b> A scatterplot illustrating the correlation between the pre and post scores of the TSES questionnaire.	<b>45</b>
<b>Figure 6:</b> The percentage coverage of the occurring themes from the focus group data.	<b>47</b>
<b>Figure 7:</b> Main themes, sub-themes and subordinate themes rated in order of occurrences within the focus group dialogues.	<b>51</b>

## Part One

### Literature Review

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Overview of Literature Review**

This literature review provides an exploration of the definitions, aetiology and measures of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy with particular reference to teaching assistants (TAs) and the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Training Programme.

As trait-emotional intelligence is often referred to, and misinterpreted as, 'emotional intelligence' and 'emotional literacy' in research, this literature review will explore the terms and decipher the most appropriate term to use as part of this research. The literature review will examine the relevant key terms and concepts in applied research, examine the theoretical assumptions underpinning them and consider implications for the research study and its relevance to educational professionals and academics. This includes a descriptive account of self-efficacy and its relevance to TAs, and a methodological enquiry into the measurements for trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy is addressed with specific reference to school staff that will follow each description. Furthermore, there is an overview and descriptive account of the ELSA Training Programme and its relevance to educational psychology. The study rationale, its relevance to educational psychology and the research questions will conclude the literature review. Due to the lack of research exploring the trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of TAs, this literature review will examine research relating to teachers when necessary, as they are the closest professional group to TAs.

### **1.2 Overview of Research Topic**

The role of TAs has changed considerably from that of supporting teachers and children with additional learning needs to that of providing emotional support and enhancing personal and social development (Groom, 2006). Furthermore, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2013) identified that children's social, emotional and behavioural needs were a high priority amongst those identified as School Action Plus (SA+). The development of the ELSA Training Programme was in response to the increased understanding of the effects of children's emotional well-being on their educational outcomes (Burton, 2008). The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2014) reported that the emotional well-being of children in the United Kingdom scored the lowest on a range of well-being measures in comparison to children from 20 different industrialised countries. Therefore, the well-being agenda is important for schools to ensure that they meet the emotional needs of their students. However, the educational outcomes of students rely heavily on the effectiveness of the teaching staff

(Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

The effectiveness of teaching staff is governed by levels of self-efficacy, that is, the belief teachers have about their teaching capabilities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998); which could be applied to TAs as they are the closest comparable group. Dembo and Gibson (1985) assert that, because of this connection, "the problem of identifying antecedents of efficacy and developing ways to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy is critical" (p.177). This emphasises the importance of identifying antecedents to increase TAs' level of self-efficacy. One factor that has been identified to positively influence the self-efficacy of TAs is training (Gibb, 2007).

Educational psychology services (EPSs) in the United Kingdom have launched ELSA training programme for TAs and are trained by educational psychologists (EPs) to become ELSAs. Upon completion of the training, the ELSA's role is to:

*"support children and young people in school to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst also respecting the feelings of those around them"*

(Burton, 2008)

It is recognised in recent research that TA skills and self-efficacy need to be enhanced (Higgins & Guilford, 2014) and the ELSA project has been designed as a training programme to increase the skills of TAs (Burton, 2008). In order for TAs to be nominated for the ELSA programme, a person specification is used as a method for trainee selection that includes the identification that the trainee already shows a high level of emotional literacy however, this is often referred to as emotional intelligence in research. Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa, Reyes and Salovey (2010) state that individuals with higher trait-emotional intelligence scores report higher levels in their own ability to manage stress and manage classroom behaviours, which could be related to higher levels of self-efficacy. Direct research into TAs' trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy is difficult to find. However, for the purpose of this research, it is useful to explore research that has reviewed empirical evidence and theories relating these issues to the teacher role. Therefore, this study is concerned with the concepts of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of TAs who have completed the ELSA training programme. Furthermore, due to the limitations of research exploring TAs' experiences and perceptions of the ELSA Training Programme, this will also be explored in this research.

### **1.3 Description of Key Sources**

Research studies and relevant literature that were included in the literature review are those which are most recent and relevant to the current study. Due to the nature of the frequent use of the term 'emotional intelligence' within research, and the lack of research identified using the term 'emotional literacy', every attempt was made to focus on 'emotional literacy' in relation to education and educational psychology. However, the search terms entered into the Electronic Library resources included: 'ELSA', 'teaching assistant', 'emotional support', 'school', 'emotional literacy', 'emotional intelligence', 'trait-emotional intelligence', 'self-efficacy', 'educational psychology' and 'training'. The final search was completed on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016 utilising the following electronic library resources PsychInfo, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Interpreting Emotional Literacy, Emotional Intelligence and Trait-Emotional Intelligence

Despite a significant amount of theoretical and applied research exploring emotional well-being there is some confusion regarding the use of terminology applied (Weare & Gray, 2003). The concepts of 'emotional literacy', 'emotional intelligence' and 'trait-emotional intelligence' are often applied in research and there is little agreement amongst researchers regarding the similarities and differences between them (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007). Furthermore, the discussion about 'emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' has become increasingly prevalent within British education (Perry, Lennie, & Humphrey, 2008). However, Weare and Gray (2003) argue that the terms 'emotional well-being', 'emotional resilience', 'behaviour support' and 'inclusion' are used by educational professionals to refer to a similar group of concepts. In the United Kingdom (UK) the term 'emotional literacy' is generally applied in education and has developed as a social construction rather than the term 'emotional intelligence' or 'trait-emotional intelligence'. Therefore, before undertaking research exploring emotional literacy it is important to clarify the key terms that will be used and ensure that there is a clear understanding of the definitions.

Upon investigating the key concept 'emotional literacy' within current research, there emerged many interrelating interpretations to the term 'emotional intelligence' and 'trait-emotional intelligence' which could cause confusion in selecting a single term to explore within the context of research. However, there are important differences between the three (Petrides Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007; Steiner & Perry, 1997; Weare & Gray, 2003). In order to gain sufficient clarity and to provide a cohesive and focussed narrative of the theoretical approaches, the review will clearly define 'trait-emotional intelligence' as presented by Petrides, Pita and Kokkinaki, (2007), and 'emotional literacy' as described by Steiner (2003). Theoretical approaches, such as the Bar-On (2006) 'mixed' model of emotional intelligence and Goleman's (1996) concept of emotional intelligence will be included for discussion as they include elements from both ability and trait theories of emotional intelligence.

#### 2.1.1 Emotional Literacy – the definition

The definition of emotional literacy by Steiner and Perry (1997) states that:

*“Emotional Literacy is made up of the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathise with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and improves*

*the quality of life around you. Emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community.”*

(Steiner & Perry, 1997, p.11)

The term ‘emotional literacy’ is widely used in the UK and has been the focus of a number of organisations (for example Antidote, 2010), research and government publications, such as the Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice guide from the Department for Education (DfE, 2015). The term has gained significant value in education and is applied by educational support professionals such as educational psychologists (EPs), schools and local authorities (LAs) in the UK. Some LAs are using the concept as a framework for organising and implementing a range of different pieces of work, all of which are seen as contributing to better emotional literacy (Faupel & Sharp, 2003). LAs across England and Wales have emotional literacy interest groups (ELIGs), and have key people taking a lead on what they term ‘emotional literacy’. However, Weare and Gray (2003) found that the definition of emotional literacy focuses attention on individuals and their capacities and not on the surrounding context and underlying determinants. Therefore, they view it as being too much ‘within child’ and not sufficiently reflective of environmental factors. Furthermore, another criticism of the term is that the metaphor implied in the word ‘literacy’ may be confused with aspects of language skills, and can sometimes be used without reference to the social aspects that are an integral part of it.

### **2.1.2 Defining Emotional Intelligence– a trait or an ability?**

From an abundance of academic research, several best-selling texts and frequent media exposure, the concept termed ‘emotional intelligence’ has emerged as one of the most recent high profile psychological constructs (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002). The underlying constructs of the concept emerged in the early 1960s. However, the term ‘emotional intelligence’ gained prominence from Goleman (1996) and focuses on emotional intelligence as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. However, the early emotional intelligence theory was developed by Gardner (1983) who adopted the concept as a cognitive ability. This development has caused much deliberation regarding the value of the concept, which has consequently influenced the development of other definitions.

In the UK, Petrides could be considered one of the key researchers in the field of psychology as he is leading the academic research in emotional intelligence. However, he refers to it as trait-emotional intelligence (Petrides Furnham & Frederickson, 2004). Trait-emotional intelligence is defined as “a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies” (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007

p.323). It is defined as a collection of personality traits concerning people's perceptions of their emotional abilities, i.e. not a cognitive ability. Trait-emotional intelligence influences outcomes relating to job performance, burnout, psychopathology, health-related behaviours, relationship satisfaction, educational attainment, sport performance and group performance (Bell, 2007, Laborde et al., 2015a, Laborde et al., 2010, Pena-Sarrionandia et al., 2015 and Petrides et al., 2016). Petrides and Furnham (2001) argue that trait-emotional intelligence should not be considered a form of 'traditional' intelligence as the label 'intelligence' should not be regarded as having any functional importance in relation to emotions, but argue that it is useful in highlighting the differences between their own theory of emotional intelligence (trait-emotional intelligence) and cognitive ability:

"We integrated scattered early findings into a comprehensive theoretical framework, which we labelled 'trait-emotional intelligence' in a clear effort to emphasise that our approach aligns the construct with personality traits rather than with cognitive abilities...

although we have proposed 'emotional self-efficacy' as an alternative label that avoids the word 'intelligence', it must be understood that, in stark contrast to operational definitions, labels are scientifically unimportant."

Petrides, Furnham, & Frederickson, (2004, p.575)

However, the idea that labels are scientifically unimportant is not one which is accepted by all researchers. Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) suggested that the use of the label 'intelligence' is in part responsible for the confusion that currently surrounds the term 'emotional intelligence':

"We agree with many of our colleagues who have noted that the term emotional intelligence is now employed to cover too many things—too many different traits, too many different concepts."

Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008, p503).

Research has explored the concept of emotional intelligence to identify distinct and measurable natural attributes, and their effects on aspects such as social behaviour, life chances and learning (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001; Mayer & Cobb, 2000). Due to the links with scientific research, physiology of the brain and neurological development in young children, the term is extensively used in the United States of America (USA). Some in the UK are linking emotional and social intelligence with emerging work on generic learning skills and learning to learn (for example a conference run by Essex LA on The Emotionally Intelligent School; cited in Weare & Gray, 2003). However, Salovey and Grewal (2005) draw attention to the areas of emotional intelligence research where only a small amount of progress has been made and urge



researchers to ground further research in empirical study. Locke (2004) is critical of the theoretical basis for emotional intelligence research, suggesting that the concept itself lacks validity. Furthermore, Sternberg, Nokes, Geissler, Prince, Okatcha, Bundy and Grigorenko, (2001) criticised the concept of 'intelligence' as the term tends to focus the attention on an innate fixed measurement rather than on teaching and learning. When applied less formally, the term 'emotional intelligence' tends to have more resemblance to the term 'emotional literacy' and, therefore, 'emotional intelligence' seems to lack any precise or specialist meaning.

'Trait-emotional intelligence' refers to people's perceptions of their emotional abilities and essentially concerns the perceptions of their emotional world. An alternative label for the same construct is 'trait-emotional self-efficacy' (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007 p.323). The concept contests the belief that emotions can be falsely objectified into amenable scoring similar to that used for the intelligence quotient. However, the emerging concept of emotional intelligence led to conceptual confusion and numerous conflicting results as researchers and theorists overlooked the fundamental difference between typical self-report questionnaires and maximal performance tests (Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Cronbach, 1949; Hofstee, 2001). These researchers assumed they were investigating the same construct. In response to this distinction, Petrides and Furnham (2000a, 2000b, 2001) differentiated between trait-emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence. It is vital that the distinction between these two concepts is apparent as the measures for these can have theoretical and practical implications if confused. For example, trait-emotional intelligence would not be expected to correlate strongly with measures of general cognitive ability, whereas ability emotional intelligence would. Furthermore, trait-emotional intelligence facets are personality traits that are subjective to emotional experience and not innate cognitive abilities. Vernon, Villani, Schermer and Petrides (2008) propose that the genes involved in the development of individual differences in the 'Big Five' personality traits are consistent with those involved in the individual differences of trait-emotional intelligence. Therefore, the notion that trait-emotional intelligence is based on self-perception and not a fixed ability level suggests that the level of trait-emotional intelligence can be influenced by a person's experiences, such as training. For the purpose of this research the concept 'trait-emotional intelligence' will be the foundation on which TAs' self-perceptions will be explored.

### **2.1.3 The Ambiguity of a Single Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

The variation amongst researchers in their use of the terminology for emotional literacy, emotional intelligence and trait-emotional intelligence is commonly noted. Often, the terms 'emotional intelligence' and 'trait-emotional intelligence' are not clearly distinguished or defined and are frequently put together under the same umbrella term as 'an ability' rather than 'a trait'. Therefore, when the term emotional intelligence is applied, it is often mis-representing trait-emotional intelligence or emotional literacy as concepts in their own right. Perry, Lennie and Humphrey (2008) advocate that there is a lack of evidence to distinguish between emotional intelligence and emotional literacy and suggest that a single term should be applied whereas Haddon, Goodman, Park and Crick (2005) state that the terms emotional intelligence and emotional literacy should be explicit. This suggests that 'emotional literacy' best describes a process of interaction that builds understanding whereas 'emotional intelligence' could be used to refer to an individual's emotional abilities. Other researchers suggest adopting new terminology that encapsulates both terms such as social and emotional competence and well-being (Weare & Gray, 2003) and emotional literacy and related concepts (Carnwell & Baker, 2007). Matthews (2006) argues against the concept of 'emotional intelligence' and advocates that the term 'emotional literacy' should be further developed, as he believes that all social and emotional interactions take place in a cultural context and that people experience emotions due to their interactions with other people. Regardless of the disagreement over the terminology, there are distinct differences in how the three terms are used. Definitions of 'emotional intelligence' place an emphasis on the qualities of an individual (Carnwell & Baker, 2007; Coppock, 2006; Kassem, 2002; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) whilst definitions of 'emotional literacy' and 'trait-emotional literacy' refer to internal processes, social processes and the interaction between the two (Haddon, Goodman, Park, & Crick, 2005; Zembylas, 2004; Steiner & Perry, 1997; Park, 1999).

Within this literature review the terms 'trait-emotional intelligence', 'emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' will be used in the context that they are referred to in the literature that they are being referenced from. However, for the empirical data collection, this report will be exploring trait-emotional intelligence.

### **2.1.4 Measuring Trait-Emotional Intelligence**

There is no specific self-report measure that is designed for use with adults. The number of emotional intelligence measures that are available may suggest that emotional intelligence is regarded as a cognitive ability rather than a trait. However, few trait-emotional intelligence measures have been developed within a clear theoretical framework and even fewer have sturdy empirical foundations (Petrides & Furnham,

2001). Furthermore, most self-report questionnaires intend to measure emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability such as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) and the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997). The Trait-Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a product of the London Psychometric Laboratory based at University College London (UCL) (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). It is regarded as one of the most extensively validated emotional intelligence measures (Petrides, 2001; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Cooper and Petrides (2010) report that the TEIQue has gained significant value over the previous 15 years as it has received reports of strong findings in many different fields. Furthermore, from a meta-analysis of independently peer reviewed studies, Martins, Ramalho and Morin (2010) found that the TEIQue outperformed all emotional intelligence measures against which it has been compared.

The Trait-Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire- Short Form (TEIQue-SF) (Petrides & Furnham, 2006) is a questionnaire with 30 items designed to measure global trait-emotional intelligence (e.g., "I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions"; "I'm usually able to influence the way other people feel"). The TEIQue-SF was developed from the full form of the TEIQue (Petrides & Furnham, 2003), which covers 15 distinct facets (see Table 1). These facets are clustered together to focus on key 'factors' of trait-emotional intelligence. These main factors help to indicate an individual's key strengths and development needs. Based primarily on correlations with total subscale scores, two items from each of the 15 facets were selected for inclusion in the short form. This ensured adequate internal consistencies and broad coverage of the sampling domain of the construct. However, the TEIQue-SF does not yield scores on the 15 trait-emotional intelligence facets. The TEIQue-SF employs a Likert-style format, ranging from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 7 (Completely Agree). A global trait-emotional intelligence score can be calculated by adding the item scores and dividing by the total number of items.

<b>WELL-BEING</b> <i>evaluates how positive, happy, fulfilled an individual is</i>	
<b>Optimism</b>	Confidence and likelihood to look on the bright side of life
<b>Happiness</b>	Pleasant emotional states, primarily dissected towards the present rather than the past or future
<b>Self Esteem</b>	Personal success and self-confident
<b>SOCIABILITY</b> <i>evaluates relationship building, influence in social settings and networking</i>	
<b>Emotion Management</b>	The influencing of other people's feelings
<b>Assertiveness</b>	Forthright, frank, and willing to stand up for their rights
<b>Social Awareness</b>	Ability to network and social skills
<b>EMOTIONALITY</b> <i>evaluates ability to recognize emotional states in others, express emotions and use the abilities to develop and sustain close relationships with others.</i>	
<b>Empathy</b>	Acknowledging and taking in someone else's perspective
<b>Emotional Perception</b>	Insightful and clears about the feelings of others
<b>Emotional Expression</b>	Communication of one's feelings to others
<b>Relationships</b>	Capability to have fulfilling personal relationships
<b>SELF CONTROL</b> <i>evaluates control over their impulsiveness and coping with external pressures &amp; stress</i>	
<b>Emotion regulation</b>	Short, medium and long term control of one's own feelings and emotional states
<b>Impulsiveness</b>	How reflective and the likelihood of giving into urges
<b>Stress Management</b>	Capability to withstand pressure and regulate stress
<b>AUXILIARY FACETS</b>	
<b>Adaptability</b>	Flexibility and willingness to adapt to new conditions
<b>Self Motivation</b>	Drive and endurance in the face of adversity

**Table 1:** 15 Facets & four subscales of the TEIQue that guide the principles of the TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009)

Cooper and Petrides (2010) examined the psychometric properties of the Trait-emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2006) using item response theory (IRT) across two separate studies. From a sample of nearly 2000 participants, results indicated that most items on the questionnaire had good discrimination and threshold parameters, and high item information values. Additionally, the TEIQue-SF showed very good precision across most of the latent trait range with the instrument showing good psychometric properties at the item and global level. Overall, the studies suggest that the TEIQue-SF can be recommended when a rapid assessment of trait-emotional intelligence is required as the TEIQue-SF has been subjected to independent validation and has demonstrated strong psychometric properties (Cooper & Petrides, 2010, Jacobs et al., 2015 & Stamatopoulou et al., 2016). However, the TEIQue-SF has not been factor analysed and, therefore, it is suggested that researchers use the long form in order to gain factor and subscale scores.

## **2.2 Defining Self-Efficacy**

Early research into the concept of self-efficacy emerged from the theory of locus of control which stated that one's level of self-efficacy is defined by internal or external justification for outcomes of tasks and/or responsibilities (Rotter, 1966). However, Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy refers to the core beliefs that a person has regarding his/her capabilities to perform certain actions. These self-efficacy judgments are:

“...concerned not with the number of skills you have, but with what you believe you can do with what you have under a variety of circumstances”

(Bandura, 1997, p.37)

Consequently, it is not a matter of how capable a person is, but of how capable a person believes himself/herself to be. Bandura's (1997) explanation describes that self-efficacy beliefs underpin the stimuli for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment as they:

“. . . influence the courses of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavours, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize.”

(Bandura, 1997, p.3)

Therefore, unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere when faced with difficult circumstances.

### **2.2.1 Developing Self-Efficacy**

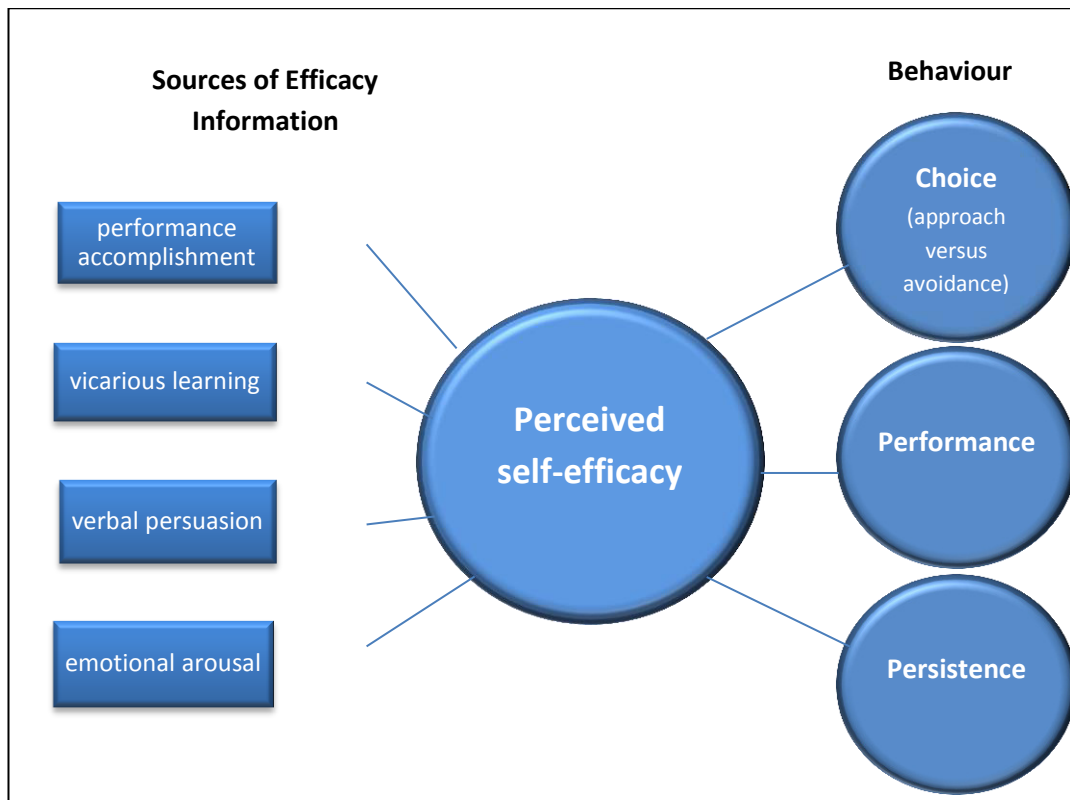
Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy beliefs develop from four main sources of information: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions and physiological states. However, Bandura (1997) asserts that more robust self-efficacy beliefs develop from enactive mastery experiences i.e., the interpretation of one's previous performance. Individuals who engage in tasks and activities will interpret the results of his/her actions, use the interpretations to develop beliefs about his/her capability to engage in subsequent tasks or activities and then act accordingly with the beliefs created. Therefore, having opportunities to practice behaviours is essential for mastery (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). Consequently, Capa (2005) suggested that experiencing success raises a person's self-efficacy; once a learner masters a skill then his/her expectations of their ability to further develop his/her skills increases. Equally, failure tends to lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). However, mastery experiences are

only raw data, and many factors influence how such information is cognitively processed and affects an individual's self-appraisal (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). An individual's perceived self-efficacy can change over time and across different contexts including the degree to which self-efficacy can be altered, how it can be applied within various circumstances and the amount of effort one exerts for a specific task (Bandura, 1997).

Therefore, self-efficacy could be considered as an extremely influential factor on a person's productivity that can be modified and increased, but also decreased. This is an important aspect to consider when exploring a person's self-efficacy, as it is not stable over time.

### ***2.2.2 Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy***

Research suggests that self-efficacy is affected by individuals' affective and emotional states (Bandura, 1997; Graham & Weiner, 1996; Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). This supports the theoretical stance of Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy model. Enderlin-Lampe (2002) modified Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, devising a model that emphasised perceived self-efficacy and the range of impacting factors as fundamental influencers (see Figure 1). Enderlin-Lampe (2002) argued that performance accomplishment (achievements), vicarious learning (apprenticeship experiences), verbal persuasion and emotional arousal influence how the individual exercises choice (engaging versus avoiding), performance (linked to effort and intensity) and persistence. Enderlin-Lampe's (2002) model illustrates the behavioural effects of a person's level of self-efficacy. For example, a high level of self-efficacy might be gained through a person's experience of success in a task (performance accomplishment). Consequently, a person may be more motivated to attempt the next task and may also be more persistent and increase her/his performance. Conversely, a low level of self-efficacy may influence an increase in a person's task avoidance and resistance to putting much effort into their performance, especially if the task becomes difficult.



**Figure 1.** Bandura's (1997) model of self-efficacy adapted by Enderlin-Lampe (2002)

### 2.2.3 Research into Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy has emerged from research into diverse areas such as medicine, athletics, the media (studies), business, social and political change, psychology, psychiatry and education. Research exploring psychological difficulties such as assertiveness, depression, moral development, phobias, and social skills has identified self-efficacy to be an important contributing factor (Pajares, 1997). Self-efficacy is prominent in studies of educational constructs such as academic achievement, career development, attributions of success and failure, goal setting, memory, problem solving, social comparisons and teacher education (Pajares, 1997). Self-efficacy has been identified as a strong predictor of behaviour as research has documented high correlations of self-efficacy beliefs with behaviour changes and outcomes (Graham & Weiner, 1996).

Graham and Weiner (1996) assert that self-efficacy is a more consistent predictor of behavioural outcomes than any other motivational constructs in psychology and education. Within education, TAs now have career structure such as training opportunities for them to become higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) where they have more responsibility yet no formal training or qualifications. Therefore, the influence of self-efficacy could be an important factor for this group of workers and could be a key area for exploration as their roles and responsibilities within schools grow

and change.

#### **2.2.4 Measuring Self-Efficacy**

The theoretical construct of self-efficacy and the validity of the numerous teacher self-efficacy scales utilised in research are areas of contentious debate (Denzine, Cooney & McKenzie, 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Heneman, Kimball, & Milanowski, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Usher & Pajares, 2008). One of the most popular teacher self-efficacy scales, the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) by Gibson and Dembo (1984), has been found to have conceptual and statistical problems (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Furthermore, researchers have found inconsistencies in its reliability and validity as a measure for teacher self-efficacy (Soodak & Podell, 1993; Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990). Even the shortened version of the TES continued to show inconsistencies and raised additional concerns about the tool (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

As a result of earlier measures being flawed by unsuitable conceptualisation and statistical validity, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The TSES is more succinct with the theoretical guidelines proposed by Bandura (1994, 1997), specifically in the focus on forward-looking capabilities (e.g., "I can craft good questions for students") and not global ability (e.g., "I am a good teacher"). Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) endeavoured to develop a measure that replaced the previous 25 years of teacher efficacy research. As a result, a 24-item scale consisting of three dimensions of teacher efficacy; instructional strategies, classroom management and student engagement measures were developed through extensive reliability and validity testing. These three dimensions were thought to provide results that are generalisable enough to assess teacher efficacy across a wide range of teaching tasks and activities, but specific enough to be useful in a variety of contexts. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) stated that the TSES was:

"superior to previous measures of teacher efficacy in that it has a unified and stable factor structure and assesses a broad range of capabilities that teachers consider important to good teaching, without being so specific as to render it useless for comparisons across contexts, levels, and subjects"

(p. 801)

Since its development, numerous studies have tested the validity and reliability of the TSES in a variety of settings over the past ten years in relation to teacher performance, teacher growth, student achievement and educational reform (e.g., Betoret, 2009; Gavora, 2010; Guo, Piasta, Justice & Kaderavek, 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Milner & Hoy, 2003; Moe, Pazzaglia & Ronconi, 2010; Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt &



Leaf, 2010; Wheatley, 2002). Furthermore, cultural and geographical studies have found the TSES to have strong internal consistency and international validity (e.g., Fives & Buehl, 2010; Klassen et al., 2009; Moe, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010; Tsui & Kennedy, 2009; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). Although Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) support the design and high reliability of the TSES, they argue that the three teaching dimensions of the TSES are simply not enough. However, despite the concerns of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007, 2010), there has not been much support in the literature for a move away from the use of the TSES as the preferred teacher efficacy measure. Overall, the TSES has proven to be a reliable and valid measure of teacher efficacy and it is currently the instrument favoured in the recent literature. Moreover, Chan (2004) found significant relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy using the TSES (Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009; Gürol, Özeran, & Yalçın, 2010; Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009).

### **2.3 Trait-Emotional Intelligence & Self-Efficacy: The Link**

Current research suggests that people's attitudes and academic performance improve with higher levels of emotional intelligence (Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008; Salami, 2004; Salami & Ogundokun, 2009; Wong, Wong & Chau, 2001) and self-efficacy (Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008; Faulkner & Reeves, 2009; Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2001; Salami 2004; Salami & Ogundokun, 2009; Schwarzer & Fuchs, 2009). Therefore, the influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy can have very similar outcomes and studies have revealed strong positive correlations between levels of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Chan, 2007; Hashemi, 2011; Talebinezhad & Banihashemi, 2013). This supports Pajares and Valiante's (2001) argument that a person's internal processes and the beliefs that they create and hold about their capabilities are significant factors when faced with important challenges throughout their life. Therefore, their emotional intelligence could play an important part in their self-efficacy which, consequently, could influence their life choices and aspirations. Bar-On (2006) found that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence believed that they were mindful of their emotions and were able to regulate them in order to increase their emotional well-being. Furnham and Petrides (2003) believe that these individuals should enjoy higher levels of happiness compared to those who have low levels of emotional intelligence. Comparably, Caprara, Steca, Gerbino, Paciello and Vecchio (2006) found that high self-efficacy levels positively influence an individual's capacity to regulate his/her emotions and contribute to feelings of happiness. The research also found that high levels of self-efficacy promote affective and positive interpersonal relationships (Caprara et al., 2006).

As emotional intelligence influences an individual's social relationships (Petrides, Furnham, & Frederickson, 2004), individuals can also create and develop self-efficacy beliefs as a result of the social interactions they receive from others. A fundamental area could be the education system, as this is where many children experience social interactions which can influence their self-efficacy. Schools are key facilitators in developing an individual's self-efficacy which has been found to be related to academic achievement, positive behaviour and motivation (Faulkner & Reeves, 2009; Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2001; Schwarzer & Fuchs, 2009; Salami, 2004; Salami & Ogundokun, 2009). Therefore, developing a student's emotional intelligence can improve several factors such as life satisfaction, psychological well-being, academic and occupation success and performance (Adeyemi & Adeleye, 2008; Bar-On, 1997 & 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). With this in mind, the UK government has prioritised students' psychological well-being as a fundamental responsibility for educational professionals, including EPs (DfE, 2015).

#### **2.4 Trait-Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy in Schools**

The past and present UK Government's well-being agenda takes responsibility to increase the well-being of pupils across schools in England and Wales (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009). The government has over time given responsibility to educational professionals to develop the happiness and well-being of children. Policy initiatives such as Personal, Social and Health Education (2000); Every Child Matters (DCSF, 2003); National Healthy Schools Status (2005); and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted in England) and ESTYN Inspection Framework (Education and Training Inspectorate in Wales) have emphasised the responsibility that educational professionals have for improving pupil well-being. However, despite these policy initiatives, there is a limited amount of quality research to underpin interventions that increase happiness and well-being within schools (Stallard et al., 2010; Weare & Gray, 2003). Schools have encountered numerous challenges around definition, measurement, interventions and the value and assumptions underpinning them (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Craig, 2009; Kristjansson, 2012). Statistics reveal that despite the increase in society's material wealth, children in the UK are no happier (Layard & Layard, 2011). With great concern, the UK was listed at the bottom of a list of 21 industrialised countries for childhood well-being by UNICEF in 2007. However, according to the Office for National Statistics, suicide and depression rates in England and Wales are relatively stable. Despite these differences, well-being is still a fundamental area identified by researchers and government for improvement in the UK education system and specific programmes and

interventions have been developed as a result.

Research has identified that schools in the United Kingdom have ensured that many pupils identified with additional needs routinely receive high levels of support from teaching assistants (Rose et al., 2015). Numerous programmes in England and Wales focus on developing students' social and emotional skills, as high levels of emotional literacy influences variables in educational contexts. For example, pupils who have high levels of emotional literacy tend to have fewer unauthorised absences and are less likely to have been expelled from school (Mavroveli Petrides, Shove, & Whitehead, 2008; Petrides et al., 2004). Also, students who have a high level of emotional literacy have higher motivation and higher morale (Durlak, 1995; Durlak & Wells, 1997) in comparison to peers with low emotional literacy. Improving a student's emotional literacy influences positive peer relations at school (Petrides & Furnham, 2006), decreases the likelihood of aggressive and challenging behaviour (Santesso, Reker, Schmidt, & Segalowitz, 2006; Rogers, 2004) and increases school attendance, motivation, and morale (Durlak, 1995; Durlak and Wells, 1997). Interventions such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum (DfES, 2007) and the Targeted Mental Health in Schools initiative (TaMHS) (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Stallard et al., 2010) aim to increase the emotional literacy of children in school. The SEAL programme has influenced independent and commercial initiatives to emerge that complement the government's investment in emotional literacy. Training and consultancy (Sharp, 2000), commercial organisations (e.g. The School of Emotional Literacy), national interest groups (e.g. Antidote, and the National Emotional Literacy Interest Group), Circle Time activities (Mosley, 1993; Mosley & Tew, 1999) and the Circle of Friends initiative (Newton, Taylor & Wilson, 1996) all proclaim to develop students' social and emotional skills.

Studies have evaluated the range of approaches to improve students' emotional wellbeing (Carnwell & Baker, 2007; Parton & Manby, 2009; Stallard et al. 2010) and state that the benefits of the interventions include a positive effect on students' reported confidence levels. Some changes in behaviour and social skills were also found and many participants felt better able to deal with their problems. Both pupils and facilitators generally reported the experience as positive, and for some it was extremely positive. However, these findings do not claim that these interventions increase well-being in students. Pajares, Britner, and Valiante (2000) claim that teachers need to cultivate students' beliefs in their capabilities by encouraging students to believe that success in an endeavour is the result of self-disciplined effort. Therefore, the relationship between the student and facilitator, and the self-efficacy of the facilitator, are important factors

for the success of emotional literacy programmes.

A programme currently being piloted is the 'UK Resilience Programme' (UKRP). The purpose of the intervention is to increase positive behaviour and well-being in schools through skills training using cognitive behavioural therapy techniques, trying to reduce depression, helplessness and anxiety and increase optimism (Challen & Machin, 2009). However, researchers identify problems with the interventions such as the UKRP: self-selection, time investment, the lack of consistency in the programme being rolled out, whether or not the whole programme is covered and difficulties in gathering well-being data (Smith *et al.*, 2007; McLaughlin, 2008). Individual programmes, where a single child is supported in a one-to-one session, lack the systemic strength and do not focus on strengthening the community or reducing structural barriers of whole-school approaches (Mental Health Foundation, 1999). The whole-school approach fits within the context of SEAL (Banerjee, 2010) and the feedback from pupils (Duckett, Sixsmith & Kagan 2008) and teachers (Cowie, Moorland & Jones, 2004; Kidger, 2009), which stressed the need for well-being interventions to be fully integrated as part of school life, not a 'bolt on' to be thought about for an hour a week. It should, however, be recognised that, in common with the terms 'happiness and well-being', 'whole school' does not have an agreed definition.

Smith *et al.* (2007) report that the fundamental factors contributing to the perceived success of a whole school programme for emotional well-being were tailoring the programme to each school; local authority leadership and support, including network meetings; and positive pupil outcome, particularly for anger management and developing an understanding of how they learn productively. However, concerns highlighted that some teachers prioritised academic issues instead of the well-being initiatives; pupils did not like the inconsistency of teacher behaviour between the intervention and academic teaching, and teachers felt there should be a clearer focus on teacher training to provide an appropriate foundation for the programme. Criticism has also been given in relation to the relationship between emotional intelligence and value systems, the consequences of assessing children's social and emotional development, the lack of consideration given to the emotional experience of teachers, the role of schools in providing therapeutic education, the evidence base for the effectiveness of well-being interventions and the effect of a nationally agreed strategy for social and emotional aspects of learning. Smith *et al.* (2007) conclude that interventions should take a whole-school approach, challenging attitudes and cultures and clearly link in with the wider community.

It is suggested that emotional literacy plays an essential role in every learning

experience (DfES, 2005), offers possibilities for tackling childhood obesity and school violence (Salovey & Grewal, 2005), is a core quality of successful leadership (Stichler, 2006) and improves life chances (Goleman, 2006). However, Pérez-Rodrigo and Aranceta (2001) encourage practitioners to carefully inspect potential school intervention programmes, as many are not grounded in scientific research and lack theoretical validity (Salovey & Grewal, 2005; Locke, 2005).

## **2.5 The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Programme**

The ELSA project is an EP led intervention that seeks to develop TA knowledge and skills by providing them with training and supervision, combining both psychological theory and practical guidance, to meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils with whom they work in the context of a school (Burton, 2008). The specialised ELSA training involves six full training days facilitated by at least two EPs with groups of TAs from different schools within the LA. The training involves building knowledge and skills in a range of issues including anger management, bereavement, friendships, self-esteem, and social skills. Furthermore, practical skills training including active listening, working with puppets, social stories and therapeutic stories are also included.

Following the completion of the six days of training, TAs will then be referred to as 'ELSAs' and will receive ongoing regular group supervision sessions throughout their time as an ELSA. After completing the training, it is anticipated that the ELSAs and their school will embrace the principles of the ELSA role and ELSAs will apply their new skills and knowledge by working with pupils who require additional support in their setting. The interventions that an ELSA provides are individualised programmes that are tailored for the specific needs of the child or children (for group interventions). The ELSA programme was developed by an EP, Sheila Burton, in 2007 and piloted in primary schools in Southampton. Burton (2008) states that the ELSA programme is appropriate for TAs in all educational contexts including secondary schools and pupil referral units and can be tailored for use with children who have special educational needs. Since 2007, the ELSA programme has been used in many schools in England and Wales and it continues to be high on schools' well-being agenda.

### ***2.5.1 Research Exploring the ELSA Programme***

The impact of the ELSA programme has been predominantly researched by trainee EPs for their theses or facilitated with the programme developer, Sheila Burton (Burton, 2011; Burton, Osborne & Norgate, 2010; Burton, Traill & Norgate, 2009; Burton & Shotton, 2004). More recently, some of the areas that have been researched are

children's experiences of the ELSA support received (McEwen, 2015), ELSAs perceptions of the ELSA-child relationship (Miles, 2014), the impact of the ELSA programme on children's and ELSAs self-efficacy (Grahamslaw, 2010) and the scope of an ELSA's role and responsibilities (Bradley, 2010), to name but a few.

The ELSA programme has been evaluated regarding the change in pupils' emotional literacy as a result of ELSA support (Mann & Russell, 2011). Pre (before) and post (after) ELSA intervention data were collected in the form of an Emotional Literacy Checklist (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003) for staff, parents and pupils. Results indicated that the teachers believed that the pupils' levels of emotional literacy had improved following ELSA intervention.

Using a multi-method approach, Bravery and Harris (2009) conducted an evaluation of the ELSA role and the impact of the intervention using questionnaire data and semi structured interviews. The study explored how the first ELSA cohort established their roles one year after training, by gaining head teacher perceptions of the impact that the ELSA programme had on their schools. Results from semi structured interviews explored how ELSAs managed their role; and included systemic issues such as having an allocated room, lack of session planning time, and lack of supervision from management level in school. This illustrates the wider systemic and resource issues faced by ELSAs in facilitating the programme successfully.

Murray (2010) evaluated the impact ELSAs have on the development of pupils' emotional literacy (as part of a thesis submission). Using a mixed methods approach, results indicated that the ELSA intervention had a positive impact on pupil progress. Similar findings were obtained by Burton, Osborne and Norgate (2010) who examined the impact of the ELSA training on primary and secondary pupils using a quasi-experimental design. Pre and post-test measures of pupil and staff perceptions of emotional literacy and behaviour were taken from an experimental and waiting list control group. Results indicated that the ELSA intervention had a successful impact on pupils' emotional literacy and behaviour (Burton, Osborne & Norgate, 2010).

Although research indicates an increase in pupil emotional literacy, the emotional literacy or emotional intelligence of the TAs delivering the ELSA intervention has not been explored at pre and post training. However, Grahamslaw (2010) evaluated the self-efficacy beliefs of ELSAs and found that, after having implemented the ELSA project in their school, ELSAs' self-efficacy beliefs were higher than those in the control group (TAs who had not completed the ELSA training). Unfortunately, this does not illustrate the direct influence of the ELSA training on TAs' self-efficacy beliefs as the self-efficacy scores were based on a control group and not pre and post training changes in

data of ‘within participants’ design. Therefore, there is a gap in the research literature that explores the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of ELSAs as a result of their ELSA training utilising a ‘within participants’ design.

## **2.6 Teaching Assistants and their Roles**

There has been an increase in the appointment of TAs within school and this commitment to develop inclusive practice by the government has seen a 21% increase of the allocated Budget in 2015 (CRA 2015). The problem of job role interpretation and the ambiguity of the TA role within schools has been stressed in research (Farrell, Balshaw & Polat, 2000; Groom, 2006; Blatchford et al., 2007). However, Blatchford, Russell and Webster (2012) suggest that TAs spend the majority of their time working directly with children, described as a “Wider Pedagogical Role” and urge school leaders and teachers to consider strongly these seven evidence-based recommendations.

- TAs should not be used as substitute teachers for low-attaining pupils.
- TAs to add value to what teachers do, not replace them.
- TAs to help pupils develop independent study skills and manage their own learning.
- TAs are fully prepared for their role in the classroom through out of class liaison with teachers.
- TAs to deliver high-quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions.
- adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction.
- it is important that what students learn from TAs complements what they are being taught in the classroom.

Furthermore, Estelle Morris, former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, stated that, “Schools of the future would be rich in trained adults available to support learning to new higher standards” (Morris, 2001, p.19). However, this raises the question of how TAs’ contribution within education can be best defined and understood. According to a recent survey by the Department for Education (DfE, 2013) statistics indicated that there are 243,700 full-time equivalent TAs employed in schools across England a number which has more than trebled since 2000. In a year, schools spend approximately £4.4 billion on their employment and the TA population amounts to a quarter of the workforce in mainstream schools. However, there has been much deliberation regarding the value of TAs (Blatchford et al., 2009). Previous research

highlights that in many schools TAs are not being used in ways that improve pupil outcomes (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, & Martin, 2007; Blatchford, Martin, Moriarty, Bassett, & Goldstein, 2002; Muijs & Reynolds, 2003). However, research identifies that, when TAs are well trained and used in structured settings with high-quality support and training, they can boost learning by as much as an extra term and increase GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) scores (Brown & Harris, 2009).

### **2.6.1 The Professional Development of Teaching Assistants**

Research has highlighted that the training for TAs is not consistent or clearly defined for the role (Farrell, Balshaw, & Polat, 2000; Groom, 2006; Blatchford *et al.*, 2007). It is noted that a large proportion of TAs enter the profession at either GCSE level or below (Blatchford, Russell & Webster, 2012; Russell, Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, & Martin, 2005). Additionally, Russell *et al.* (2005) state that the role specific training for TAs is inconsistent and does not necessarily lead to qualifications. This could lead to poor self-efficacy beliefs that could impact on their motivation and dedication to TA's role (Hayes, Richardson, Hindle, & Grayson, 2011; Enderlin-Lampe, 2002); which subsequently could lead to poorer outcomes for students (Blatchford, Russell, & Webster, 2012; Penrose, Perry, & Ball, 2007). Increasing and developing the skills of TAs through training has been highlighted in research and government documents as a key factor for improving outcomes for students (The Plowden Report, Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967; The Warnock Report, 1978; Moran & Abbott, 2006). From a review of current research, Cajkler, Tennant, Tiknaz and Sage (2007) identified that TAs' performance, confidence and self-esteem improved following training. However, some studies indicated that TAs' behaviour and performance within the teaching and learning process did not change following training despite positive changes in knowledge, skills, self-esteem and confidence (Edwards & Clemson, 1997; Hutchings, 1997; Swann & Loxley, 1998). Systemic issues such as a lack of opportunity given to the TAs by the teachers to demonstrate their new skills (Hutchings, 1997) and TAs not being included in formal meetings with parents (Taylor & Gulliford, 2011) can impact on their feelings of empowerment. Furthermore, TAs need to feel supported to facilitate and deliver intervention programmes in schools (Green, 2013) in order to achieve success. The influence of the socio-political context of the school upon the delivery of the TA role has been identified as a key factor for the success of programme delivery and outcomes for students (Blatchford, Russell, & Webster, 2012; Butterfoss, Kegler, & Francisco, 2008). Research exploring the outcomes of training for employees identifies that a fundamental factor isto empower them from being 'trainees' to facilitators, where the



implementation of new knowledge and skills ensues (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Turner, Nicholson, & Sanders, 2011). Solis et al (2012) suggests that the influence of professional development opportunities varies by and context, and that some teachers embrace it more readily than others. Research suggests that the factor influencing the success of training including role ambiguity (Damore & Murray 2008; Takala, Pirttimaa, & Tormanen 2009), limited mutual planning time, poor administrative support and limited professional development opportunities (Murawski 2010; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin 2012). However, the specific focus on the role and functioning of TAs themselves within and following training is rare within research (Higgins & Gulliford, 2014).

## **2.7 Trait-Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of Teaching Assistants**

Mayer, Salovey, Caruso and Sitarenios (2001) state that emotional literacy is, "an ability to recognise the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them" (p.234). Bandura (1994) asserts that perceived self-efficacy can be explained as, "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p.71), and that these beliefs "determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave" (p.71). Therefore, both emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are important factors for teaching staff to possess, including TAs. However, research exploring the self-efficacy and emotional intelligence of TAs is limited, therefore, for the purpose of this review, research investigating self-efficacy and emotional intelligence of teachers will be explored as they are the nearest professional group to TAs.

### **2.7.1 Self-Efficacy of School Staff**

Tobin, Muller and Turner (2006) define teacher self-efficacy as:

"the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on their students' abilities, in redirecting their students' behaviour and on their overall student achievement"

*(p. 303)*

Teacher effectiveness is governed by levels of self-efficacy, that is, the belief teachers have about their personal teaching capabilities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998). The self-efficacy of teaching staff has been found to influence positively the outcomes for students. Research shows that students taught by teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy perform better than those taught by teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy (Chang, 2015; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Henson, 2001). Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy, (1998) found

that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy were more likely to have higher levels of motivation and persistence when dealing with challenging student behaviour. Research shows that teachers with high self-efficacy are more committed to their role (Coladarci, 1992), more enthusiastic, innovative and reflective in their teaching (Nurlu, 2015; Fan & Chen, 2001), better at resolving conflict (Cinamon, 2006) place more importance on building a warm relationship with their students (Nurlu, 2015) and are more organised (Aremu, 2005). Although the research reviewed explores the self-efficacy of teachers, the theories and empirical evidence can be applied when exploring the self-efficacy of TAs (Hammett & Burton, 2005).

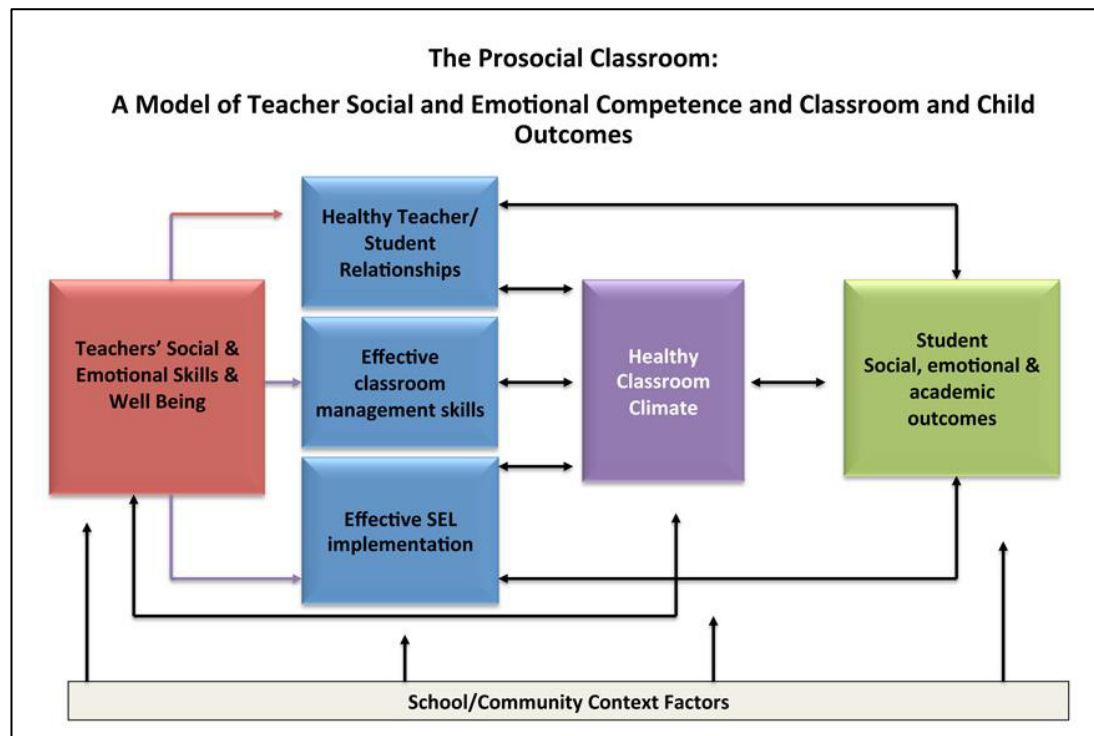
### ***2.7.2 Influencing and Enhancing Self-Efficacy of Teaching Assistants***

Dembo and Gibson (1985) emphasise that, "the problem of identifying antecedents of efficacy and developing ways to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy is critical" (p.177). This highlights the importance of identifying antecedents to increase TAs' level of self-efficacy. Higgins and Gulliford (2014) state that there are calls for the enhancement of TA skills and self-efficacy; but direct research into TA self-efficacy is difficult to find. Influential factors for TAs' self-efficacy include previous experience working with children with special educational needs (Gibb, 2007), working with parents (Soltys, 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) and having experiences in positive behaviour management (Giallo & Little, 2003). Furthermore, recommendations for training opportunities such as collaborative and supportive training (Gibb, 2007), organisational initiatives (Tobin et al., 2006), and contextual factors within an organisation such as participation, framing and organisational climate (Quinones, 1997) influence the effectiveness of training and develop positive self-efficacy for trainees. Factors which negatively impact on TAs' self-efficacy are conditions of service such as temporary contracts, low pay, lack of training opportunities, systemic issues of disorganisation, and feeling unprepared (Russell et al., 2005; Clayton, 1993; Farrell et al., 2000). However, Hammett and Burton (2005) discovered that a clear career progression, specialist roles and training would be seen as motivating factors for TAs only when the school system is supportive of TAs' self-esteem and status. Furthermore, research identifies that collaborating with colleagues intrinsically strengthens a teachers' capacity for inclusion, which can be positively influenced through opportunities that facilitate the sharing of, knowledge and expertise (Forlin 2010; Horn and Little 2010). This could be applied to TAs and their experience of the ELSA training programme.

### **2.7.3 Teaching Assistants *Trait-Emotional Intelligence***

As previously discussed, the following research explored will be based on teachers' emotional intelligence, which, it is argued, could be applied to TAs.

Jennings (2011) suggests that teachers with high levels of emotional intelligence are well prepared to effectively implement social and emotional learning for students by modelling skills and behaviour in naturally occurring everyday situations. For example, when a teacher introduces skills to regulate strong emotions, it is important to demonstrate techniques that illustrate skills of emotional intelligence when faced with disruptive classroom behaviour. This then influences three outcomes: healthy teacher-student relationships, effective classroom management and effective social emotional learning (SEL). Subsequently, these factors support the cultivation of a healthy classroom climate that is conducive to desirable social, emotional, and academic student outcomes. Moreover, a healthy classroom climate may reinforce a teacher's self-efficacy and commitment to the teaching profession, resulting in a positive feedback loop (Jennings, 2011). Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) Prosocial Classroom figure illustrates the relationship between a teacher's emotional intelligence and positive student outcomes (Figure 2). According to the Prosocial Classroom Model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) teachers' emotional intelligence and well-being are imperative in cultivating a prosocial classroom climate. Therefore, emotional intelligence influences teachers to form supportive relationships with their students, manage their classrooms effectively and successfully implement SEL. Conversely, teachers with low emotional intelligence may resort to reactive and excessively punitive responses that do not teach self-regulation and may contribute to a self-sustaining cycle of classroom disruption (Osher et al., 2007).



**Figure 2:** The Prosocial Classroom Model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

#### **2.7.4 Influencing and Enhancing Trait-Emotional Intelligence of Teaching Assistants**

The principle of developing emotional literacy is:

"...to help people work with each other cooperatively, free of manipulation and coercion, using emotions empathically to bind people together and enhance the collective quality of life."

Steiner (2003)

Therefore, Steiner's assertion is that emotional literacy should be used to bring people together, but allow them to work free of 'manipulation and coercion' by others. The purpose of emotional literacy is not to develop individual emotional ability, but to create contexts in which the interactions between people promote understanding and collaboration. Haddon et al. (2005) believe that emotional literacy can be conceptualised as an evolving influence of group interactions, rather than an internal quality of any single individual, which is in contrast to the concept of emotional intelligence. Therefore, the emotional literacy of school staff on a systemic level could have vastly influential outcomes, both positive and negative.

Promoting emotional literacy may support TAs and teaching staff to better manage situations that they may find difficult. Consequently, its influence may successfully cultivate supportive and caring relationships with their students, establish and maintain classroom environments that are conducive to learning and more effectively implement social and emotional learning curricula. Successfully creating and maintaining a classroom learning environment where students are happy and excited to learn reinforces teachers' efficacy and enjoyment of teaching, thereby preventing

burnout and attrition.

Steiner and Perry (1997) suggest that enhancing emotional literacy involves three further skills of increasing difficulty level including speaking about emotions and what causes them; developing empathic intuition capacity; and apologising for the damage caused by emotional mistakes. Within the ELSA training programme TAs are encouraged to explore their own emotions, behavioural triggers for and receive training from EPs to develop their empathy skills. It could be hypothesised that the ELSA programme could positively influence the emotional literacy of TAs who successfully complete the training course as the ELSA programme includes elements which develop TAs' understanding of feelings, behaviours and developing empathy. This prepares the ELSAs to, "support children and young people in school to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst also respecting the feelings of those around them" (elsanetwork.org).

#### ***2.7.5 Relevance of Teaching Assistants' Self-Efficacy and Trait-Emotional Intelligence in Research***

Chan (2004) found that "self-efficacy beliefs were significantly predicted by the components of emotional intelligence" (p.15). Emmer and Hickman (1991) recommend that researchers explore the relationship between school staff emotions and efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, Adepoju (2001) and Cherniss (1993) argued that contributions of emotional literacy and self-efficacy are important work related attitudes but have not received much empirical attention and support. Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) suggested that there is a need for rigorous research to underpin the usefulness of emotional literacy and self-efficacy in organisational settings, whether public or private, on both a personal and organisational level. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) suggest, "the substantial variation in teacher efficacy may result in part from variance in teachers' emotions" (p.339). This suggests that the link between self-efficacy and teaching staff emotions is an influential association. Numerous studies have explored emotional literacy and emotional intelligence (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008); however, a few have explored the relationship between emotional literacy and self-efficacy, especially with regards to educational professionals. Chan (2004), Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009), Rastegar and Memarpour (2009), and Gürol, Özeran, and Yalçın (2010) found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy. However, no significant differences among teachers with different genders, ages and teaching experiences were reported.

## **The Current Study**

### **3.1 Research Rationale**

This study is concerned with the concept of trait-emotional intelligence and the self-efficacy of TAs who participate in the ELSA Training Programme. In the UK, since the mid-1990s, there has been an explosion of interest in non-cognitive aspects of learning, the mental health of children and the role of schools in health promotion (Coleman, 2009); all of which has contributed to the current well-being agenda. This has been promoted, relatively uncritically, by government, academics and independent organisations. The well-being agenda has been embraced in schools across the UK with relatively little critical debate until concerns were raised regarding the assumptions and values underpinning it (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Craig, 2009). The evidence base for the effectiveness of well-being interventions; the relationship between emotional intelligence and value systems; the role of schools in providing therapeutic education; the lack of consideration given to the emotional experience of teachers; the effect of a nationally agreed strategy for social and emotional aspects of learning; and the consequences of assessing children's social and emotional development were all key areas that were identified as having little or no sustained research. However, this is in relation to other well-being projects and not the ELSA programme.

A key factor to consider for this research would be to look at the larger systemic issue of schools providing therapeutic support to potentially vulnerable children and the lack of consideration given to the emotional experience of those who are involved in the delivery of the therapeutic interventions e.g. TAs. For the purpose of this study, the TAs' feelings of self-efficacy in relation to their role as an ELSA will be explored. Alborz, Pearson, Farrell, and Howes' (2009) systematic review of research exploring TAs' self-efficacy suggested, "TAs appear effective when trained and supported to deliver specific interventions" (p.15). This emphasises the influence of training as a catalyst to increase TAs' self-efficacy.

### **3.2 Evaluating Teaching Assistants' (TAs') Training Experience**

The specialised ELSA training involves six full training days facilitated by two EPs from whom ELSAs receive ongoing supervision following training. Higgins and Guildford (2014) state that EPs are well placed to ensure that evaluation of training methods assesses whether self-efficacy is being enhanced during and after the training process. This suggests that research conducted by EPs could identify whether the ELSA training programme influences the TAs self-efficacy and emotional literacy. However, there is little research on ELSA training and its impact on TAs' own self-efficacy and emotional

literacy. This highlights an important area for research to explore TAs' perceptions of the training in relation to their future role.

### **3.3 Relevance to Educational Psychology**

The specialised ELSA training programme can only be facilitated by EPs. Following the six-day training programme, TAs receive ongoing supervision from EPs from their local authority. Therefore, the role of the EP is fundamental from the outset and continues to be a key influencing and supportive factor throughout the ELSA role, long after training. However, there is insufficient research on ELSA training and its impact on TAs and there is no known literature on the impact of training on TAs' trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. This highlights an important research area to explore and could identify key issues for EPs who are involved in facilitating the ELSA programme and the supervision sessions for ELSAs after training. This research could highlight key issues for EPs delivering or promoting training programmes in schools for school staff generally.

### **3.4 Research Questions**

This study is concerned with the concepts of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of TAs who have completed the ELSA training programme. Furthermore, due to the lack of research exploring TAs' experiences and perceptions of the ELSA training programme and their future role, this will also be explored in this research. Reflecting on the research perspective and the literature review, this study will specifically explore the following research questions

- 1.** Does ELSA training have an effect on TAs' own levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence?
  
- 2.** What are TAs' perceptions of the ELSA training in relation to their future role as an ELSA?

## **Part Two**

### Empirical Study



## Abstract

The role of TAs has changed considerably from that of supporting teachers and children with additional learning needs to that of providing emotional support and personal and social development (Groom, 2006). Consequently, the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme was developed (Burton, 2009) as a training programme to develop the skills of teaching assistants (TAs) in schools to provide emotional support for children in their schools. However, their effectiveness in delivering this programme is likely to be governed by levels of self-efficacy, that is, the belief they have about their capabilities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Self-efficacy beliefs are predicted by the components of trait-emotional intelligence (Chan, 2004) and there is a need for research exploring the relationship between school staff emotions and efficacy beliefs (Emmer & Hickman, 1991).

This research utilises a multi-methods approach exploring the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs before and after having completed the ELSA training and the perceptions TAs have regarding their future role. Statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires revealed that the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence scores of the participants increased after having completed the ELSA training. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from the focus group revealed that TAs identified issues that influenced their perceptions of their future roles as ELSA both negatively and positively. The four main themes were identified, with sub themes and subordinate themes. The overarching main theme identified was 'systemic issues' as the main concern with the sub themes 'lack of support from school' and 'lack of self-efficacy for the role'. The second occurring main theme was 'improved knowledge and understanding' with the sub themes 'value of the ELSA role & training' and 'a better understanding of the ELSA values'. The third occurring main theme was 'benefits of ELSA for children and TAs', with the sub themes 'developing personal skills' and 'benefits for children'. The final occurring main theme was and 'low self-efficacy and confidence' with the sub themes 'self-efficacy for the ELSA role' and 'fears and loneliness of ELSA role'.

## Introduction and Literature Review

### 1.1 Trait-Emotional Literacy and Self-Efficacy: The Link

Mayer, Salovey, Caruso and Sitarenios (2001) state that emotional literacy is, "an ability to recognise the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them" (p.234). Bandura (1994) asserts that perceived self-efficacy can be explained as, "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p.71), and that these beliefs "determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave" (p.71). Therefore, both emotional literacy and self-efficacy are important factors for teaching staff to possess.

Teacher effectiveness is governed by levels of self-efficacy, that is, the belief teachers have about their teaching capabilities (Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998). This could also be applied to TAs as their role within school is very close to that of teachers. Dembo and Gibson (1985) suggest that because of this connection, "the problem of identifying antecedents of efficacy and developing ways to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy is critical" (p.177). It could be argued that the importance of identifying antecedents to increase TAs' level of self-efficacy. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) suggest "the substantial variation in teacher efficacy may result in part from variance in teachers' emotions" (p.339). This suggests that the link between self-efficacy and teachers' emotions is an influential association. Therefore, research needs to explore the relationship between teacher emotions and efficacy beliefs (Emmer & Hickman, 1991). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence that explores TAs' emotional literacy and self-efficacy. It is possible that enhancing a TA's emotional literacy will have a positive influence on a person's self-efficacy, as Abraham (2000) found that more emotionally intelligent employees had higher levels of job satisfaction and greater commitment to their organisations. However, there is limited research that explores the ability to positively influence school staff's self-efficacy (Fives, 2003). Burton (2009) states that the majority of ELSAs report high levels of job satisfaction. Stringer (2009; cited in Burton 2009, p.2) states that, "as an ELSA you will experience enhanced job satisfaction" which could imply that TAs' self-efficacy will increase as result of completing the ELSA training. However, there is no known research to support this claim. This presents an opportunity to explore an area of research that is currently under-represented. Chan (2004) found that "self-efficacy beliefs were significantly predicted by the components of emotional intelligence" (p.15). Emmer and Hickman (1991) recommend that there is a need for research exploring the relationship between school

staff emotions and efficacy beliefs.

### **1.2 Teaching Assistants and their Roles**

The role of TAs has changed considerably from that of supporting teachers and children with additional learning needs, to that of providing emotional support and personal and social development (Groom, 2006). The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2013) identified that children’s social, emotional and behavioural needs were a high priority for children who were identified as school action plus (SA+). The development of the ELSA training programme was in response to the increased understanding of the effects of children’s emotional well-being on their educational outcomes (Burton, 2008). The United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that the emotional well-being of children in the United Kingdom scored the lowest on a range of well-being measures in comparison to children from 20 different industrialised countries. Therefore, the well-being agenda is important for schools to ensure that they meet the emotional needs of their students.

### **1.3 The ELSA Programme**

Educational psychology services (EPSs) across England and Wales have launched ELSA training whereby TAs are trained by educational psychologists (EPs) to become ELSAs. Upon completion of the training, the ELSA’s role is to:

“support children and young people in school to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst also respecting the feelings of those around them”

(elsanetwork.org)

However, the educational outcomes of students rely heavily on the effectiveness of the teaching staff (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

It is recognised in recent research that TA skills and self-efficacy need to be enhanced (Higgins & Guilford, 2014) and the ELSA project has been designed as a training programme to increase the skills of TAs (Burton, 2008). In order for TAs to be nominated for the ELSA programme, a person specification is used as a method for trainee selection that includes the identification that the trainee already shows a higher level of emotional literacy (trait-emotional intelligence; Petrides, 2008); however, this is often referred to as emotional intelligence in research. Brackett et al. (2010) states that individuals with higher trait-emotional intelligence scores report higher levels in stress management and managing classroom behaviours; which could be related to higher levels of self-efficacy. Direct research into TAs’ trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy is difficult to find.

#### **1.4 Evaluating TAs' Training Experience**

The specialised ELSA training involves six full training days facilitated by two EPs from whom ELSAs receive ongoing supervision following training. Alborz, Pearson, Farrell, and Howes' (2009) systematic review of research on TAs' self-efficacy suggested, "*TAs appear effective when trained and supported to deliver specific interventions*" (p.15). This emphasises the influence of training as a catalyst to increase TAs' self-efficacy. Furthermore, Higgins and Guildford (2014) state that EPs are well placed to ensure that evaluation of training methods assesses whether self-efficacy is being enhanced during and after the training process. This suggests that research conducted by EPs could identify whether the ELSA training programme influences the TAs' self-efficacy and emotional literacy. However, there is little research on ELSA training and its impact on TAs' own self-efficacy and emotional literacy. This highlights an important area for research to explore TAs' perceptions of the training in relation to their future role.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

Reflecting on the research perspective and the literature review, this study will explore the following research questions:

- 1** Does ELSA training have an effect on TAs' own levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence?
  
- 2** What are TAs' perceptions of the ELSA training in relation to their future role as an ELSA?

## Epistemology

### 2.1 Research Design

Following the evaluation of previous research methods utilised in the data collection of school staff perceptions (Penrose, Perry & Ball, 2007) and considering the aim of this study, the following research design was proposed

- In order to explore research question 1 and 2, a quantitative, two-phase research method that explored TAs' trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy through administering two standardised questionnaires of a 'within participants' design; pre and post training. The dependent variable was the measurement of each participant's self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. The independent variable was the ELSA training.
- For the purpose of gaining data that could answer research question 2, qualitative data was obtained through the facilitation of three separate focus groups of TAs that had completed the ELSA training to determine the participants' views on their future role as an ELSA.

### 2.2 Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct this research, ethical approval was required from Cardiff University. This is to ensure that the research is conducted with ethical integrity and is compliant with the standard ethical principles of the university, BPS and HCPC. Once the necessary approval and permissions were obtained, the sampling procedure commenced. All participants were provided with the informed consent form and the debrief form at both the questionnaire and the focus group stages. Please see Appendix 1 for full information regarding the measures put in place to ensure that this study was conducted in line with the Cardiff University's Ethics standards.

### 2.3 Research Materials

In order to ensure that participants fully understood that their involvement in the research was freely volunteered and that they were allowed to withdraw at any time, all potential participants were provided with an information sheet and informed consent form

- Questionnaire sample see Appendices 2 and 3
- Focus group sample see Appendices 4 and 5

Following the completion of their participation in the research, all participants were assured that their data would be kept anonymous and held securely and received a

debrief form explaining this.

- Questionnaire sample see Appendix 6
- Focus group sample see Appendix 7

### **2.3.1 Measures**

In order to explore if ELSA training affects TAs' self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence and the TAs' perceptions of their future role as an ELSA, investigation exploring the best possible research materials were determined. Thorough research and consideration was given to determine the most appropriate and reliable surveys to measure TAs' trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. The TEIQue-SF (Petrides & Furnham, 2006) (see Appendix 8) and the TSES-SF (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) (see Appendix 9) questionnaires were determined to be the best possible measures to collect the necessary information regarding trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as they were both standardised measures which could be adapted for use with TAs. The following materials were required

- TEIQue-SF (Petrides & Furnham, 2006). It contains 30 items in 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). TEIQue-SF is based on Trait-emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-long form (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) which contains 153 items in 15 facets in four sub-constructs; wellbeing, self-control, emotionality, sociability and global trait-emotional intelligence. Cooper and Petrides (2010) showed the TEIQue to have better psychometric characteristics in comparison to other EI measurement scales. Therefore, the TEIQue-SF was used in this study to measure the construct of trait-emotional intelligence of TAs on the basis of its face validity for use with teachers (Cooper & Petrides, 2010).
- TSES-SF (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). It contains 12 items answerable using a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (none at all) to 9 (a great deal). The TSES-SF is based on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) that was originally developed by Gibson and Dembo (1984). Following close scrutiny of the TSES, the TSES-SF has been found to demonstrate scale reliabilities, inter correlations, means, and standard deviations that have been applied to teaching staff at all levels (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Heneman, Kimball & Milanowski, 2006).
- A semi-structured interview plan to guide discussion (Appendix 10). The methods discussed in Kitzinger (1995), Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub (1996), and Krueger and Casey (2000) in conjunction with research relating to self-

efficacy were followed to produce a plan for the focus group interview.

- An audio recording device to record the views of the focus group with prior consent of all participants.

## **2.4 Sample**

The research sample for this study was an opportunity sample, recruited from a group of approximately 95 TAs from primary and secondary educational settings and pupil referral units who were enrolled on the ELSA training courses. Participants were of employment age between 18 and 65 years and contained both males and females. Participants were recruited from three different training cohorts from six different local authorities in Wales following approval from the Principal Educational Psychologists (see Appendix 11).

The following samples were recruited

- For the questionnaire data, participants were recruited at the beginning of the first ELSA training day. Participants completed the pre-training Teacher Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short-Form (TEIQue-SF) and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Short-Form (TSES-SF). The same participants were invited to complete the same questionnaires at the end of the last day of ELSA training.
- The research sample sought to participate in the focus group was an opportunity sample of TAs who had completed all six days of the ELSA training. The participants were recruited at the end of the sixth ELSA training day and were invited to participate in a focus group. Three focus groups took place at the end of each training programme with approximately eight participants in each group, utilising the semi-structured interview schedule.

## **2.5 Procedure**

Following ethical approval from Cardiff University, the research could commence. In order to maintain a realistic and achievable structure for this study, an action plan was developed and followed (Appendix 12).

### ***2.5.1 Questionnaires***

In order to collect the necessary data to answer research questions, the initial stage of the procedure required the recruitment of a research sample. At the beginning of the first ELSA training day the researcher invited TAs to complete the TEIQue-SF and the

TSES-SF questionnaire. Potential participants were approached and provided with the information sheet and informed consent form. Each TA was also given a unique identifier number that was known only by the participants, which they wrote on their questionnaires. Individuals who consented to and fully understood his or her participation in the research, they were asked to use their unique personal code to mark on their questionnaires. At the end of the sixth training day the same participants were invited to complete another set of the TEIQue-SF and TSES-SF questionnaires. The unique identifier number allocated to each participant was used again. These questionnaires were administered by and kept by the researcher.

All participants, from all three training cohorts, who were included in this study understood that they gave permission for their pre-questionnaires (that were administered on day one) and post-training questionnaires (those administered on day six) to be used as data for this research. This was to ensure that their data at both the pre and post training stages could be paired for analysis. This is imperative for the analysis stage of the research in order to determine if ELSA training affects the trait-emotional intelligence and/or self-efficacy of the TAs. Both the TEIQue-SF and TSES-SF questionnaires at both stages were required to be completed in full. Questionnaires that had not been completed in full or those who had not signed consent for both the pre and post questionnaires were not included for analysis and were destroyed. The questionnaires that had been completed in full (and where the participants gave consent to both the pre and post questionnaires being used for research) could be paired with the pre-training questionnaires and verified appropriate for data analysis following the inclusion criteria as shown in Figure 3.

The estimated duration of the period of data collection was three days; one day spent at each of the sixth training day at each cohort in the pre and post-test days. On each day it took approximately 1 hour to:

- obtain signed informed consent from participants;
- administer the post questionnaire;
- collect in the pre or post questionnaires; and
- distribute the debrief forms.

### **2.5.2 Focus Groups**

Potential participants were approached and provided with the information sheet and informed consent form for their perusal at the beginning of the sixth ELSA training session. Those who had engaged in all of the six training days were invited to participate in the focus group that followed after the completion of the sixth ELSA training day. This



was to ensure that the participants' views of their future role as an ELSA was as informed as possible; therefore, those who had not attended all training days were not invited as the greatest breadth of experiences would provide a richer data set.

The duration of the data collection process was three days; one day spent at each of the sixth training day at each cohort in April 2015. On each day it took approximately 1 hour 30 minutes to:

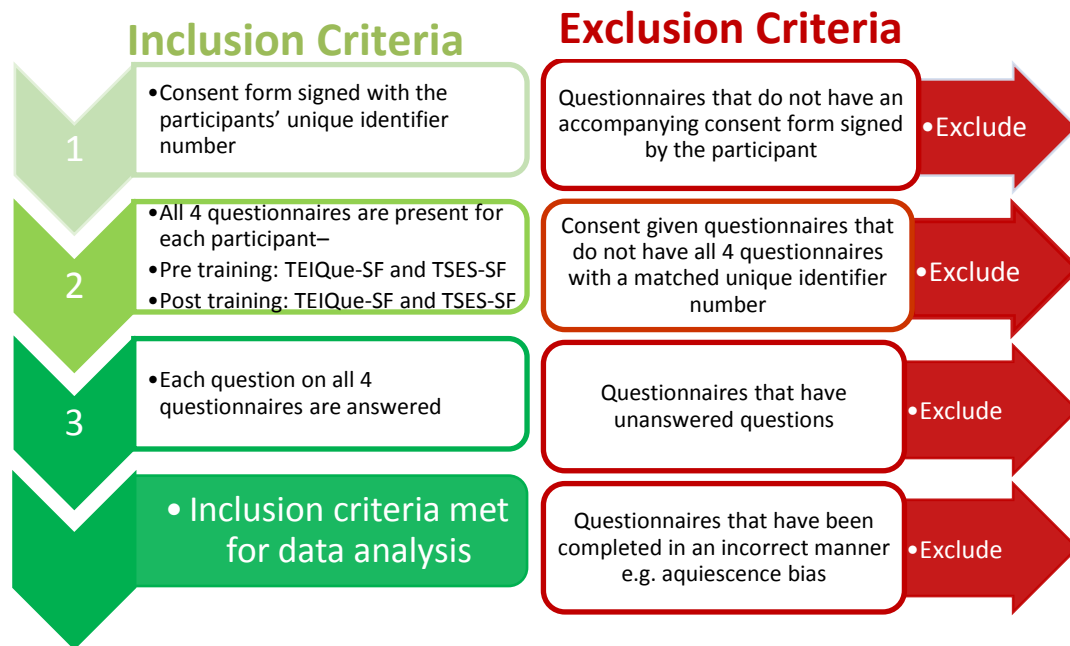
- obtain signed informed consent from participants;
- conduct the focus group; and
- distribute the debrief forms.

Attention was paid to issues of reliability and validity in generating focus group data. Ground rules were used, and the researcher was sensitive to the size of group, familiarity of staff, and the need to distribute opportunity within the discourse, through facilitation (Cohen et al., 2007). The data were recorded, transcribed, and coded by the researcher using inter-rater checks. Anonymity and confidentiality of the data were securely maintained and the audio tapes were erased after their use. Ethical issues were addressed through explanatory letters and debriefing to all relevant school staff (please see Appendix 7).

## **2.6 Method of Analysis**

### ***2.6.1 Questionnaire Data***

The data obtained from the pre and post questionnaires were examined using SPSS to determine whether there was a significant difference in the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs pre and post ELSA training. All questionnaires had to meet the inclusion criteria as shown in the figure below in order to be included for analysis. See Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** Questionnaire Completion Criteria for Inclusion for Data Analysis

### 2.6.2 Focus Group Data

The data gained from the focus group was examined using thematic analysis to determine the perceptions of the TAs. Thematic analysis was chosen as it is widely used as a qualitative analytic method within psychology that offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Boyatzis (1998) describes thematic analysis as a method for organising and describing data sets in rich detail that interprets various aspects of the research topic. Therefore, the decision to use thematic analysis as a method of analysis was the most appropriate for this research achieved using the NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package. In order to examine qualitative data using thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) propose that there is an array of different techniques. Therefore, researchers have debated the validity of this type of analysis. To reduce validity issues of interpretation and theory, and to ensure a robust analysis, steps outlined by Vaughn et al. (1996) on how to analyse focus group interviews were followed. The steps used were:

- (a) Coding data
- (b) Deciding on categories and inclusion criteria for these categories and placing quotes into envelopes
- (c) Reviewing these categories in an iterative process
- (d) Developing themes from these categories
- (e) A colleague completing these steps and the themes evaluated
- (f) Final themes developed

## Results

### 3.1 Questionnaire Analysis

Out of 97 participants who consented to their questionnaire data being analysed for this research, a total of 70 participants’ data met the inclusion criteria identified in Figure 3. This verified their suitability for analysis in order to answer research question 1.

Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics of the participants’ total trait-emotional intelligence (TEIQue-SF) and total self-efficacy (TSES-SF) scores.

Results indicate the mean, mode, median and range of scores increased for both the TSES-SF and TEIQue-SF after having completed the ELSA training (see table 2).

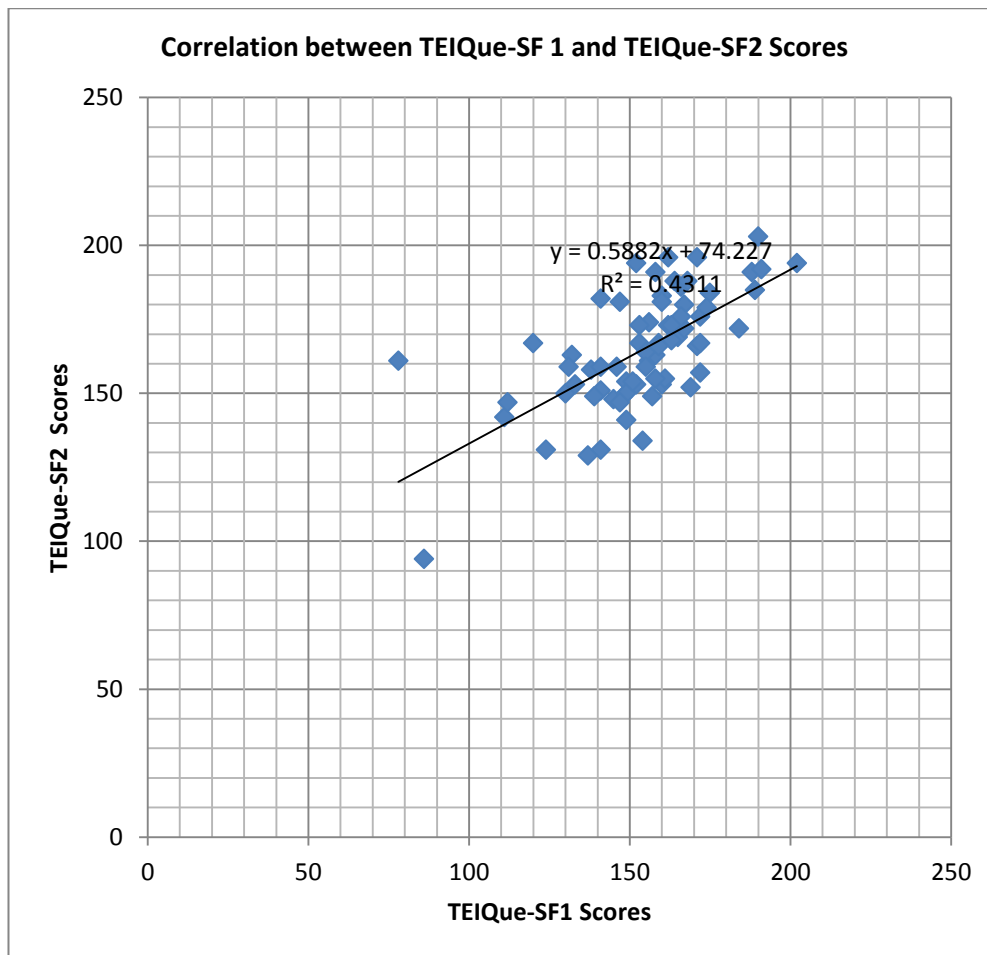
	Pre TSES-SF 1	Post TSES-SF 2	Pre TEIQue-SF 1	Post TEIQue-SF 2
<b>Mean</b>	74.64286	84.25714	153.9286	164.7714
<b>Mode</b>	82	84	141	167
<b>Median</b>	76	84	156.5	165
<b>Score range</b>	41-105	39-109	78-202	94-203

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics for trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy scores both pre and post ELSA training.

#### ***3.1.1 Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>) Participants report a change in trait-emotional intelligence from the pre-training levels to the post-training levels.***

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PC) was calculated to assess the relationship between the scores of the TEIQue-SF1 and TEIQue-SF2 (data for pre TEIQue-SF scores and post TEIQue-SF scores).

Analysis using PC indicated that there was a significant association between the scores of the TEIQue-SF1 and TEIQue-SF2 ( $r=.657, n=70, p= <.001$ ). Therefore, there is a strong correlation between the scores at the pre and post training stages. This indicates that participants who had a low score on the pre questionnaires also had a low score on the post questionnaires and similarly for those who scored highly. This supports the reliability and validity of the questionnaires used.



**Figure 4:** A scatterplot illustrating the correlation between the pre and post scores on the TEIQue-SF questionnaires.

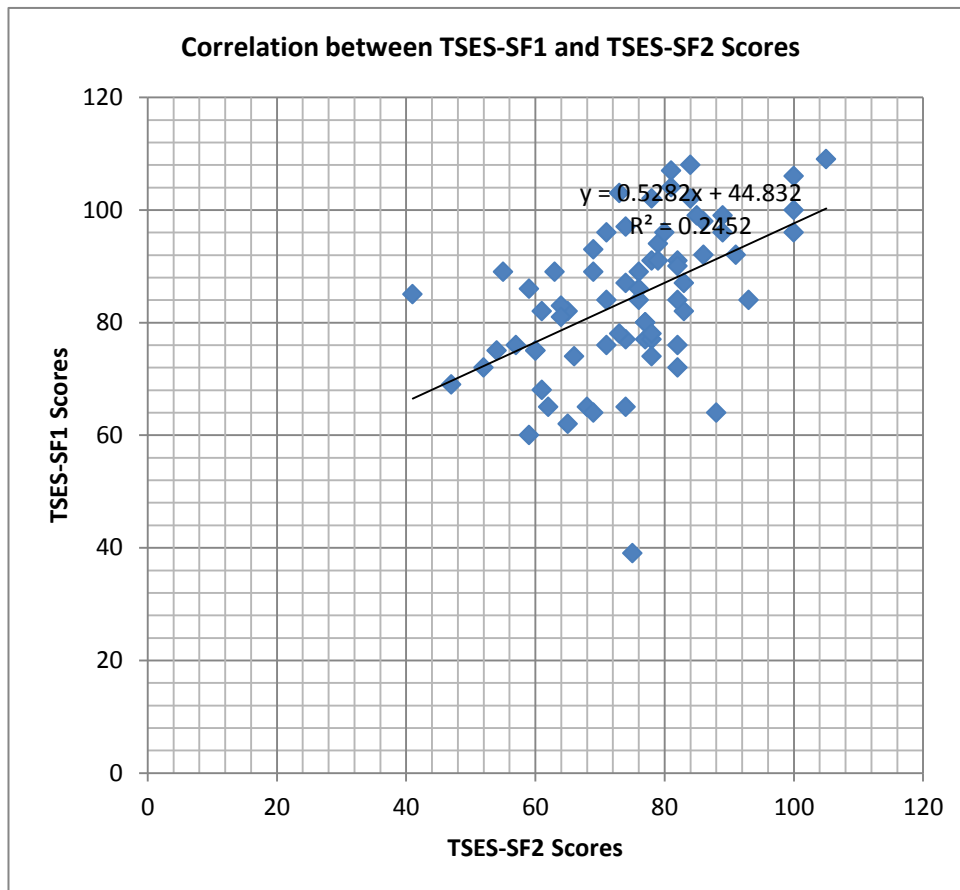
A scatterplot summarises the results of the PC analyses (Figure 5). Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the pre and post measures of trait-emotional intelligence. Scores of pre training trait-emotional intelligence positively correlated with post ELSA training scores of trait-emotional intelligence.

As shown in Table 3, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the trait-emotional intelligence scores of the pre ELSA training and the post ELSA training measures. There was a significant difference in the scores for the TEIQue-SF1 ( $M=153.93$ ,  $SD=2.59$ ) and the TEIQue-SF2 scores ( $M=164.77$ ,  $SD=19.41$ );  $t(69) = -5.292$ ,  $p < .001$  pre-training. These results indicate that the scores at the pre and post training stages for participants' level of trait-emotional intelligence were significantly different. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 ( $H_1$ ) can be accepted, as participants' scores on a test of trait-emotional intelligence were significantly higher after the ELSA training than before it.

**3.1.2 Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>) Participants report a change in self-efficacy from the pre-training levels to the post-training levels.**

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PC) was calculated to assess the relationship between the scores of TSES-SF1 and TSES-SF2 (data for pre TSES-SF scores and post TSES-SF scores).

Analysis using PC indicated that there was a significant association between the scores of the TSES-SF1 and TSES-SF2 ( $r=.495$ ,  $n=70$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Therefore, there is a strong correlation between the scores at the pre and post training stages. This indicates that participants who had a low score on the pre questionnaires also had a low score on the post questionnaires and similarly for those who scored highly. This supports the reliability and validity of the questionnaires used.



**Figure 5:** A scatterplot illustrating the correlation between the pre and post scores on the TSES-SF questionnaires.

A scatterplot summarises the results of the PC analyses (Figure 4). Overall, there was a strong, positive correlation between the pre and post measures of self-efficacy scores. Scores of pre training self-efficacy were positively correlated with post ELSA training score of self-efficacy.

As shown in Table 3, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy scores of the pre ELSA training and the post ELSA training measures.

There was a significant difference in the scores for the TSES-SF1 (M=74.64, SD=12.63) and the TSES-SF2 (M=84.26, SD=13.47) scores;  $t(69) = -6.123$ ,  $p < .001$  post-training. These results indicate that the scores at the pre and post training stages for participants' level of self-efficacy were significantly different. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 ( $H_2$ ) can be accepted, as participants' scores on a test of self-efficacy were significantly higher after the ELSA training than before it.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	TSES-SF1 – TSES-SF2	-9.614	13.137	1.570	-12.747	-6.482	-6.123	69	
Pair 2	TEIQue-SF1 – TEIQue-SF2	-10.843	17.144	2.049	-14.931	-6.755	-5.292	69	

**Table 3:** Paired Samples Test of TSES-SF1 – TSES-SF2 and TEIQue-SF1 – TEIQue-SF2

For further information on the statistical results please see SPSS output tables in Appendix 13.

**3.1.3 Hypothesis 3 ( $H_3$ ) Scores for self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence will be significantly related at a) pre- and b) post-training.**

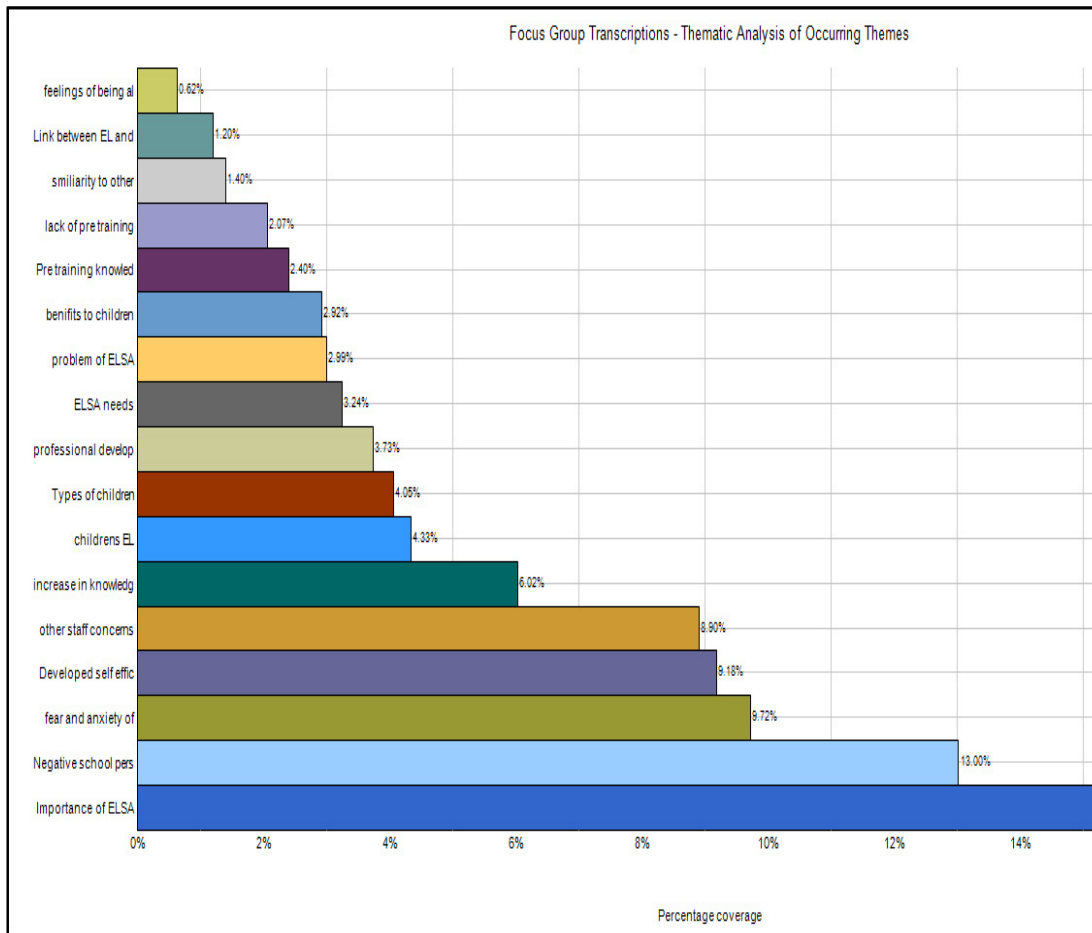
The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PC) was calculated to assess the relationship between the scores of:

- a. TSES-SF1 and TEIQue-SF1 (data for pre TSES-SF scores and pre TEIQue-SF scores); and
- b. TSES-SF2 and TEIQue-SF2 (data for post TSES-SF scores and post TEIQue-SF scores).

The results of the PC for the relationship between the scores of the TSES-SF1 and TEIQue-SF1 ( $r=.271$ ,  $n=70$ ,  $p=.023$ ); and TSES-SF2 and TEIQue-SF2 ( $r=.128$ ,  $n=70$ ,  $p=.292$ ) were not significant. This indicates that there was no significant relationship between participants' scores on the TSES-SF and TEIQue-SF pre or post training; therefore, there is no significant relationship between their scores of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy pre or post ELSA training. There is no significant relationship between the differences in the pre- and post-training scores of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence and Hypothesis 3 can be rejected, for both a) pre- and b) post-training. However, the level of association is greater at the pre-training stage, so participants' scores of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence are more closely associated at pre-training than post-training.

### **3.2 Focus Group Findings**

Data were gathered from three separate focus groups from three different groups of ELSA trainees. Eight participants were recruited for each focus group and all 24 participants were given the opportunity to convey their thoughts and feelings relating to the focus group questions. The focus group recordings were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis on NVivo computer package which identified comparable themes across the combined focus group data. Figure 6 shows the emerging themes percentage coverage in all three focus groups. The emerging theme with the highest percentage coverage i.e., the theme that emerged in the data most frequently was the 'importance of ELSA', whereas the theme 'feelings of being alone' emerged the least throughout the data. These themes could be rated (1-16) in order of percentage coverage, with 1 representing the highest percentage coverage i.e. 'importance of ELSA' and 16 representing the lowest percentage coverage 'feelings of being alone'. Please see Table 4 for a full list of the rated themes and a selection of the corresponding quotes from the focus group data.



**Figure 6:** The percentage coverage of the occurring themes from the focus group data.



N°	Theme	Examples of Quotes
1	Importance of ELSA	<p>"You never know what that child has been keeping inside waiting for that meeting at that time on that day."</p> <p>"Then I do feel this actual training could make a lot of difference because it does involve so many different strands that we've looked at."</p>
2	Negative school perspective	<p>"It's up to them to implement it now. Find me a room. I've done my resources. I tell them what I need to do. I'm fed up of going constantly. I just feel like it's - I don't know. I sometimes feel like it's a waste of time if I'm honest."</p> <p>"I just think, I hope the head teachers and management keep their end of the deal up as well."</p>
3	Fear and anxiety of ELSA role	<p>"Purely because people are abusing my position. I've been given a room and - then the teachers can't cope with the behaviour in the class. It's you, you and you, down."</p> <p>"Like I would be devastated if they'd (children) just say, oh yeah I remember her. She used to let me down.... Because you're causing more damage in the long term, aren't you?"</p>
4	Developed sense of self-efficacy	<p>"...that's my role really, just if I can help I will. I think they - because I'm coming on this lots of people call me now. I think they think I'm some sort of [laughs] God."</p> <p>"When we're talking on our groups and they're saying about certain things and you think of children, which I would never have done before."</p>
5	Other school staff concerns about the ELSA role	<p>"The head teacher has invited me along (to the staff meeting). It'll (new ELSA role) probably go down like a cup of cold sick"</p> <p>"(We are) damn good at our job, but we need someone with [unclear]. I could never go in and tell a teacher, well I need this, excuse me."</p>
6	Increase in knowledge	<p>"It just gave me a better understanding of emotional literacy."</p> <p>"We've got the knowledge now I think and the back-up of well, we are ELSAs, this is our role, to actually put these interventions in place."</p>
7	Children's emotional intelligence	<p>"I was quite surprised about how limited their vocabulary was around feeling words. When I started working with the children I was - it's like the three main feelings, happy, sad, angry..."</p> <p>"...and that they didn't feel it was okay to feel sad or angry. They didn't know how to express it."</p>
8	Professional development	<p>"Then I do feel this actual training could make a lot of difference (to my development) because it does involve so many different strands that we've looked at."</p> <p>"I discussed it with my manager and I said it'd be really good to develop my programme."</p>

9	ELSA needs	<p>"I just think, I hope the head teachers and management keep their end of the deal up as well."</p> <p>"I hope that we're going to have support, I know just from having emails that we are going to get some support from the education psychologist."</p>
10	Negative aspects of ELSA	<p>"You know that you can't always refer all the children..."</p> <p>"Because I'm passionate about it and I feel that you're not paid enough, I'm not paid enough, but in return just respect would be good."</p>
11	Types of children suitable for ELSA	<p>"You've obviously got the certain children who you know have complications and issues and things like that."</p> <p>"Because the children that we are working with, it's - we're something like 60 per cent School Action and School Action Plus in our school..."</p>
12	Positive understanding of a lack of pre-training knowledge of ELSA	<p>"I didn't really understand because we'd never had anything like that (ELSA) within our school."</p> <p>"Yeah definitely new. I mean I had a little understanding what it (ELSA) was about and what it entailed, et cetera, but yeah, it was all definitely new to me"</p>
13	No knowledge/inclusion in decision making for attending the ELSA training beforehand	<p>"Before I started I thought there was more about learning about feelings and knowing that it's okay to express how you're feeling in an appropriate way. I thought it would be tailored around that kind of stuff."</p> <p>"I didn't have any idea and I went on the ELSA. Well I just Googled ELSA, and then all the pictures of the other ELSA came up. But no, just the ELSA network came up from - so I had a look on that."</p>
14	Similarity of ELSA to other programmes	<p>"There's a bit of circle time, bit of [unknown word], bit of this and bit of that in there."</p> <p>"I do a programme on self-esteem and confidence. So I knew a little bit about the ELSA role."</p>
15	The link between children's emotional literacy and learning	<p>"You've got to treat - if they come in sad you've got to treat that before you can teach them anything. Got a saying in our class, if you don't come in with a smile you don't learn properly."</p> <p>"We found out some games that you play with them, just tiny things, that make so much difference to them to be able to learn."</p>
16	Feeling of being alone	<p>"The other lady who came, she left, so I'll be doing it predominantly now on my own."</p> <p>"There are so many (children) and there is just one me."</p>

**Table 4:** The rated themes and the corresponding quotes from the focus group data.

Figure 7 shows the Thematic Map of the subthemes and main themes that emerged as a result of the thematic analysis of the subordinate themes shown in Figure 6. The subordinate themes emerged from the data and could be further organised into subthemes and main themes. The subordinate themes that initially emerged from the raw data were numerically rated (1-16, with 1 representing the highest and 16 representing the lowest occurring subordinate theme) in order of highest rate of occurrence following from the data shown in Figure 6. Subthemes emerged from corresponding subordinate themes and were rated (1-8; 1 representing the two subordinate themes that emerged most frequently, and 8 representing the two subordinate themes that emerged the least frequently in the data). Subsequently, the main themes emerged as a result of the combined subthemes. The main themes were rated 1-4; with 1 representing the two subthemes that emerged most frequently, and 4 representing the two subthemes that emerged least frequently. The overarching main theme of the focus group data concerned 'systemic issues' which included subthemes of 'lack of school support' and 'lack of information and self-efficacy for the role'; and the subordinate themes of 'negative school perspective', 'other school staff concerns about the role', 'no knowledge or inclusion in the decision making for attending the ELSA programme beforehand', and the 'negative aspects of ELSA'. However, the second most frequent emerging main theme of the data was an 'improved knowledge and understanding' regarding ELSA. This included the subthemes of 'value of the ELSA role and training', and 'a better understanding of the ELSA values'; and the subordinate themes of 'importance of ELSA', 'increase in knowledge', 'positive understanding of a lack pre training knowledge of ELSA', 'link between emotional literacy and learning'.

The main themes that developed were 'low self-efficacy and confidence'; 'improved knowledge and understanding'; 'systemic issues'; and 'benefits of ELSA for children and TAs'. The main themes were able to be organised into positively regarded themes and negatively regarded themes. Both 'low self-efficacy and confidence' and 'systemic issues' were based upon negatively perceived themes; whereas 'improved knowledge and understanding' and 'benefits of ELSA for children and TAs' were based upon positively perceived themes. Therefore, it could be deduced that half of the dialogue of the three focus groups was based upon negative perceptions of participants, whereas half the dialogue involved positive reflections relating to the ELSA programme.

Please see Appendix 14 for the focus group transcription related to the individual themes that emerged.



**Figure 7:** Main themes, sub-themes and subordinate themes rated in order of occurrences within the focus group dialogues.

## 4. Discussion

The research questions sought to explore whether ELSA training has an effect on a TAs' own levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence; and to find out TAs' perceptions of their future role as an ELSA. The results of the focus group can be related to the results of the questionnaires to answer the research question exploring TAs' levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. The results of the data analysis were as follows.

### 4.1 Teaching Assistant Self-Efficacy

There was a statistically significant increase in TAs' self-efficacy scores following completion of the ELSA training programme, which is similar to the findings of Grahamslaw (2010). It could be argued that the ELSA programme can positively influence TAs' feelings of motivation, well-being and personal accomplishment. Therefore, it could be argued that the mastery experiences (opportunities to practice interventions) within the ELSA training programme support the development of TAs' self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) identified that enactive mastery experiences produce

“ . . . stronger more generalised efficacy beliefs than do modes of influence relying solely on vicarious experiences, cognitive stimulations, or verbal instruction”

(p. 80)

This highlights the importance of EPs providing TAs with the opportunity to practice their new skills as learners needs opportunities to practice behaviours in order to master them (Knobloch, 2002). Consequently, Capa (2005) noted, “. . . as learners master skills, they tend to raise the expectation that they will be able to master those skills further” (p. 20) which would in turn increase their level of self-efficacy. However, a main theme that emerged from the focus group is that TAs feel, after having completed the ELSA training, that they experience feelings of low self-efficacy and reduced confidence in their ability to apply their future role as an ELSA. It would be interesting to explore whether the same TAs developed improved self-efficacy, in a longitudinal study, after having applied their new training skills and knowledge as an ELSA.

### 4.2 Teaching Assistant Trait-Emotional Intelligence

There was a statistically significant increase in TAs' trait-emotional intelligence scores following completion of the ELSA training programme. It could be argued that the ELSA programme can positively influence TAs' feelings of well-being, sociability, emotionality, self-control and motivation (Petrides, 2008). Therefore, the ELSA training programme supports the development of TAs' trait-emotional intelligence, which indicates that TAs are more prepared to effectively implement social and emotional learning effectively for

students by modelling skills and behaviour than before completing the ELSA training (Jennings, 2010). Subsequently, this could improve student outcomes by creating healthy student/TA relationships, improving classroom management and the implementation of social emotional literacy skills (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Furthermore, the results from the focus group highlighted that TAs identified that they had an increase in knowledge and skills after having attended the ELSA training and that they recognised the important link between emotional literacy and educational outcomes.

This highlights the importance of EPs enhancing the emotional literacy of trainee ELSAs by providing them with an opportunity to speak about emotions, and what causes them, and to develop empathic intuition capacity (Steiner, 1997). Furthermore, as the ELSA programme has been shown to influence trait-emotional intelligence of TAs. Again, it would be interesting to explore whether the same TAs developed their trait-emotional intelligence further in a longitudinal study.

#### **4.3 Teaching Assistant Self-Efficacy & Trait-Emotional Intelligence**

Statistical analyses exploring the relationship between the scores of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence were not significant. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between TAs' scores of trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy pre or post ELSA training. However, the level of difference is larger at the post training stage, which indicates that the participants' scores of self-efficacy does not increase as much as their scores of trait-emotional intelligence increase. Therefore, this leads to query if the level of trait-emotional intelligence increases does this make the TAs more self-aware and responsive of their capabilities within educational settings? Furthermore, as the ELSA training increases levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence, the gap between them becomes bigger as a result of undertaking ELSA training. Although there is increase of both scores, the level at which they correlate is stronger before training. Trait-emotional intelligence requires matching individuals' profiles to specific jobs which need individuals with specific profiles and characteristics (Nikoopour, Farsani, Tajbakhsh & Kiyae, 2011). Therefore, as the ELSA training is essentially a training programme to change the TAs' specific job role and responsibilities, it could be that this unfamiliarity with the new job role could cause the TAs to have reservations as to their self-efficacy, which could be the influential factor for the insignificant correlation with the trait-emotional intelligences scores at the post training stage. It would be interesting to see whether the trait-emotional intelligence scores and self-efficacy score significantly correlate after the TA has had an opportunity to work as an ELSA for some time.

It is possible that enhancing a TA's emotional literacy will have a positive influence on a person's self-efficacy, as Abraham (2000) found that more emotionally intelligent employees had higher levels of job satisfaction and greater commitment to their organisations. Therefore, it could be possible that there is a positive feed-back loop between emotional literacy and self-efficacy of TAs. Increasing a person's emotional literacy increases their self-efficacy.

#### **4.4 Teaching Assistants' Perceptions of their Future Role**

The TAs' perceptions of their future role as ELSAs were both apprehensive and optimistic. The four main themes that emerged and their significance for the TAs' perceptions of their future role as an ELSA are discussed below.

##### **4.4.1 Main Theme 1: Systemic Issues**

The main over-arching theme reflected TAs' anxieties about systemic issues that they felt were out of their control. Within this main theme includes the sub themes 'lack of support from school' and 'lack of information and self-efficacy for the role' and the subordinate theme 'negative school perspective', which included TAs' negative feelings towards the systemic issues in the school environment. TAs felt that schools had many ongoing issues and they felt powerless in the process of change. The overall nature of this issue was concerning and negative towards their perceptions of their future role as ELSAs. Following on from the negative systemic issues, the theme 'other school staff concerns about the ELSA role' emerged often as a concern for TAs. Many felt that the teachers and higher management levels would not give them the time, space or support to carry out their ELSA role fully. Furthermore, the final sub-theme was negatively perceived, as TAs felt that they had 'no knowledge/ inclusion in decision making of attending the ELSA training beforehand'. This could be attributed to systemic issues where TAs do not feel included or supported in taking on training for their ELSA role.

##### **4.4.2 Main Theme 2: Improved Knowledge and Understanding**

TAs were able to identify the positive aspects relating to their future roles as they discussed themes relating to a feeling of improved knowledge and understanding of emotional literacy and interventions to use with vulnerable children. The subordinate theme that emerged in the data the most was the 'Importance of ELSA'. Participants identified that they felt that the ELSA programme was a valued and pertinent intervention programme for use with vulnerable children. This could also account for the increase in trait-emotional intelligence as found in the statistical analyses of the quantitative data. The next occurring sub-theme was TAs feeling that they had an

'increase in knowledge' after having completed the ELSA training. This could be an influencing factor of the increase in trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as found in the statistical analyses of the questionnaire data. Having a 'positive understanding of a lack of pre-training knowledge of ELSA' emerged, which included thoughts about their personal and professional development during the training process and the new knowledge that TAs have gained as a result. This would have also had an influence on TAs' perceived self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. TAs felt able to identify 'the link between children's emotional literacy and learning' which highlighted the importance of developing children's emotional well-being in school to improve outcomes (Mavroveli *et al.*, 2008; Petrides *et al.*, 2004; Durlak, 1995; Durlak & Wells, 1997; Catalano, 2003).

#### **4.4.3 Main Theme 3: Benefits of ELSA for Children and TAs**

The subsequent occurring sub-themes, in order of prevalence, were recognition of the possible impact of the ELSA intervention on 'children's emotional intelligence'. TAs felt that the intervention from an ELSA could impact on the well-being of certain children in their schools. The following emerging sub-theme that was valued by TAs was the opportunity for their own 'professional development'. This could have influenced their feelings of self-efficacy, as Gibb (2007) identified the effect of positive training experiences on self-efficacy. Subsequently, the next emerging sub-theme included 'types of children suitable for ELSA' where TAs felt that they could identify the characteristics of certain children who would benefit from ELSA intervention such as those who are vulnerable or display challenging behaviour. Finally, TAs recognised that there was a 'similarity of ELSA to other programmes' such as the SEAL programme; which highlighted their increase in knowledge and the benefit for children.

#### **4.4.4 Main Theme 4: Low Self-Efficacy and Confidence**

The sub-theme 'fear and anxiety of ELSA role' occurred in the data from TAs who reported doubts about their role and responsibilities after completing the training. This illustrated their negative perceived self-efficacy for the role and could account for the level of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence scores not significantly correlating at the post training measures stage. The next occurring sub-themes were the 'ELSA needs' as a support assistant facilitating a school intervention and the 'negative aspects of ELSA' which were based on systemic challenges in school. These two themes were related to negative feelings of self-efficacy for the role, which could have impacted on the qualitative results. 'Feeling of being alone' emerged as a final sub-theme in the data, where TAs felt that they had no support from staff or other TAs in their schools.



However, this identifies a key role for Eps, to ensure that supportive networks are created with group supervision sessions to help support peer supervision opportunities. Conversely, the next emerging theme was 'developed sense of self-efficacy'. This is surprising considering the negative perception of self-efficacy in the previously emerging theme. However, TAs appear motivated and assertive when speaking about areas of the programme where they felt confident.

#### **4.5 Implications for Educational Psychologists**

This research highlights the important role the EPs can play in ensuring that the training they are facilitating is developed in a way that increases trainees' self-efficacy. The research showed that the impact of EP training can increase TAs level of self-efficacy and trait emotional intelligence however the relationship between the increase of these was not significant. This illustrates how some participants may feel that their knowledge for a role has increased but their efficacy for their role has not increased in the same way. Therefore, some trainees may feel overwhelmed or unprepared to apply their new knowledge in their role. Some participants in this study highlighted that they were not consulted on their training needs and were not part of the decision making process for the enrolment on the programme. Therefore, it is important that when EPs plan training for school staff that they are consulted with and have their training needs met. The main theme that emerged were concerns regarding the wider systemic influence. Participants identified that they did not feel supported by other members of their school system which influence feelings of loneliness and division. Therefore, it is important for Eps to ensure that TAs feel supported and that the role of an ELSA is clearly defined with distinct expectations of the school and its staff. This could ensure that the impact of the system around them does not negatively influence their feelings towards their future role, not only with regards to the ELSA training programme but to the wider context. Moreover, the need to ensure that trainees' managers are fully informed of and included in the delivery of the ELSA programme, to ensure that ELSAs feel supported, empowered and motivated to implement the programme successfully in their school to support children. Furthermore, this research emphasises the importance of Eps seeking evaluation of their training and also practice to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the people whom they are working with.

The barriers highlighted in the research need to be discussed with schools and ELSAs in order to bring about positive change and to increase the self-efficacy of TAs undertaking the training.

#### **4.6 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research**

The limitations of this study include not implementing a pilot study to ensure that the factors on each questionnaire were relevant to TAs. A pilot study could have supported the development of a questionnaire that would be more valid for TAs and thus might have provided more reliable data. Furthermore, the data would have benefited from having a formal inter-rater to ensure that all aspects of the transcription and thematic analysis were consistent; which would have increased the reliability and validity of the research results.

Future research could explore the self-efficacy beliefs of the TAs in a longitudinal context and investigate the factors influencing the role of the ELSAs after having implemented the programme in their schools. Additionally, there is the opportunity to develop measures that specifically investigate the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs, as a limitation of this study included the adaption of measures specifically developed for use with teachers.

## **Part Three**

### Major Research Reflective Account

## **Contribution to Knowledge**

### **Introduction**

This critical appraisal provides an overview and critical account of the development of the research process and the outcomes that I consider to be key contributors to knowledge in the field of educational psychology. The development of the research questions along with the epistemological beliefs that guided the chosen research method and analysis will be discussed. The conclusion will acknowledge the methodological strengths and limitations of this research which will be considered when evaluating its contribution to knowledge.

### **1.1 The Development of the Research**

It was important to me to engage in research that was formulated from a real and current field within educational psychology. During my second year trainee placement I was involved in the launch of the ELSA training programme that the educational psychology service was piloting in the Local Authority. This was my first experience of the ELSA programme and it was the first time this particular EPS had been involved in the training programme. My role within the ELSA pilot team was to identify measures that could be utilised to evaluate the delivery of the ELSA programme. I felt that it was important to develop links with other EPSs that were already successfully implementing the training programme to foster professional relationships and to gain a better understanding of the current evaluation of the ELSA programme. Through engaging in professional dialogue with EPs and trained ELSAs I enriched my understanding and knowledge of the programme and its strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of both EPs and ELSAs. From my review of the current literature of ELSA and exploring the ELSA evaluation resources, I found the topic engaging and interesting as it fitted in with my new interest in the field of emotional literacy. In particular I wanted to further my understanding of the link between self-efficacy and trait-emotional literacy. Self-efficacy has been identified as a strong predictor of behaviour as research has documented high correlations of self-efficacy beliefs with behaviour changes and outcomes (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Furthermore, Graham and Weiner (1996) assert that self-efficacy is a more consistent predictor of behavioural outcomes than any other motivational constructs in psychology and education. Therefore, the self-efficacy of TAs within education is a key area for exploration as their roles and responsibilities within schools grow and change.

## 1.2 The Development of the Literature Review

The first challenge I encountered was with regard to definition and terminology. The terms 'trait-emotional intelligence', 'emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' were used in many contexts and the ambiguity of the concepts in research posed some difficulty in settling on a reliable definition. I dealt with this by using the terms consistently throughout the literature review as they appeared in the individual research papers. This is because they are frequently referenced in current academic and professional discourse. However, for the empirical data collection, this report explored trait-emotional intelligence as it is defined as a construct with personality traits rather than with cognitive abilities (Pertrides, Furnham & Frederickson, 2004).

When investigating the topic, I became interested in the link between trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy and this raised a question for me about the self-efficacy of TAs as they were the primary agents for the delivery of the ELSA programme for children and young people. More broadly, I also wondered how undertaking the ELSA training programme might affect TAs' self-efficacy. I also questioned whether a training programme that initially requires trainees to have a high level of emotional literacy (Burton, 2008) might influence their trait-emotional intelligence. While there is a great deal of evidence explaining the different definitions of emotional literacy, emotional intelligence and trait-emotional intelligence and the associated behaviour patterns, the literature regarding the development of trait-emotional intelligence of TAs appeared very limited. In addition, it seemed that other researchers had posed similar questions about the development of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs but not pursued the answers (Grahamslaw, 2010). The TAs experiences and perceptions of the training programme prompted my interest in the delivery of the ELSA programme and the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence as a result of undertaking the training. I began to wonder about how ELSAs and children perceive the ELSA programme – not just in terms of outcomes, but in terms of their overall experience, what they think is important about the ELSA programme, benefits they might associate with it, and what they perceive to be the facilitators of, and barriers to, its success.

There is literature, including empirical studies, which illustrate the implications of teachers' self-efficacy and trait-emotional literacy; however, there appeared to be little evidence related to the TAs following training (Higgins & Gulliford, 2014). Therefore, for the purpose of the literature review undertaken for this study, the empirical research used explored the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of teachers as they are the closest group of people that can be comparable to TAs. The gap in literature exploring the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of TAs highlighted

an area for my research to investigate that might generate new knowledge. However, there are issues that I was faced with by using research that was not directly applicable to TAs and I had to explore research to the closest population to the research participants, teachers. Research involving teachers is not necessarily applicable to TAs, which is a pertinent concern.

### **1.3 The Development of the Research Design**

Although research indicates an increase in pupil emotional literacy, the emotional literacy or emotional intelligence of the TAs delivering the ELSA intervention have not been explored pre and post training. Grahamslaw's (2010) research does not illustrate the direct influence of the ELSA training on TAs' self-efficacy beliefs as the self-efficacy scores were based on a control group (participants who had not undertaken the training) and not pre and post training data of within participants design. Therefore, there is a gap in the research literature that explores the self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence of ELSAs utilising a within participants design. This study will explore self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence utilising a within participants design to gain reliable and robust data.

With the gaps in research literature on TAs and their self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence, professional colleagues, my research supervisor and I hypothesised about what might influence a teaching assistant and her/his opinions regarding his/hers own self-efficacy. Ideas drew on professional experiences and more broadly based psychological knowledge. Having witnessed the formulation of this problem, specific to the practice of educational psychology, I considered how this question could be addressed. Where the problem lay, a solution could be developed in the form of research. The advantage of being formulated from a real world problem, i.e. a problem that occurs in the actual lives of people, is the contribution which the research can make to further the understanding of educational psychology with regard to the development of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. Whilst it may be philosophically *"better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers"* (Thurber, 1939, p.139), for applied psychologists, practice-based decisions rely on being able to pose theoretical questions and seek answers to these questions which are grounded in informed and reasoned action (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008). By addressing a real world problem, the research had the potential to provide evidence which acts to inform practice-based decisions of EPs.

#### **1.4 The Development of the Research Questions**

Monohan (2002) advocates that asking a better question leads to better answers, and describes the formulation of a question as a process of asking more and more superior questions, which spark curiosity. Initially, the research question relating to the present study was fairly broad: what are TAs' experiences of the ELSA training? My interest lay in identifying the contributing factors which may cause one teaching assistant to have a higher or lower level of self-efficacy and/or trait-emotional intelligence as a result of attending the ELSA training programme. Reading around the topic, and delving into the development of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence, the research questions developed further: Does ELSA training have an effect on TAs' levels of self-efficacy and emotional literacy? What are TAs' experiences of being trained by EPs? At the time, I felt as though these were the research questions to be addressed, and whilst this is currently referred to here as a step in the process, this was once thought to be the end.

When developing research questions, I was concurrently developing ideas about how to test the research questions, whether there was a conscious awareness of this or not. Bartlett (1958) advocated the importance of the experimenter thinking with instruments. Reading about previous research and methodologies helped me develop an awareness of the ways others have approached the topic. At the same time as wondering what one would like to find out, I also wondered about the method by which the research questions would be answered. While these two processes may be concurrent, they have been explored sequentially for the purpose of this reflection. It became clear that the research questions remained too ill-defined and would require more refinement, aided by a greater understanding of research methodology. The scope of the question became narrower, also supported by the literature review process. The review of literature encouraged me to focus on the research subject, which highlighted a research deficit. This resulted in the development of the final research questions: Does ELSA training have an effect on TAs' own levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence? What are TAs' perceptions of their future role as an ELSA? These research questions were used to guide the refinement of the methodology.

#### **1.5 Research Paradigm**

Prior to embarking on research, it is the researcher's responsibility to adopt a stance regarding the ontology (the nature of reality) and the epistemology (how we can come to know of and make sense of reality) of their own ideas of the research question (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). The proposed ontology influences all subsequent decisions regarding the research epistemology (research design) (Darlaston-Jones, 2007).

Bartlett (1958) states that while it is important for the experimenter to think with instruments, it is not necessary to become concerned with methodology as a body of general principles. However, all research poses questions, and as such, makes assumptions about the way one might look at the world. This view is otherwise called a paradigm, "*composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action*" (Mertens, 2010, p.7).

For this study, the ontology which has underpinned the design is Critical Realism (Bhaskar, 1998; Bergin, Wells & Owen, 1998). A critical realist stance allows the researcher to explore an explanation of reality or 'truth', which can inform further investigation. Therefore, by permitting multiple explanations of reality, it acknowledges the effects of human action and socio-cultural factors in data collection and analyses. Critical realists retain an ontological realism (i.e. there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions) whilst also recognising epistemological constructivism and relativism (understanding of the world is a construction of personal perspective). The different forms of realism related to the ontology and epistemology infer that there is no possibility of attaining a single understanding of the research subject, which Putnam (1999) describes as an interpretation that is independent of any particular viewpoint. Therefore, the critical realism stance consequently influenced the mixed method experimental research design for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to obtain more than a single understanding of the research subject.

Other views, such as those held by positivists, view the social world as an entity that can be studied experimentally, similar to the natural world; this was limited to that which could be objectively observed. As the present study is concerned with the investigation of TAs' beliefs and perceptions, it would not necessarily be possible to measure these through observation. Observation would serve to record the associated behaviours, but not the beliefs affecting the behaviour. Post-positivists extended the positivist approach to include the importance of human experience which is not observable, for example cognitions. However, the methodology remained rigidly experimental and primarily quantitative and interventionist, with the researcher manipulating an aspect of experience. The research questions in the present study aimed to measure something which was naturally occurring, so this manipulation or experimentation was rejected. Furthermore, the constructivist methodology makes assumptions about the interactions between researcher and participants and, due to the research question, it was aimed to keep the interaction to a minimum, with the researcher impacting on participants minimally. This study is concerned with the



epistemological beliefs, i.e. the nature of knowledge, of teaching assistant participants. As such, it is important that the researcher maintain objectivity in measuring such beliefs (as is possible within a post-positivist or pragmatic paradigm), rather than creating an influential interactive link with participants when collecting data (as in a constructivist or transformative paradigm). The use of a pragmatic paradigm allows the researcher the freedom to link theory to method “in the different ways that you deem appropriate” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.30), employing quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies. This is in contrast to the more rigid experimental methodology of the post-positivist paradigm or the qualitative methodology of a constructivist paradigm (Mertens, 2010). My study is concerned with the examination of people’s beliefs about their own self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. It was important that my role be objective as I did not want to manipulate opinions, but measure what already existed. The post-positivist and pragmatic approaches both lend themselves to this, whilst the constructivist and transformative approaches, which rely on an interactive link between participants and researcher, are in direct contrast.

### **1.6 The Development of the Research Paradigm**

As methods of data collection, both quantitative and qualitative methods have successfully illustrated the effectiveness of exploring TAs’ perceptions (Higgins & Gulliford, 2014). There is contrast variations in both structure and control in utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods in research (Coolican, 2001). Quantitative methods such as questionnaires and surveys may generate objective and narrow data; however, qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups may provide a rich quantity of information acquired through realistic settings (Shank, 2002). With the specific research questions formulated, it was possible to consider the best ways to answer these questions. Through the examination of the methodologies of previous research into self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence, it became almost immediately apparent that a measure of these had already been designed, and their reliability and validity established through empirical research. For the purpose of this research in exploring the trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of TAs undergoing ELSA training, a quantitative method of data collection was considered to be the most effective method to facilitate the attainment of a larger range of responses through standardised questionnaires. A qualitative method of data collection was considered to be most suitable for exploring the TAs’ perceptions of their future role through the facilitation of a focus group. Furthermore, a methodological triangulation (Robson, 2002) of both qualitative and quantitative data strengthens the research analysis and findings.

## **1.7 Methodology**

Through the extensive review of literature and data collection methods, I was interested in the link between trait-emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy that Chan (2004), Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009), Rastegar and Memarpour (2009), and Gürol, Özercan, and Yalçın (2010) found. However, as there were no significant differences on these measures among teachers of different genders, ages and length of teaching experience, I chose not to differentiate between the participants' individual differences. My interest as a researcher was to explore the correlation of TAs' trait-emotional intelligence and self-efficacy at pre and post training. I felt that exploring this could contribute to knowledge in the area of self-efficacy as there is limited research that explores the ability to positively influence school staff's self-efficacy (Fives, 2003). In relation to this research, Burton (2008) states that the majority of ELSAs report high levels of job satisfaction. Furthermore, Stringer (2009; cited in Burton 2009, p.2) states that "as an ELSA you will experience enhanced job satisfaction" which could imply that TAs' self-efficacy will increase as a result of completing the ELSA training; however, there is no known research to support this claim. This presented me with an opportunity to explore an area of research that is currently under-represented. The outcomes of this research could also be important for the development and delivery of the ELSA programme to ensure that the training programme is evaluated and developed in a new way.

The methodology that I chose varied from that of previous research which had investigated self-efficacy of TAs (Grahamslaw, 2010). Grahamslaw (2010) evaluated the self-efficacy beliefs of ELSAs against those of the control group (TAs who had not completed the ELSA training). Therefore, this does not illustrate the direct influence of the ELSA training on TAs' self-efficacy beliefs as the self-efficacy score comparisons were based on a control group and not pre and post training data of within participants design. I intended to ensure that the research method would overcome this limitation, as Grahamslaw's (2010) research had made some assumptions based on the methodologies and resulting findings. Therefore, this research highlights the direct effect of the training on the same sample of TAs.

## **1.8 Ethics**

Before undertaking the data collection process I had to seek ethical approval from Cardiff University. However, the issue of ethics in research is not isolated to one

philosophical approach, it is of importance to researchers across all research paradigms. Participants in this study were therefore fully informed of the research (information sheets) and were provided with opportunities to express their consent by signing the informed consent form, and provided with further opportunities to withdraw. After completing the questionnaires, focus group participants were provided with debriefing information.

### **1.9 Pilot Study**

I was unable to conduct a pilot study. Due to the timings of the ELSA training cohorts and the date that I gained ethical approval, I did not have sufficient time to conduct a pilot study. In order to ensure that potential issues with questionnaires, such as reliability, validity, sample appropriateness and incorrect response sets, I used standardised, reliable and valid questionnaires and ensured that I followed the exclusion and inclusion criteria. However, if I were to be able to complete this study again I would conduct a pilot study to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events and effect size (statistical variability) in an attempt to improve upon the study design.

### **1.10 The Findings and Implications for EPs**

The findings of the research were in line with the results found by Chan (2004), Gibb, (2007) Grahamslaw (2010), Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009), Rastegar and Memarpour (2009), and Gürol, Özeran, and Yalçın (2010) who support that there is a link between self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. However, in this study there was no significant link between the increase in TAs levels of self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. The present research contributes to the understanding of the issues that influence school staff self-efficacy and the impact of training as changing the role of a TA to an ELSA might bring about feelings that do not significantly increase their self-efficacy. Due to my open-mindedness as a researcher (not having any preconceived ideas about the TAs perceptions) the findings from the focus group were a surprising and informing result, as I did not foresee the degree and variety of influencing factors that the participants perceived to impact on their future role as an ELSA. The results indicated that there is more than one factor influencing TAs' self-efficacy and their perceptions of their future role, highlighting the importance of support from managers and fellow staff of their new role and thus placing the responsibility of ensuring this for EPs delivering the ELSA training but also any other training they might provide for school staff.

The application of psychological theory to practice is a fundamental principle underpinning all aspects of EPs work as applied psychologists. EPs' distinctive

contribution, when working with children and young people, is this application of psychological theory to practice, and the findings of the current study contribute to this, by aiding the understanding of how providing training to school staff can influence levels of self-efficacy. The barriers that emerged regarding the implementation of the ELSA role that were identified by the participants in this study were based upon their limited time in applying their role in school. Future research could explore the TAs' levels of self-efficacy after having overcome the barriers identified through the focus group. This could also be an opportunity to explore how the TAs come to overcome these barriers in order to further develop the ELSA programme and identify key areas for EPs to influence.

## **Critical Account of Research Practitioner**

### **Introduction**

In this section, I will reflect on my role as a research practitioner. McNiff and Whitehead (2002) suggest that when reporting research, it is important for researchers to discuss the significance of their work with reference to "personal practice, institutional influence and the wider body of educational knowledge" (p.141). Therefore, I will include my reflections in relation to the development and learning I experienced as a result of carrying out this research with a focus on the aspects of the research process that I consider to be the most crucial learning points. The aim is to enable a better understanding of the personal and professional development I gained through the research process.

### **2.1 Research Rationale**

The development of the research question has been discussed earlier, from a research perspective, and will now be considered from a personal perspective, providing greater justification for the research rationale.

At a time when I was contemplating my small scale research proposal, I already believed that I had decided on my thesis research topic; I was going to conduct research that could have some benefit for young carers. I had worked with young carers for the past six years before I came to study on the DEdPsy in Cardiff, and I had always held the belief that I would conduct research with this group. However, that was not to be. When I began to explore the ELSA programme I found myself in an area of which I had very little previous knowledge. This I found to be an interesting position, when exploring potential research ideas. Possibly, due to my lack of previous experience and knowledge in the field of ELSA, I found it enlightening and fascinating. I felt that I had an opportunity to broaden my knowledge and that this would enhance my professional and academic development. Furthermore, the ELSA training was an important tool for EPs to apply their practice and I believed that this could be a responsibility for me as an EP.

### **2.2 Organisation**

Once I had decided upon my research area, it was at this point that I ensured that I was organised and was able to prioritise my workload. It was necessary to devise an achievable and thorough working timetable in order to organise my workload so that I was able to meet deadlines. Throughout the research process I endeavoured to keep to my timetable, however, time constraints played a part in the design of the study. I was aware of the need to complete a robust piece of research within a twelve month period

whilst also having the responsibilities of my work placement. Therefore, I needed to devise a timetable that was manageable, whilst ensuring that the research was unique and in-depth. However, as the research process progressed and developed, the timetable changed and, due to unforeseen circumstances, was adapted to the difficulties experienced along the way. As a researcher, I have learned that you cannot be too organised or prepared as, embarking on research, you are exploring potentially unknown territory for which no amount of preparation can account for the potential interruptions and/or revelations that can emerge. Therefore, it is important to be flexible and allow time for the unexpected whilst ensuring that I can factor in completing smaller elements of work as and when I can. This is also a good way of working in areas other than research.

### **2.3 Research Procedure**

The present research problem and resulting questions originated from a real-world issue within an EPS. Therefore, it was not conceptualised as a piece of research with a pre-determined methodology. The research evolved as part of a process and from this I believed that I too evolved as a researcher. An element of this process was to embark on a piece of research that I felt, at the time, would be a valid study that was epistemologically reliable. Therefore, I believed that a multi-methods approach that encompassed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, would enhance the reliability and validity of my research. However, with that came a time consuming and arduous data collection and data analysis processes.

#### ***2.3.1 Data Collation in a Multi-Methods Approach***

My quantitative data collection process not only included recruiting nearly 100 participants, but it also required each participant to complete four separate questionnaires. Questionnaires were collected on separate occasions due to the nature of the pre and post training implications of the research design. Once questionnaires were collected, the process of 'matching' completed pre and post training questionnaires together took time, whilst also ensuring that each questionnaire fulfilled the inclusion criteria (see figure 3 in the empirical paper). Unfortunately, the exclusion criteria (see figure 3 in the empirical paper) enforced the exclusion of questionnaires that met the inclusion criteria. However, as they were matched to questionnaires that failed the inclusion criteria, both questionnaires had to be excluded. In this instance, for future research, I would utilise all questionnaires that meet the inclusion criteria for data analysis in a way that could help answer the posed research questions.

For the collection of qualitative data, the role of a researcher is to remain objective, consistent with the pragmatic and positivist paradigms. However, this can become a challenge when interacting with participants during data collection. The role of an EP involves creating a relationship with school staff and the role of a post-positivist researcher is in direct contrast with this. I facilitated three separate focus groups with eight participants in each using a semi-structured interview schedule. I attempted to maintain an objective stance by engaging minimally with the participants and delivering instructions on a group basis, rather than an individual basis, which might have prevented the cultivation of the typical EP-school staff relationship. By engaging with groups of participants within a focus group setting, I tried to ensure that I maintained a simple functionality in data collection. However, due to my personable and empathic manner I found it difficult to take a step back and not engage with participants on a personal level.

### ***2.3.2 Analysis of a Multi-Methods Approach***

With regards to the analysis of the quantitative data, I did not feel that my skills as a researcher were adept in order to (confidently and correctly) apply the statistics computer package SPSS without support from a statistician. Seeking advice from statisticians can be both helpful and yet counterproductive in some ways, as even statisticians can disagree about the best way to approach a problem. It is important to bear in mind that there is no one way to approach a statistics problem. Subsequently, it is not always possible to answer the question as to what statistical test should be used, but rather what statistical tests could be used. Having clear research questions and a thorough knowledge grasp of the previous literature supports the design of the research study to ensure that the correct data are collected. Therefore, I maintained that I was clear in my research questions and design and ensured that the SPSS statistical tests used were provided data appropriate to answer my research questions. During the data analysis process I gained knowledge and understanding of statistical analysis and the use of SPSS. It was pleasing to gain confidence in an area which I had previously considered a personal deficit. This is where I feel that it is necessary to seek knowledge, information and advice from professionals and research and evidence based literature to improve my skills.

The data analysis of the qualitative data collected from the focus groups was a more time-consuming process than any other part of the research procedure. I tried to ensure internal consistency, therefore I transcribed the three focus group recordings and compiled them in order to analyse the data. I decided to broaden my skills and knowledge by utilising a computer package for thematic analysis, NVivo, which I had not

used before. I sought advice on how to utilise the package but feel that my lack of experience in implementing it resulted in a time consuming expedition however I was able to identify themes in the data that I had not expected.

### ***2.3.3 Reflections on the Research Process***

The epistemological part of the study was an experience that I enjoyed. However, it was time consuming. If I were to implement this study again I could possibly utilise online survey sites to collect and compile the questionnaire data and enlist the support of a transcription company to transcribe my qualitative focus group recordings.

## **2.4 The Writing Process**

The process of writing the research may appear to be the grand finale, however, in my experience it became the most time consuming and arduous task. From the formulation of the major literature review and the empirical article to compiling and refining reference list and contents page; it seemed to be a never ending compilation of 'to do' lists and amendments.

The research process commenced with the writing of the research proposal and concluded with the writing of the final thesis submission. During this time, I had many thoughts and questions that I considered, some of which are not immediately relevant but could potentially be an important issue to raise or deliberate at a later date. Learning from my previous experience in research, for my Master's degree, I had recognised that thoughts and questions that can seem obvious or like a monumental breakthrough at the time rarely return with such clarity if not recorded appropriately. Therefore, I kept a small notebook, where all thesis-related thoughts were recorded in my diary. I utilised this notebook in supervision sessions, during professional placement and when conducting the research, as things can suddenly seem relevant to the research at the most unexpected times.

The process of compiling the literature review is extensive. It is a process that was at the heart of the initial proposal phase where a great deal of papers were consulted. The literature review is a task that is still a work in progress at the final stages of the thesis write up. Therefore, the empirical papers and related research documents needed to be organised in a way which made them easily accessible throughout the process and to ensure that they were structured and referenced in the final thesis. Furthermore, I learnt to use EndNote in order to organise electronic resources and generate reference lists. It was challenging to learn to use another unknown computer package at a time when so many things seemed to be new, but learning to use this system proved to be a great support in the long term.



After collecting and collating the research I then spent a great deal of time with word processing on a computer, attempting to type everything which subsequently had to be read, investigated and learned. I tried to establish a balance of having enough time to dedicate to extended periods of writing, but not spending too much time writing in isolation in one sitting to the point where it became counter-productive due to a lack of fresh perspective. Due to the limited time available to carry out the research, I continued to read further literature during the research process. At times, the acquisition of new knowledge led me to question the appropriateness of the questionnaires, the focus group schedule and research design; which caused me to lack confidence in my ability to carry out the research appropriately. When working independently, self-doubt can become apparent and even magnified, as can concerns about taking wrong turns. It was at these moments that I valued the opportunity to access support from my supervisor where I could discuss openly my concerns and seek advice when I felt uncertain.

I had to ensure that the literature review and empirical article had a coherent structure for the reader to follow, whilst also running the risk of editing and removing valuable sections to ensure each section was within the necessary word count limits. It is at this point that my supervisor recommended visualising my literature review on a large piece of paper by mapping the themes and relevant research in order to gain clarity and to be able to link sections coherently. Additionally, I found that discussing my concerns with others in my professional placement allowed me to draw on professional practice to try and focus my attention and gain clarity.

Therefore, in future research projects, I would plan my literature review in a visual 'mapping' activity where I could gather my thoughts and identify gaps in my knowledge. Furthermore, I would ensure that my time management would factor in opportunities to seek advice from proof-readers in sufficient time before the deadline.

## **2.5 My Research Stance**

From a personal perspective, I consider myself an applied psychologist, training as an educational psychologist (EP). During consultations or planning meetings with school staff, the question of training is often discussed. Although there are many positive aspects of training support staff in schools, having completed this research, I feel I now have better understanding of the pros and cons of this offering.

The research process itself has also led me to reflect critically on my research stance. The inclusion of a multi-methods research approach meant that the EPSs involved benefitted from the research process, as they have both quantitative and qualitative data evaluating the training and also the wider contextual factors influencing the future delivery of the ELSA programme in their local schools and community. I

consider that the use of both quantitative and qualitative data in my research strengthened the findings as the results they provided not only contributed to knowledge at an individual level, but they also contributed to knowledge mutually. Therefore, I believe that using both qualitative and quantitative research methods can complement one another and add value to the research findings.

I reflected on the fact that the research design was influenced greatly by what I perceived to be important and of significance. Therefore, I need to maintain a reflexive stance throughout the research process (Darlaston-Jones, 2001; Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006). If I were to complete the study again, however, there are things that I would do differently to embed ownership of the research more firmly within the school community. I would, for example, have asked the Senior Management Team to consider including other members of staff in the research reference group. I would also have attempted to further reduce my own influence, as an external researcher, on the data gathering process. Perhaps this could have been implemented by involving members of the school community in the data analysis process and using a less structured approach in focus groups. For example, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) would have given the focus group participants more ownership and input into the research and would have reduced my influence as a researcher.

From embarking on this research I still consider myself a beginner, beginning an ongoing and reflexive process, through which my understanding of research philosophy and method will be adapted and refined. I am motivated to explore how research can be applied by EPs to support school communities and evaluate the service delivery of EPs. Whilst my critical realist research stance provides me with a pragmatic philosophical standpoint from which to continue applied research, I would like to consider alternative viewpoints such as constructivist criticism in future research opportunities.

## **2.6 Influence of the Research for Applied Work**

I began my research process prior to fully understanding the ELSA training programme. Therefore, I was unaware of the role that EPs have in the self-efficacy of TAs undertaking the training. As a result, I believe that I have developed a greater knowledge of the role of ELSAs in supporting children and the important role that EPs play in training and supervising ELSAs. Both the findings of the current study, and the learning points from the research process, are things which I will carry forward and incorporate into my practice, post qualification. The understanding of self-efficacy, trait-emotional intelligence and the impact of training now forms an element of my informed and reasoned action. This is something which I will apply in EP practice when thinking about working with schools on developing training packages, or working with schools to

improve staff efficacy. The findings have highlighted the possibility of many contributing factors in the development and negative influence on TAs' self-efficacy and have prompted an interest to explore opportunities to pursue follow-up research, examining the role of the EP and school management staff in the development of the ELSA training programme.

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## **Appendix 1: Ethical Considerations**

### **Anonymity**

To ensure that the participants' data and information are anonymous, no personal data was required from any of the participants during any stage of the study. For the questionnaire stage of the research, participants were assigned a personal number to identify their completed questionnaires in order for the data to be paired for analysis. These personal numbers were placed on the inside of the ELSA training folder that the EPs provide them on day 1 of training. The TAs were required to bring these folders with them for every training session and put the number on the top of their pre and post questionnaires. The participants kept their completed questionnaires in their folders as the EPs only administered the pre questionnaire as a training activity. It was the discretion of the participant if they wanted to volunteer their questionnaires for the purpose of the research. Due to the nature of the research, no additional information regarding personal attributes of individuals were collected as only the numbers are used to identify participants. If the participants required feedback they would need to give their unique number to identify themselves. During the focus group the participants were not required to identify themselves nor to disclose any personal information; however, any personal information that participants did decide to disclose, for example the name of their school, would remain anonymous (as it will not be included in the transcript) and held confidentially and securely.

### **Confidentiality**

The data collected from the pre and post questionnaires were anonymous and therefore were not be able to be traced back to the individual. To ensure that data collected during focus group stage was held confidentially, the researcher would not disclose any confidential information to any person without the participants' prior written consent. There was a strict degree of care to protect the confidentiality of the participants in the focus group and the researcher did not use any of the confidential information for any purpose other than the permitted research purpose. During the focus group participants could have disclosed confidential information, such as colleagues' names, however all participants of the focus group were bound by a written agreement and professional obligation to protect the confidentiality of any disclosed confidential information. Participants were informed that the researcher may have to share confidential information with a supervisor who may need to access the confidential information for the performance of their work with respect to the researcher. Participants would be informed that the supervisors are bound by a written

agreement or professional obligation to protect the confidentiality of the participant. The confidentiality agreement would only be compromised if a participant should disclose information that is of a security or safeguarding concern. In these instances, participants would be informed if the researcher had to share information with the relevant line manager. However, this did not happen during this research.

### **Data Protection**

All information and data collected via the questionnaires and focus group was kept securely and the integrity and protection of the data was stored safely. Once the data analysis had been completed and authorisation from the university has been obtained, the hard copies of the questionnaires and the audio copy of the focus group recording will be destroyed.

### **Informed Consent**

All participants were required to sign the informed consent forms before participating in any stage of the research. The informed consent form provided participants with a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications, and consequences of the research and what would be expected. In order to give informed consent, the participants must show adequate reasoning capacity and be in possession of all relevant facts at the time consent was given. The researcher ensured that the participants who gave informed consent were fully competent to give this consent and had a full understanding of the expectations and implications of the research. Therefore, they fully understood that:

- the EPs will administer the pre questionnaires as part of a training activity;
- they (the participants) will keep their pre questionnaires in their folder;
- on day 6, the researcher will administer the post questionnaires to those who sign the consent forms;
- they (the participants) will be asked to put their unique identifier number (found on the inside of their folder) on both the pre and post questionnaires; and
- the researcher will collect both of their pre and post questionnaires, with their unique identifier number, for data analysis by the researcher.

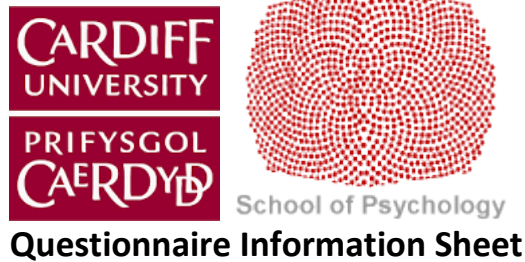
### **Right to Withdraw**

All participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point. Any information that was provided by a participant who wishes to withdraw would be assured that their data will be destroyed and not included in any part of the research by providing their unique identifier number. Furthermore, participants who wished to withdraw were reassured that their decision to do so would not compromise their participation in the ELSA training.

### **Debriefing**

All participants were provided with a debrief form which described the purpose of the study for both the questionnaire and focus groups stages. Those who were asked to complete the questionnaire and focus group stage were informed of how the research procedure was related to the research questions. Furthermore, the debrief form included assurance of anonymity, confidentiality and data protection (as stated above). Finally, the participants were thanked and provided with contact information should they wish to contact the researcher regarding the study. This also allowed participants from the questionnaire stage to gain information regarding their trait-emotional intelligence and SL scores.

## **Appendix 2: Questionnaire Information Sheet**



**Why do this study?** – I am interested to find out if the ELSA training makes a difference to your views on your own self beliefs.

**What will participation involve?** - The study involves collecting data from two questionnaires that will be administered to you before the training (on training day 1) by the Educational Psychologists as part of a training activity. The second set of questionnaires (which are the same as the first set) will be administered by me at the end of the sixth training day. Both sets of questionnaires will require you to put your unique identifier number on them, which is found on the inside of your ELSA training manual.

**How long will participation take?** – In order to complete the questionnaires, it should take approximately ten minutes.

**What will happen?** – With your permission I will use the information gathered from the questionnaires on both occasions to see if there is a difference. As you have been given unique identifier numbers I do not require any personal information from you and I will not be able to trace the information back to you.

**The information gathered is completely anonymous  
and will be held confidentially.**

Please feel free to ask me any questions regarding the research.



**Carys Rees** (*Trainee Educational Psychologist*)

### Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form - Questionnaires



#### **Participant Consent Form Part 1 - Questionnaires**

**Please read through the agreement and sign below**

**Participant Agreement**

I agree to take part in the research that is exploring the effect of ELSA training on TA's own self beliefs using questionnaires.

I understand that the study involves collecting data from two questionnaires that will be administered to you before the training (on training day 1) by the Educational Psychologists as part of a training activity. The second set of questionnaires (which are the same as the first set) will be administered by me at the end of the sixth training day. Both sets of questionnaires will require you to put your unique identifier number on them, which is found on the inside of your ELSA training manual.

I understand that all data is anonymous.

I understand that I can leave the study at any time and withdraw my questionnaire data.

All my questions about the study have been answered and I know what being involved means.

I understand that I will agree for the information gathered from questionnaires given on the first training day to be matched with the information gathered on the 6<sup>th</sup> training day.

- **I give permission for the first set of questionnaires, administered by the Educational Psychologists, which I completed on the first day of ESLA training to be used in this research.**

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

.....

- **I give permission for my second set of questionnaires, administered by the researcher, which I complete on the last day of ESLA training to be used in this research.**

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Many thanks for your participation  
Carys Rees**

### Appendix 4: Focus Group Information Sheet



### Focus Group Information Sheet

**Why do this study?** – I am interested in how TAs view their experiences of being trained by educational psychologists.

**What will participation involve?**–It will involve having a conversation with me and a group of TAs from your group about your experiences of the ELSA training. All information will be stored anonymously, which means nobody will know who said what. Of course, some people in the service will know that you have taken part in this study; however no one will know what you as an individual have said.

**How long will participation take?** – Approximately 30 minutes.

**What will happen?** – I will ask you and the group questions about your experiences of being trained by the educational psychologists. The group session will be voice recorded but you will not be personally identified in the recording, and only I will have access to this recording.

**What will happen?** –I will treat your participation in this study confidentially and that anything you say in the focus group will be totally anonymous as I will not seek any personal information.

**The information gathered is completely anonymous and will be held confidentially.**

Please feel free to ask me any questions regarding the research.



**Carys Rees** (*Trainee Educational Psychologist*)



## **Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form- Focus Group**



### **Participant Consent Form Part 2 - Focus Group**

#### **Please read through the agreement and sign below**

I agree to \_\_\_\_\_ taking part in the research that is exploring TA's views on their experience of being trained by EPs.

I understand that this will involve participating in a focus group.

I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all personal data will remain anonymous.

I understand that I can opt out of the study at any time and without explanation.

I understand that the focus group will be voice recorded in order for the researcher to analyse the data. Only I will have access to this data, and once it has been analysed the tapes will be destroyed.

All my questions about the study have been answered and I know what being involved means.

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Many thanks for your participation**

## **Appendix 6: Debrief Form - Questionnaires**



**ELSA Research Debrief Form  
Part 1 - Questionnaires**

Thank you for taking part in my study.

It is important to explore how the ELSA training impacts on TA's own emotional literacy and self-efficacy.

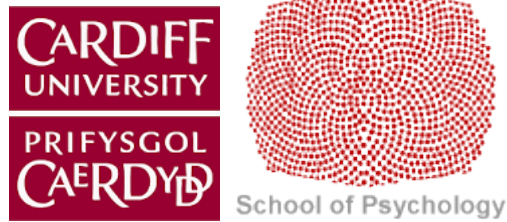
The information you gave me will be held anonymously. This means that it will be impossible for people to know what you told me.

If you think of any questions you would like to ask once I have gone then you can call Cardiff University main reception on 02920874007 and ask them to email me.

If you are not happy to discuss your concerns with me, please contact the School of Ethics Committee directly using the email address – [psychethics@cf.ac.uk](mailto:psychethics@cf.ac.uk)

Many thanks!  
Carys Rees

**Many thanks for helping me**



**ELSA Research Debrief Form  
Part 2 - Focus Group**

Thank you for taking part in my study.

It is important to talk to TA's about their experiences of being trained by EPs.

The aim of this study was to gather information about –

- TA's beliefs of their self-efficacy and emotional literacy; and
- how TA's view their experience of the ELSA training and being trained by EPs.

The information you gave me will be held anonymously. This means that it will be impossible for people to know what you told me.

If you think of any questions you would like to ask once I have gone then you can call Cardiff University main reception on 02920874007 and ask them to email me.

If you are not happy to discuss your concerns with me, please contact the School of Ethics Committee directly using the email address – [psychethics@cf.ac.uk](mailto:psychethics@cf.ac.uk)

Many thanks!  
Carys Rees

**Many thanks for helping me**

## TEIQue-SF

*Instructions:* Please answer each statement below by putting a circle around the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7  
 Completely Disagree Completely Agree

1. Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I generally don't find life enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I can deal effectively with people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I tend to change my mind frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I often find it difficult to stand up for my rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I'm usually able to influence the way other people feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Those close to me often complain that I don't treat them right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. On the whole, I'm able to deal with stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I often find it difficult to show my affection to those close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. On the whole, I'm pleased with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I would describe myself as a good negotiator.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I often pause and think about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I believe I'm full of personal strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Others admire me for being relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6

# Teaching Assistant Beliefs

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for TAs.

Your answers are anonymous.

*Directions:* Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

	None at all	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1. How much can you do to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. How much can you do to help your students' value learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

## Appendix 10: Focus Group Interview Schedule

## **Focus Group Programme**

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Explanation of focus group purpose**

### **Questions**

1. What were your thoughts about the ELSA training before you attended?
2. Can you tell me about your beliefs regarding emotional literacy before attending the ELSA training?
3. Can you tell me about how you felt about your role within your school before attending the ELSA training?
4. Can you tell me about your experience of the ELSA training and the content of the training?
5. How did you find being trained by Educational Psychologists?
6. How do you feel about your knowledge and skills now that you have completed the ELSA training?
7. How do feel about your role within your school now that you have completed the ELSA training?
8. Do you think the ELSA training has influenced your practice, if so how?
9. What would be your best hopes for ways of working in the future now that you have completed the ELSA training?

**End and thanks**

### **Appendix 11: Gatekeeper letter**



School of Psychology Cardiff University  
 Tower Building, Park Place  
 Cardiff, CF10 3YG  
 Direct Tel no: 07702880003  
 Email:

Dear South Wales ELSA Consortium  
 ReesCA11@cardiff.ac.uk

I am Trainee educational psychologist in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University and am extremely interested in exploring the impact of ELSA training. I aim to carry out a study to explore what effect the ELSA training has on the level of TA's own self-efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. In order to measure these I aim to analyse the data collected from two standardised questionnaires pre and post training. Furthermore I also wish to gain an understanding of TA's experiences of being trained by EPs. There has been very little research to date in both of these areas and I would like to recruit TA's from your training cohorts to participate in my study.

As you are aware I have recommended two questionnaires for you to administer as part of a training activity to encourage TAs to explore their beliefs of their own self efficacy and trait-emotional intelligence. With your agreement, I would like to ask consent from the participants if I can collect the questionnaires that were administered on day one by you. The study involves inviting participants to complete the two questionnaires at the end of the sixth ELSA training day, which I can then explore the difference in score between the pre and post training questionnaires.

In order to explore the TA's experience of being trained by EPs I would like to invite the ELSA trainees to participate in a half hour discussion in a focus group at the end of the sixth training day.

All the data collected will be anonymous and confidential. Your service will not be named and the data will be destroyed once the report has been completed. The report will be shared within the university. The report will be made available to you from the university at your request.

If participants have any complaints regarding the study, they can contact the secretary of the Cardiff University School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (02920 874007; [psychethics@cf.ac.uk](mailto:psychethics@cf.ac.uk)). If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me - [ReesCA11@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:ReesCA11@cardiff.ac.uk)

I would be very grateful for your support in conducting this study.  
 Yours Sincerely,  
 Carys Rees

## **Appendix 12: Action Plan**

<b>Conceptual Phase</b> December 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish supervision from supervisor</li> <li>• Conducted research for EPS to recommend most suitable measure for self-efficacy and emotional literacy for use with TAs who are participating in ELSA training.</li> <li>• Contact local authority educational psychology service (EPS) to discuss research proposal and recruitment of participants.</li> <li>• Decide on topic area to be researched</li> <li>• Clarify research aims and questions</li> <li>• Clarify most suitable data collection resources – provide EPs with copies of recommended questionnaires</li> </ul>
<b>Design and Planning Phase</b> January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and submit proposal</li> <li>• ELSA training for all three cohorts begins, EPs administer pre-training questionnaires.</li> <li>• Obtain ethical research approval from the University.</li> <li>• Commence literature review</li> </ul>
<b>Data Collection Phase</b> March 2015 - April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend sixth ELSA training day for all three cohorts for participant recruitment.</li> <li>• Distribute consent forms and research rationale to potential participants.</li> <li>• Administer post-training questionnaires</li> <li>• Conduct focus group</li> </ul>
<b>Empirical Phase</b> June – August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcription of focus group audio recording.</li> <li>• Collate data.</li> <li>• Complete Literature Review</li> </ul>
<b>Analytical Phase</b> September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse data using thematic analysis.</li> <li>• Evaluate findings.</li> <li>• Develop conclusions and recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>Draft Submission</b> January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit draft thesis report.</li> <li>• Make necessary amendments</li> </ul>
<b>Dissemination Phase</b> March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit final thesis for assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Final Phase</b> June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend VIVA</li> <li>• Make necessary amendments</li> </ul>

### **Appendix 13: SPSS output for quantitative data**



## Correlations

Correlations

		TSES-SF1	TSES-SF2
TSES-SF1	Pearson Correlation	1	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
TSES-SF2	Pearson Correlation	.495**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		TEIQue-1	TEIQue-2
TEIQue-SF1	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
TEIQue-SF2	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Correlations

Correlations

		TEIQue-1	TSES-SF1
TEIQue-SF1	Pearson Correlation	1	.271*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	70	70
TSES-SF1	Pearson Correlation	.271*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	70	70

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		TSES-SF2	TEIQue2
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TSES-SF2	Pearson Correlation	1	.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.292
	N	70	70
TEIQue-SF2	Pearson Correlation	.128	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.292	
	N	70	70

**T-Test**

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	TSES-SF1	74.64	70	12.634	1.510
	TSES-SF2	84.26	70	13.475	1.611
Pair 2	TEIQue-SF1	153.93	70	21.666	2.590
	TEIQue-SF2	164.77	70	19.410	2.320

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	TSES-SF1 & TSES-SF2	70	.495	.000
	TEIQue-SF1 & TEIQue-SF2	70	.657	.000

**Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 TSES-SF1 – TSES-SF2	-9.614	13.137	1.570	-12.747	-6.482	-6.123	69	.000	
Pair 2 TEIQue-SF1 – TEIQue-SF2	-10.843	17.144	2.049	-14.931	-6.755	-5.292	69	.000	

## Appendix 14 – Transcription of Focus Group

All names and identifying data have been changed to ensure anonymity. Where names appear in the text they are fictitious names to ensure anonymity.

### ELSA Focus Group 1 Transcript

#### ELSA 1 - FILE DETAILS

Audio Length: 27 minutes  
 Number of Facilitators: One  
 Number of Interviewees: Eight

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Facilitator: That one's started. Right. Okay. It's okay. Right, so today all I want to ask you is a couple of questions about the ELSA training. So the first question I've got is, what were your thoughts about the ELSA training before you attended the course? What did you think about the ELSA training? What did you think it was?

Female: I thought it was going to be very similar to circle time.

Facilitator: Okay, in what way?

Female: That was my initial thoughts. Having a group of children that had got emotional difficulties and talking them through that. That's what my initial thoughts were.

Female: Well we were the same. We got someone running it in the school so I had a rough idea of what they had been through on the course. I say, we had a - it is very similar. There's a bit of circle time, bit of [unclear], bit of this and bit of that in there.

Female: I didn't know at all to be honest what it...

Facilitator: Didn't know anything.

Female: No. Just what I had looked into myself, and we don't have one at present in the school so it'll be...

[Over speaking]

Facilitator: So it was all new to you when you came.

Female: Yeah definitely new. I mean I had a little understanding what it was about and what it entailed, et cetera, but yeah, it was all definitely new to me and what was expected and what my role would be, et cetera.

Female: I'm pretty much the same as well. I'd no idea what it was about. Because I'm the only one [at the school].

Facilitator: So you'd no one to bounce ideas back from.

Female: No one.

Female: I didn't have any idea and I went on the ELSA. Well I just Googled, ELSA, and then all the pictures of the other ELSA came up. But no, just the ELSA network came up from - so I had a look on that.

Facilitator: Did you find that helpful?

Female: Yes. Because I had no idea what I was letting myself in for.

[Laughter]

Facilitator: So why didn't you have an idea what you were letting yourself in for? Is it because you were volunteered by someone else to come and do it?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: So a lot of you didn't actually know what it was you were coming

- to do, but some of you, you obviously...
- Female: A general idea, yeah.
- Female: Yeah we've already got half a dozen people delivering ELSA, but I've come along because as part of my new remit I'll be managing those. So I wanted to actually do the course myself so that I knew what it entailed.
- Facilitator: Oh that's good then.
- Female: Yeah. So my preconceived idea was that it was like Tina - circle time. So I didn't really know much about the in depth [thing].
- Female: I'm a bit different as well. I'm not based in one school. I go to lots of different schools. I do a programme on self-esteem and confidence. So I knew a little bit about the ELSA role but I discussed it with my manager and I said it'd be really good to develop my programme, but also not to duplicate what the ELSAs are doing. Because a lot of the pupils I work with go on to be referred to ELSA or have been involved with ELSAs previously. But I don't want to duplicate. I want to enhance it so that I - they can work alongside each other.
- Facilitator: Oh that sounds really good, yeah. Okay. So can you all tell me about your beliefs about emotional literacy before you attended the project. So what did you know about emotional literacy?
- Female: I had no idea.
- Facilitator: No idea.
- Female: When I started in our school I have to be honest it was bigger [in there then and] it was like the child [as] holistic. You've got to treat - if they come in sad you've got to treat that before you can teach them anything. Got a saying in our class, if you don't come in without a smile you don't learn properly. So we - and I've been on the circle training, I've been on the SAP training, because EI was a big thing in the school then I was in charge of Foundation Phase for EI. I have to say it's gone by the board a bit now. But this was just another - I wanted to see what new was out there then. So that's why I put it down.
- Facilitator: Oh brilliant. What was your beliefs about emotional literacy before?
- Female: I'm the same as them, Julie. It was very similar. I didn't really understand because we'd never had anything like that within our school. You've obviously got the certain children who you know have complications and issues and things like that, but nothing really has been put in to place to help them. So this course, along with others, will be imperative because they're not getting any better. They're getting worse. Obviously the headmaster thought that this - someone doing this - because we came - there's two of us from the school, but the other lady who came, she left, so I'll be doing it predominantly now on my own.
- Female: So yeah it's - I didn't know much about it to be honest.
- Female: I'm the [SEAL] coordinator in school. So we've used it as whole class initiatives, but you do realise once you start working with children that there are children that need more of a smaller group or one to one basis. So this is going to be marvellous for that.
- Female: Yeah.
- Facilitator: So what were your thoughts about - yeah, about emotional literacy.
- Female: Prior to it, no, I didn't have any idea.

- Facilitator: Okay, that's fine.
- Female: I was quite surprised about how limited their vocabulary was around feeling words. When I started working with the children I was - it's like the three main feelings, happy, sad, angry...
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: ...and that they didn't feel it was okay to feel sad or angry. They didn't know how to express it. So I was - before I started I thought there was more about learning about feelings and knowing that it's okay to express how you're feeling in an appropriate way. I thought it would be tailored around that kind of stuff.
- Female: Yeah I - what we've learnt I am already doing in a way, but to me it put the icing on the cake. It's given me a better understanding of why I'm doing it and the things that I'm saying that obviously comes naturally to us as LSAs.
- Female: Mm.
- Female: It just gave me a better understanding of emotional literacy.
- Female: Yep. Exactly, yeah.
- [Over speaking]
- Female: Not that I knew it was called that anyway...
- [Over speaking]
- Female: It's gone into it into a bit more depth. No, nor me. No.
- Female: It's putting a label on it, isn't it, yeah.
- Facilitator: Would you like to...
- Female: Same for me really. Because we were already delivering Elsa and because of the nature of the vulnerable groups that I work with wellbeing and emotional literacy underpin everything. It's part of the ethos. But for me it's just clarified how important it is, across key stage 2, 3 and 4 for me. So yeah.
- Facilitator: How did you feel about your role within your school before attending the Elsa training?
- Female: Well I work in a special needs class so we've always been tailored to individual children anyway. The items on the agenda are nothing new, but I've learnt a lot more than I did originally, yeah.
- Female: Same here I think. I think my role in the class is same as every LSA's. We're in tune with the children a bit more than the teachers. We've got to have a little bit more time with them. Circle time in our school has more or less stopped. So when they said, well we're paying for you to go to ELSA I'm hoping they're going to start something back up that was [laughs] [unclear]. I thought if we go then we've got the - I was looking for extra tools then as well as the ones I had.
- Female: Because our school's in an area where there are a lot of problems aren't there now?
- Female: Lot of problem, yeah.
- Female: Whereas one or two would normally just be sent to our class, it's being dealt with as separate big groups now isn't it within the school?
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: I think within our school we don't - I don't come from a school which is special needs, et cetera. We just have certain individuals who have issues and problems, et cetera. But to be honest with you there's probably only a handful of these pupils. So nothing, like I said, is being done at the moment. It's free for all. Whoever can help, will help. There's obviously - the children don't have that

kind of relationship with anyone at the moment where you're their safe haven sort of thing. I mean obviously all the children have different rapports with all the LSAs and the teachers, et cetera. But yeah, there's nobody really predominantly dealing with these children, which there needs to be really.

After coming here it's just opened my eyes so massively to think, oh my goodness. These children do need the help because they're not getting it, et cetera. But like I said, there's literally probably only about five or six. It's not many. So there's - that's my role really, just if I can help I will. I think they - because I'm coming on this lots of people call me now. I think they think I'm some sort of [laughs] God.

[Over speaking]

Female: Yeah. You'll find that though.

Female: You'll sort them out.

Female: You'll be - she'll sort them out. She - and I'm just like, oh my - but yeah, I think I'm seen like, oh...

Female: Then it's good for your confidence though, isn't it, to say well I've been on the training.

Female: Yeah it is nice.

Female: Now I know everything.

[Over speaking]

Female: Yeah, and I find myself thinking, well I don't know what I'm going to do. But then you sit there and you don't probably realise you're doing it and certain things you've learned. I think, well I probably wouldn't have done that if I hadn't come and learnt certain aspects of the course. I wouldn't know. It would be the normal, just play together. If you can't play together, go away. That's the kind of response which I look at other LSAs doing. I think, well, more you look at it, like they said, if you delve into it you - there could be a problem there. I know...

[Over speaking]

Female: ...when we're talking on our groups and they're saying about certain things and you think of children, which I would never have done before.

Female: Yeah.

[Over speaking]

Female: Yeah.

Female: [Gasps] this will really suit so and so, so and so.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: I think I would never have done that before.

Female: Yeah.

Female: We've learnt a lot off each other as well.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: [That's why] we like this big table.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: We're like [listening to you] as well.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Facilitator: That's great that you bounced off [unclear].

- [Over speaking]  
 Female: It's nice to be sharing ideas, yeah, practices, yeah.  
 Facilitator: So how do you all feel now. We've started to move on to what your role is now. So how do you feel it's changed from doing this course?  
 Female: I think for me because I work with key stage 4 as well the problem that I've got - and you might as well, at - with younger children - is balancing the academic with the wellbeing.  
 Female: Mm.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: So that is a real struggle for me, and saying actually, like Tina said, if the children are not happy then they're not going to learn anything.  
 Female: No.  
 Female: So for me it's given me an extra bit of confidence to push my ELSAs and say, look this needs to take priority really.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Mm, yeah.  
 Female: I think it's having the knowledge to make a judgement on what children need certain interventions I think.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Like I say we were all doing it before incidentally and not realising it, but we've got the knowledge now I think and the back-up of well, we are ELSAs, this is our role, to actually put these interventions in place. Because the children that we are working with, it's - we're something like 60 per cent School Action and School Action Plus in our school...
- [Over speaking]  
 Female: Yeah, that's right.  
 Female: ...out of 272 children.  
 Female: Gosh.  
 Female: But it's - there are so many and there is just one me. But we - going through a referral system and things now I think the children that need it will benefit from it massively just through using the ELSA approach then, rather than, oh go and see Mr [unclear].  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.
- [Over speaking]  
 Female: There is a proper referral system in place [unclear].  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Gives more structure.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: You know that you can't always refer all the children...  
 Female: No.  
 Female: ...that have got - the teachers identify, ooh so and so's got a - needs to work on this, or their parents perhaps won't be supportive in them seeing the education psychologist. You have to have that. So you need to provide for those children. Not every



- child can get an appointment with the education psychologist can they? So there are children - and sometimes it's only a tiny bit. We found out some games that you play with them, just tiny things, that make so much difference to them to be able to learn.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Definitely. It's really helpful.
- Facilitator: That's the thing, isn't it? It's that up skilling you guys...
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Facilitator: ...who are there with the children.
- Female: Yeah, on the ground.
- Facilitator: [EPs] can just - they just come in for one meeting and you - you're the ones who know the children instead of that. You see the changes in them when they come in every day.
- Female: Definitely.
- Facilitator: You know when something's not quite right the minute they walk in through that door.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: It's really important that it's consistent.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: That's...
- [Over speaking]
- Female: I was just going to say that with teachers because I think that's why circle time has been - the teachers have got such a workload on at the moment to hit targets and they go, well actually that 40 minutes for circle time, can we finish off their literacy. I'm hoping because it's labelled it's an ELSA time that they're not going to push it to the back burner.
- Female: Yeah. You will be given time.
- Female: That's what - because it's actually labelled, this is a lesson for ELSA or is their time, that it won't be, well can I have it for literacy or maths? Or can I finish this?
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: But on the - talking about consistency I think as well from my point of view is one minute the head is like, oh can you cover in year 6, we're short staffed.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: So I'm there, shouting and ranting at the front of the class, and then the next minute they're pouring their hearts out to me telling me they've got no friends.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: I think now it needs to stop. If I am an ELSA I shouldn't have to go on yard duty taking balls off people and - you know what I mean?
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Like I think if it's...
- Female: That's a role now, isn't it for you, yeah.
- Female: It's a role in itself.
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.

Female: You can't be [between] [unclear] [relationship].  
 [Over speaking]

Female: No.

Female: Rather to give that - those mixed messages to those children.

Female: Exactly.

Female: They need to trust you.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: So on...

Facilitator: So it sounds like to me what you're saying is that you now know in your school that you are an ELSA and this is your role.

Female: Yeah.

Facilitator: Do you feel confident to be able to tell teachers now or other staff, no I can't do that. I'm an ELSA and this is what I need to do?

Female: No.

Female: No, you'd - never could tell a teacher [no].

Female: No.

[Laughter]

Facilitator: No?

Female: No.

Female: I do.

Female: Well I've been invited to the next teacher staff meeting to explain the role and go through the referral system and things and say what I am going to be doing, and what I'm not going to be doing anymore.

Female: That's a good idea.

Female: Yeah.

Female: The head teacher have invited me along. It'll probably go down like a cup of cold sick, but...

[Laughter]

[Over speaking]

Female: That's what I'm doing as well. For the next staff meeting I'm going to do a presentation and just explain what the role is and hope that I can take on board...

Female: Purely because people are abusing my position. I've been given a room and - then the teachers can't cope with the behaviour in the class. It's you, you and you, down.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Mm.

[Over speaking]

Female: That's not the way.

Female: No. Exactly.

Facilitator: So you don't think you're going to get the right young people coming to you.

Female: Mm.

Female: It's like you said. There's got to be consistency.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yes.

Female: There needs to be maybe the same people coming, like you have the same groups coming et cetera.

Female: Yeah.

Female: It can't be just because you've misbehaved, down you go to Mrs Smith.

Female: Yep.

Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Down you go. That's what it needs to be. I mean I know in my school I don't feel like it's been taken seriously to be honest with you.

Female: No.  
 Female: I've gone, I've talked, I've sorted - and I just think, well that's not really up to me.

Female: No.  
 Female: It's up to them to implement it now. Find me a room. I've done my resources. I tell them what I need to do. I'm fed up of going constantly. I just feel like it's - I don't know. I sometimes feel like it's a waste of time if I'm honest.

Female: Yeah, I know what you mean.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: That's the important thing. It needs to be a whole school approach, doesn't it?

Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Course it does, yeah.  
 Female: Come from the top.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: I don't think he's...  
 Female: We're all good at saying that but...  
 Female: ...very good at communicating that unfortunately. So I do feel a bit undervalued. I can come on this course and I come away and I think, oh God it's going to be brilliant.

Female: Really excited, yeah.  
 [Over speaking]

Female: I know it's going to [unclear].  
 Female: [You] could offer but...  
 Female: But I just don't know if he's going to support me.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: That's my biggest fear I think.  
 Female: That was my initial thoughts when I came here. Because I'd come from another school. I said, oh I'm going on the ELSA course. They said, what a waste of time.

Female: See.  
 Female: Unless your school or - she - they said, we both do it and we're not given any time whatsoever.

Female: It's got - yeah. This is my biggest worry now.  
 Female: Because they're both nursery nurses, qualified ELSA, this, that and the other, they've just been made redundant.

Female: Oh.  
 Female: Oh my God, see.  
 Female: Both of them because they're paid the highest, this week.  
 Female: Oh I'm not getting any pay rise. That's what I'm arguing about.

[Over speaking]  
 [Laughter]

Female: So there's going to be no ELSA. So they've spent the money on the ELSAs...  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: That's such a shame.  
 Female: [Unclear].  
 Female: That's another day, that is.  
 Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: You could write a dissertation on our pay.

[Laughter]

[Over speaking]

Facilitator: I need another recording, yeah.

Female: I think I've learnt the importance that it's not just a quick fix, like you said, oh go and see Mrs Smith.

Female: Yeah. No, exactly.

Female: It's that now I'm going to explain that, yes this would be five or six weeks I'm going to work with this child. Then we're going to give it a rest. We're going to assess what's going to happen in the class. Has it made any difference? Do they need to come back again? What's the next child? Has it worked? What's the next child to work with?

Female: Yeah, exactly.

Female: That you can't do - you can't just wave a magic wand and I think I've learnt that.

Female: Yeah.

Female: No.

Facilitator: So is that what you've learnt from going on the course?

Female: From this course, yes.

Facilitator: Oh okay.

Female: It's a long process I think.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Depending on the child that you're dealing with, and I know we'd probably all think of certain children. I know in my head there's a certain child and I think, is this - they probably - it won't be sorted until she maybe leaves for high school next year. There's a long process. But it's whether you get that support. That's my biggest concern, is that it's all well and good saying, oh you go on the course, and you've been - it'll be this, it'll be that. But to me nothing is getting done. I'm going on the course and [unclear] go, well how's it going? That's it. That's where it stops. I don't get to...

Female: That - yeah. That sounds...

Female: Whereas I've been doing it now for so many weeks, and surely I feel like if he wants me to implement it after Easter, I don't know the children who are coming.

[Over speaking]

Female: They've only just sent out the wellbeing questionnaires. They're hit and miss getting done.

Female: Maybe this afternoon will help you then, when - yeah, because...

Female: Yeah.

[Over speaking]

Female: I need to say maybe some...

Female: Yeah.

Female: I could get someone to come over and say, right. Because I just feel like I'm just a bit hitting that wall. I just - to me at the moment I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel. It's...

Female: Yeah.

Female: You need someone that - I'm not saying above. I mean we're all...

Female: No, I know what you mean though Tina, yeah.

Female: ...damn good at our job, but we need someone with [unclear]. I could never go in and tell a teacher, well I need this, excuse me.

Female: Well that's the thing. I don't have that relationship I don't feel I

think.

Female: No.

Female: But that's what I feel I should do now in my role.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Is being manager of the ELSAs.

Female: Any jobs going with you?

[Over speaking]

[Laughter]

Female: But no, that is my role. I see - and I am going to present a twilight, and I am going to make all the teachers from all the provisions within the vulnerable groups come.

Female: That's what we need, is someone like you.

[Over speaking]

Female: Because I'm passionate about it and I feel that you're not paid enough, I'm not paid enough, but in return just respect would be good.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Definitely.

Facilitator: So you're saying about - that you feel there are barriers for you implementing the role. But are those barriers down to your knowledge and skills, or is it higher up?

Female: No, higher up.

Female: No.

[Over speaking]

Female: Because it is being implemented in our school, but it's only for half an hour. They're not having a tie in.

[Aside discussion]

Female: They're just saying there's not enough time and it's a dead half an hour and they feel as if they're just getting into the nitty gritty and they're saying, I'm sorry I've got to get back to the class.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

[Over speaking]

Female: The children are like [sighs].

Female: Again, if the teacher [unclear] or, well can you not do today? Can you cover for there? Can you do this?

Female: Yeah.

Female: Someone's out. Can you cover for there?

Female: Because the children are actually looking forward to it, aren't they?

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah, they enjoy it. They do enjoy it.

[Over speaking]

Female: That's the thing. It's the disservice to the child at the end of the day.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Because it's - like we said it's consistency. Like these children need that in their lives and it's - like you said, it's enjoyable then isn't it? It's like, oh I'm going to go and see Mrs Smith. We're going to have like juice and biscuits. Because it's the little knock on effect, isn't it?

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.  
 Female: It's like [I'm listening].  
 [Over speaking]  
 Female: No.  
 Female: So it's not consistent.  
 Female: No. Or you say, oh you can't do this week because she's not in.  
 Female: [Even] with different authorities, is it?  
 Female: But you...  
 Female: Because we're all from different...  
 Female: Or she's covering a class.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Facilitator: So you've got different.  
 Female: You never know what that child has been keeping inside waiting for that meeting at that time on that day.  
 Female: No.  
 [Over speaking]  
 Female: To burst yeah, to tell you.  
 Female: That's really heart-breaking I [feel].  
 Female: That quiet room and quiet time together is when they might say something different to out in the playground.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah of course.  
 Female: Then it's that private time where they might say, right well there's no one here so I'll tell you now what I've been bursting to tell you for the week.  
 Female: Yeah, exactly.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 [Over speaking]  
 Female: Then another person's let them down.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah exactly. I don't want to be that person.  
 Female: No.  
 Female: No.  
 Female: Like I would be devastated if they'd just say, oh yeah I remember her. She used to let me down.  
 Female: I know, and that really makes you think why local authorities are creating these positions and then taking them away.  
 Female: Yes.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Because you're causing more damage in the long term, aren't you?  
 Female: Exactly.  
 Female: Yeah absolutely [unclear] service [unclear].  
 [Over speaking]  
 Facilitator: So what would be - to finish now, what would be your best hopes for this role? That you've finished this training. What would be your best hopes for where you're going next?  
 Female: Support I think from management would be a good start.  
 Female: Massively, yeah.  
 Female: That would be a good start to get things up and running. The vision in my head is little role, timetable children like [putting] maybe four children a day, one before break, one - through the day, and...  
 Female: Impacting those.  
 Female: ...you run a - like you said, you don't know how long these things are going to take. Run it until it sees its course and then move on

to the next - you know what I mean? Just...

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: ...a nice flow.

[Over speaking]

Female: Defined role.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yes definitely.

Female: Taken as important or is given its place on the curriculum.

Female: Definitely.

Female: Given its place on...

Female: I hope that we're going to have support, I know just from having emails that we are going to get some support from the education psychologist.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Just to bounce off ideas. I hope that's what's going to happen.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: [Maybe] the psychology service are keeping their end of the bargain up, because I've had emails inviting me to supervision and things like that and I've spoken to the psychologist that comes to my school. I just think, I hope the head teachers and management keep their end of the deal up as well.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: That's right.

Female: Because it could be such a fantastic programme...

Female: It could make such a difference.

Female: ...and make such life changing...

Female: Definitely.

Female: ...differences to children.

[Aside discussion]

Female: It definitely can, yeah.

Female: Well my aim is to increase the number of ELSAs. That's really difficult in the climate I know. But I've got a really supportive line manager. So that is my aim, that I can deliver part of ELSA with the people that I manage.

Female: Marvellous.

Female: Yeah, so that I can keep my hand in with the children. But also that I can get the ELSAs to deliver to other ELSAs. Parts, not the whole course. But just little elements and they can do - and there'll be a knock on effect. That's my dream really.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Lovely.

Female: I just think as well it's to stop - like we're on about now, well we sent them on Thrive training, we sent them on this. Let me just get my teeth into what I'm doing.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Try and make a difference, instead of sending me on all these different training, just to tick boxes and [unclear].

Female: Yeah because when you're that...

[Over speaking]

Female: See that's what we were talking about.

Female: ...ELSA will make a difference.

Female: ELSA encompasses so many different things.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Then I do feel this actual training could make a lot of difference because it does involve so many different strands that we've looked at.

Female: Yep.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yep, nice.

Female: I don't think we've had enough time though. I think we could have done with more time, because I do feel some of the...

Female: Rushed.

Female: ...elements were crammed in, rushed, [yeah].

Female: Rammed in.

Female: Yeah.

Female: I think, oh I'm not quite sure on that.

Female: Planning. I would have liked more on the planning.

Female: Yes. Me too, yeah.

Female: You might not come across a child that needs...

Female: No.

Female: I've had recently the - a bereavement has come up. So last week was brilliant, just to think...

[Over speaking]

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: But if then that hadn't have come up initially perhaps in a few months' time or a year's time then you need to revisit that training don't you?

Female: Yeah.

Female: Just say, look where do I go from here?

Facilitator: Also that's an opportunity to speak with your EP when you have those meetings, is that you might know of a situation that's coming up, and you can prepare for it. You might know that there's a difficulty within a family break up or something like that.

Female: Yeah.

Facilitator: It's preparing for those possibilities.

Female: Yeah.

Female: When we did the SAT training you did the SAT training and then I think it was about six months down the line you went back for an extra day. Then you all said how it was going. If you had any problems then it was just like this sort of thing, sitting. Well this happened to me. I didn't know how to handle it, and then you'd have all like these...

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: That would be nice.



[Over speaking]  
 Female: Because it's reinforcement then and six months down the line, yeah I am doing it. I'm doing it the same as all the other [unclear] I'm doing it right.

Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Refresher day, that would be [good, wouldn't] it? That would be an idea.

[Over speaking]  
 Female: I think that's the biggest fear, is [unclear] off.

[Over speaking]  
 Female: That's not just an excuse to get back together [laughs].  
 Female: I'm glad today we've had these lesson plans today. It's been the best part.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: [Unclear] starting.  
 Female: That's my biggest fear I think, sitting and thinking, how do I start? What do I put down?  
 Female: I know.  
 Female: How do I put - I'm really fretful about that.  
 Female: We were hoping to bring a file with us today but it had all the children's names on it, what they've started already.  
 Female: Oh. Yeah.  
 Female: But it just does come.  
 Female: I'll have to ask you how you started it and things because I haven't got a clue.

[Over speaking]  
 Female: One thing that we haven't covered in any of the training, and I'm not sure whether that can be put into the training, is safeguarding. Now we all would have done that safeguarding.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Right, yeah. Okay so important aspects.

[Over speaking]  
 Female: I did ask the question whether I - I think I've got level 1 and I think I might have done level 2 some time ago, but whether - because level - you have to repeat it every year, don't you?  
 Female: Yep.  
 Female: Yep.  
 Female: So we've all got level 1 at the moment. But do we - because we're working one to one with children should that be embedded within the course? Should we...

[Over speaking]  
 Female: That's a valid point.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah.

[Over speaking]  
 Female: [Child protection] training and if we need more awareness on child protection.  
 Female: Yeah, exactly.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 [Over speaking]

Female: Now it's all cloak and dagger in my place, and it's ridiculous. You're not important enough to know.

Female: Same with us, that's how I feel. But we are. You think...

Female: I think we certainly - that's had - we've had massive concerns with that.

Female: We're going to be in the front line with these children.

Female: Well I'm working with them, so I want to know if any...

[Over speaking]

Female: If you're behind a closed door with a child...

Female: It's not to be nosy, is it?

Female: ...then you need to know...

[Over speaking]

Female: I'm the child protection officer and I have child protection meetings.

Female: [Unclear].

Female: I don't go into the in depth details because I don't have to.

Female: No, of course.

Female: But it's really important that people are equipped, especially if it's...

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: You could touch one nerve.

Female: I think it's really important because we've got children in the class and they just - you know there's certain problems.

Female: Yeah.

Female: He'll mention the CP word, but he won't tell us.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Because we had problems a couple of years ago and we had - the father tried to take the child out the school and none of us knew she was on the child protection.

Female: Oh no.

Female: So we let her go.

Female: That's dangerous.

[Over speaking]

Female: That was - oh it was awful.

Female: We [were] all aware I know.

Female: It was awful. I was like, oh my goodness.

Female: I feel sometimes as if...

Female: Because he didn't communicate with us.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yep.

Female: I feel as if the management in our school, sometimes I feel as if I'm not worthy of knowing that information.

Female: That's exactly how we're made to feel.

Female: I'm not worthy.

Female: Exactly.

Female: Like all the other wellbeing officers that I know in our area attend anything to do with social services.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah.

Female: It's called good child protection. I mean I'm lucky I had three years'

experience in a child protection team before I came to this job.  
 Female: So how are you supposed to do your planning properly...  
 Female: Exactly.  
 Female: Exactly.  
 Female: Exactly.  
 Female: ...if you don't know what problem that child has got in the beginning like?  
 Female: That's what we [just said].  
 [Over speaking]  
 Female: You can't work with families with...  
 Female: No.  
 Female: ...agencies when you're not directly involved.  
 Female: You can't, no.  
 [Over speaking]  
 Female: No, exactly.  
 Female: That's another point I think.  
 Female: It really is.  
 Facilitator: I'm really sorry. I'm going to have to stop you.  
 [Over speaking]  
 Facilitator: No you really - no, you've answered - you've more than enough.  
 Female: You sure?  
 Female: Are you sure?  
 Female: Are you sure?  
 Facilitator: Do you know what, you made some really valid points as well which they will hear back from as well.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 Female: Yeah, excellent.  
 Female: Lovely.  
 [Over speaking]  
 Facilitator: But thank you very, very much.  
 Female: Good luck, eh?  
 Female: Good luck, yeah.  
 Female: It's just...  
 Female: You come and work with me.  
 Female: Yeah.  
 [Laughter]  
 Female: [Unclear].  
 [Over speaking]



