

Identifying the chosen spaces of a cross section of girls within a UK primary academy

A multi-modal study with girls aged 8 and 9 years.





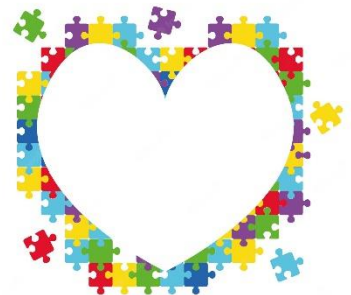
15 girls were chosen at random after permission was granted by parents and the gatekeeper. The head teacher selected 15 folded names from a bowl, and the research began...

'Researchers should think about whether they should approach gatekeepers before directly approaching participants, and about whether they should adopt an institution's own ethical approval and safeguarding procedures; this is usually a requirement.' (*BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, 2018).

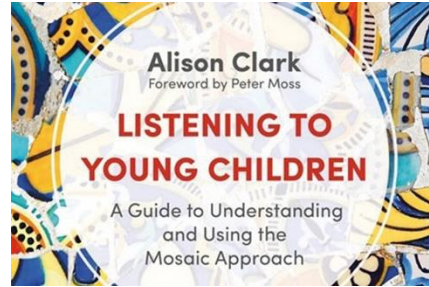
Background Information...



- The driver for this project was that I'd seen girls that demonstrated autistic traits in my workplace that slipped 'under the radar'.
 - I wanted to identify children that were masking traits of autism.
- Following a meeting with the SENCo, headteacher and my mentor, the school weren't happy for me to make any identification of girls displaying traits of ASD.
- I decided to look at the differences in spaces in which girls were happy/sad/anxious etc.
- I believed that this may identify some anomalies in girls different from those in neuro-typical girls.
 - Although disappointing, this in itself could highlight some anomalies as to what is considered neuro-typical.



'Allowing the children to use participatory visual methods to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives.' (Clark, & Moss, (2001).



It has been suggested (Clark, 2001) that participatory visual methods can challenge professional assumptions about young people's capabilities and perceptions.

Methodology



'By using an interpretivist approach, it allows the researcher to implement the research methodology within its natural setting, allowing for personal contact with the group being studied in order to attain an 'insider view' (Tuli, 2010).



Research Design Participative, Multi-Modal, Qualitative Research Study with children



Multi-Modal Data Collection Methods...

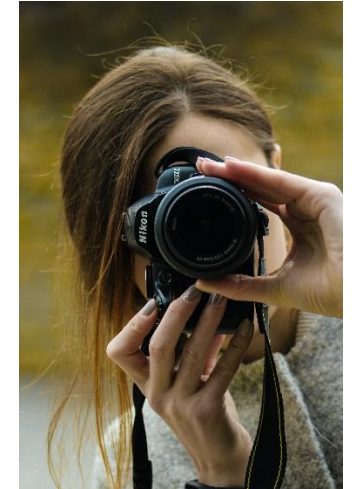
The data collection methods I used in this study were:

→ Auditory interviews recorded on a Dictaphone

















→ Visual photographs captured by the girls

→ Story boards created by the girls, including their chosen photographs.

→ Written captions and emotions depicted by the girls.



The **ZONES** of Regulation®

							
							
BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE				
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control				

Sampling and Participants



It was decided that a manageable group to work with would be approximately 15 children. This was following feedback from school and input from SENCo and head teacher.

I deliberately did not mention autism in consent form, as I was not going to identify girls with autism.

BERA guidelines were adhered to throughout the research project.

Method of Analysis...



- Thematic Analysis – identified repeated patterns and themes reported.
- Revelation of anomalies from small number of girls and their identification with spaces
- Feelings of: Anxiety, sadness, worried, nervous.
- Majority shared happy emotions when describing their school spaces.



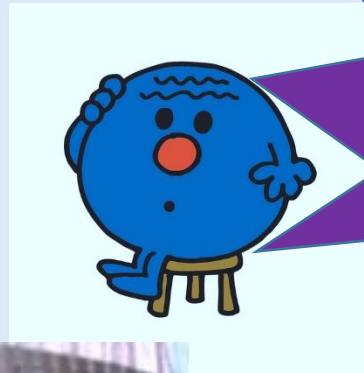
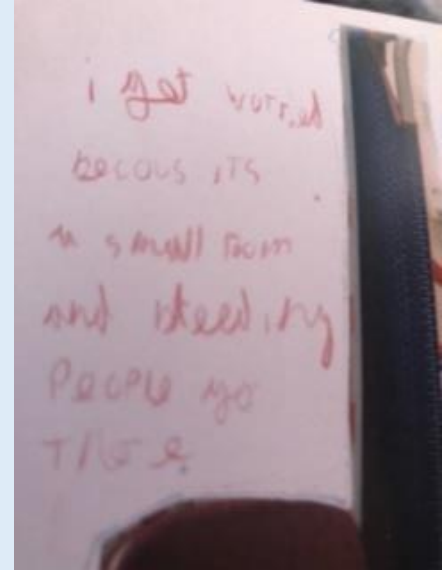
Findings





Head Teacher's office –
“It makes me nervous” - ST

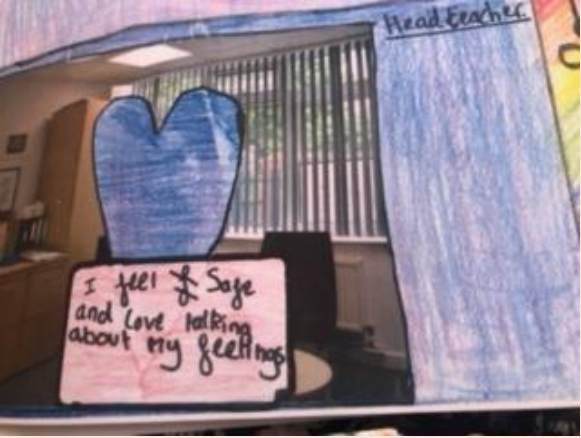
Medical Room –
“I get worried
because it's a small
room and bleeding
people go there”.
- MD



Head Teacher's
Office –
“I don't like this
place because
sometimes it's
crowded”.
EI

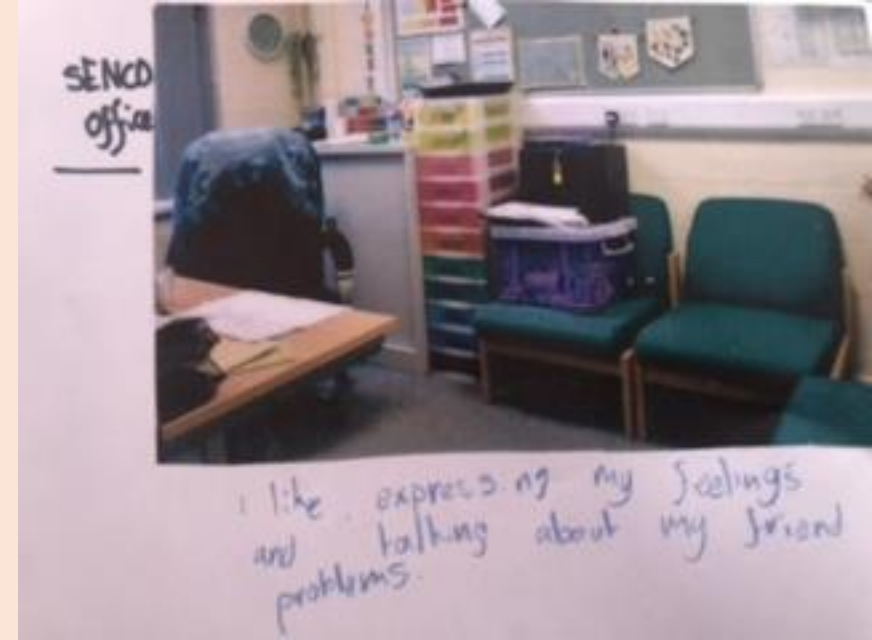
School Gate-
“Sad/nervous
because I have no
one to play with”.
ST





"I feel safe and love talking about my feelings" -

"I like expressing my feelings and talking about my friend problems".



"I like the cloakroom 'cos it's my safe space"



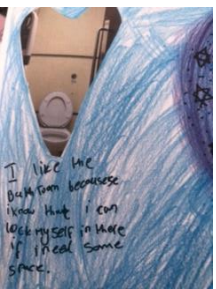
"I like the quiet zone because it is peaceful and you can sit down".



Discussion

Although I found that the majority of children enjoyed their spaces and spoke very positively, there were some anomalies in my findings:

- ❖ “I like the car park because I see my friends after a miserable Monday”.
- ❖ “I like the bathroom because I know I can lock myself in there if I need some space”. “ I like lunch because it’s the important part”. - These findings were different to the other children.
- ❖ A couple of the children shared a dislike for the medical room
- ❖ There was a mixed bag of responses for the Head Teacher’s office, but it was divided between ‘safe’ and ‘nervous and worried’
- ❖ Following on, I hope that my study can be used for further research to help staff to understand the different feelings that children have about the same spaces. It may help in the future to identify those children that need some support within school.



THANK YOU

