Early Years Education Studies (BA HONS) (Part Time)

Level 6 Semester 2

Student Identification Number: 0703174

Module EY610

Applied Research in the Early Years

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Title:

Can Team Teach training help outreach staff in primary schools to feel safer when supporting children with challenging behaviour?

Key Questions:
How safe did you feel when using restrictive physical interventions before accessing Team Teach training?

How safe do you feel using restrictive physical interventions after receiving Team Teach training?

Do you think Team Teach training has helped to reduce the risk of you being physically injured when supporting children with challenging behaviour?

Abstract:

This research attempts to evaluate how safe staff members from the Communication/Autism Team (CAT) feel when implementing Team Teach in their practice. Team Teach is a holistic approach offering three main criteria of support to all children's settings. These are de-escalation strategies, positive holding and legal framework/guidance on the use of force. The Team Teach approach is clearly defined to incorporate aspects of behaviour management and communication skills. Course members are given guidance on how to complete "dynamic risk assessments". Allen (2003) recommends that staff that are exposed to hostile situations or aggressive children need to make risk assessments.

The findings from this research show the importance of staff feeling safe when facing aggressive or challenging behaviour. Their emotions and feelings are an important indicator of how they manage difficult behaviour and make necessary risk assessments to help keep the child, themselves, other service users and staff

members safe. The findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews indicate the extent to which they can be expected to respond appropriately when faced with difficult and unsafe behaviour that may necessitate a physical intervention. Sometimes there can be a reluctance to engage in a restraint but there is recognition that it is important to know how to hold safely and legally if required. There is an admittance of trying to de-escalate where possible which was linked to confidence in their own skills and how safe they felt when using Team Teach.

Key words/phrase:

Physical Intervention.

Team Teach.

De-escalation.

Legal Protection.

Positive Handling.

Challenging Behaviour.

Introduction:

The Guardian (2010) reports that the education minister, Michael Gove wants education staff to feel confident and competent when dealing with aggressive children. The British Institute of Learning Difficulties (BILD) (2010) states that professionals who have a duty of care should seek to use, when necessary and reasonable, positive handling interventions to safeguard children. Members of CAT, a Local Authority outreach team that supports the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) receive regular training in de-escalation and positive

handling. The Local Authority for whom CAT work identify Team Teach as their preferred approach. This is a BILD accredited training model which was founded by George Matthews in 1997. Allen (2008) explains that staff who work with special educational needs or vulnerable children can access and use positive handling strategies. CAT members support approximately 2500 children who are diagnosed with ASD many of them displaying varying degrees of challenging behaviour and there is a responsibility to help modify behaviour. Each school year several CAT members report that they have had to restrain children on caseload. This leaves the child at risk of being hurt and CAT members vulnerable to being injured and open to the pressures of accusations. These staff members need to make difficult decisions about whether it is appropriate to physically intervene or not. Harris et al (1996) explain that organisations should encourage staff to monitor their responses when using restrictive physical interventions.

As there has been no previous research or evaluation of Team Teach training within CAT, the purpose for this research is to ascertain information that is linked to the research title question and the key questions to formulate and direct the research project and design. Cohen et al (2000) explains that information from research is necessary to measure effectiveness and designs of systems. After receiving regular training on how to de-escalate and physically intervene through the Team Teach approach, members of CAT need to reflect on how well the training serves their purpose. BILD (2010) states that settings need to constantly evaluate their practice and focus on the reduction of restraint. This training is part of the CAT development plan and staff members are required to feedback to their line managers and the lead

person for Team Teach within the team whenever they have used a restrictive physical intervention. The DoH and DfES (2003) explain that there should be a restraint policy for agencies which provide services for adults or children with a Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The findings will help to shape the care and control policy of CAT, provide Team Teach and the Local Authority with the indications of how Team teach training is perceived and valued. Lyon and Pimor (2005) argue that policy and practice are interlinked. Findings will identify whether CAT members feel that receiving regular Team teach training helps to support inclusion of children who display aggressive or challenging behaviour.

Literature Review:

Since the mid 1990's more children with challenging behaviour are included in mainstream settings than ever before. Walfendale and Robinson (2006) state that recent educational philosophy has shifted towards the inclusion of children with additional needs. In mainstream settings children who have various medical conditions such as ASD and social/emotional behaviour difficulties are included in most if not all curriculum activities. Emerson et al (2001) states that 10% to 15% of children with disabilities display behaviours which present a significant challenge to adults and settings. This not only impacts on the staff's time at school but can have a direct impact on other children's learning. Primary Leadership Today (2009) reports that concerns about pupils with challenging behaviour in schools is nothing new, however the severity and frequency does seem to have increased. The National Autistic Society (2010) reports that a greater proportion of children on the autism spectrum are accessing mainstream settings. The positive benefits for those

children with challenging behaviour included in a mainstream school can be numerous and indeed their peers can learn to appreciate differences and support by becoming appropriate social role models. (BILD) (2010) suggests within its code of practice that settings which support children with ASD should have accredited positive handling and de-escalation training. Learning support magazine (2010) reports that only one in three school staff members had received any training in how to deal with potentially violent situations. Pike and Hayden (2004) argue that there is a need for a clear framework on de-escalation and positive handling to manage the competing pressures facing staff in schools. During their research of 523 courses from a variety of special, residential and mainstream settings between 2000 and 2003 they concluded that Team-Teach provides a clear framework for staff to refresh their skills and keep up to date with the latest advice on behaviour management through refresher training and re-accreditation. Pike and Hayden (2004) state the Team-Teach approach increased staff confidence and increased knowledge of the legal framework for physical interventions. This study reported that staff who were Team Teach trained were more likely to use a risk assessment before engaging in a physical intervention. During their research Pike and Hayden (2004) described how staff in education provisions stated that they wanted to respond more appropriately to reduce the risk of physical intervention and maintain a calm approach. The sample number of Pike and Hayden's (2004) study increases the validity as the main objective was to conclude the overall usefulness of the Team teach approach across a variety of educational settings.

Harris et al (1996) suggest organisations provide a programme of restraint training such as Team Teach, for staff who work with service users who present challenging behaviours. The impact of Team Teach training can create a fundamental change. Special Children (2005) reports that in one EBD school before Team-Teach training was implemented there were 166 serious incidents reported in one term. Three years later, following extensive Team-teach training and refreshers, there were 12 reported serious incidents during the same time period.

Harris et al (1996:53) state that "staff who may be required to use physical interventions should receive regular training on knowledge, skills and values." Hayden and Pike's (2004) report that there has been a large number of staff leaving because of challenging behaviour which was linked to unclear use of force guidance. Previous government guidance as Ofsted (2005) reports was misleading and confusing. During Hayden and Pike's (2004) study they reported that there were still many schools operating a no touch policy. This has now been clarified. The DCSF (2010) state through the Use of Force Guidance that no school setting should authorise a no contact/touch policy. This helped to eradicate what Hayden and Pike (2004) identified as educational staff being caught up in a frightened health and safety culture. Allen (2001) mentions this was linked to government legislation and policies through the 1980 and 1990's where children leaned towards their rights not to be touched. DCSF (2010) mention that school staff have a legal power to use an acceptable use of force when it is reasonable and necessary. More recently children and young people are moving towards more reasonable thinking when being held by adults. Allen (2002) states this is a shift from previous decades where there was

much angst amongst education professionals operating in a culture where children and young people tried to exercise their rights of not being held or touched. Morgan (2004) states that children did not object to being restrained when their behaviour became unsafe, moreover they were more concerned that staff had received the appropriate training to restrain correctly. Emerson et al (2001) suggests that professionals that use restrictive physical interventions sometimes feel unsure about how to hold safely.

Bell and Stark (1998) report that there has been an absence of research and data on the use of restrictive physical interventions and that expert opinion remains central to the debate. Leadbetter (2002) questions what constitutes good practice in physical restraint. DfE (2010) reports that the issue of physical restraint has been taboo and the lack of guidance and research has been damaging. Leadbetter (2002) explains that there has been a historical vacuum of research on safe, legally defensible approaches to restraint. Allen (2002) reports that restraint holds first came into the UK in the early 1990's. Even with the earlier systems in place, Leadbetter (2002) argues that there was a lack of reliable evidence and evaluation. One of the possible reasons for this scarce evidence was a distinct lack of a recording and reporting system. Lindsay and Hosie (2000) agree that over time the effectiveness and safety of using physical interventions has been compromised due to agencies and settings failing to keep a recording and reporting system.

Allen (2001) specifies that there has been very little research into the use of physical interventions in mainstream settings. Emerson (2002) and Allen (2001) state there is

a reluctance by governments to fund research which in the future may prove controversial. Instead the vast majority of research regarding the use of restraint has been in perceived higher risk environments such as mental hospitals, special schools, Social, Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties and (SEBD) provisions, remand units and prisons. This is despite of the rise over the past 15 years in the inclusion of children with complex needs into mainstream settings e.g. looked after children and children with challenging behaviour. In direct contrast to this Peatfield (2010) reports that within one large Local Authority, over 90% of the staff trained were from mainstream primary settings. This lack of research regarding mainstream settings remains a puzzling issue. Allen (2001) completed the majority of this research in mental health, SEBD and residential settings and his study was based mainly on the use of Control and Restraint (C & R) restraint model but as Allen (2001) points out that this is misleading as C & R by this time became a term that included numerous approaches. Allen (2002) reports that researching only one particular model may conceive a more pragmatic evaluation. The majority of research that Allen (2001) evaluated was more concerned with staff injuries, improved confidence and the reduction of incidents. All these are worthy and have a fundamental validity attached because any evaluation on de-escalation and physical intervention training should focus on the increase or decrease in the reduction of these key areas. Morgan (2004) states that children wanted all staff trained in restraint holds. Allen (2002) argues that trained staff are more likely to feel confident than untrained staff in using Physical interventions. BILD (2001) concluded that training de-escalation and restraint programmes can achieve positive outcomes in the reduction of injuries to children and staff.

Tizard (1990) and Schaffer (1990) state that relevance to practice is a key issue when contemplating research. The decision by the researcher to study outreach professionals who work in a mainstream primary schools may help to indicate how safe the adult feels when using Team Teach training whilst supporting children in these settings. Hayden and Pike (2004) suggest a greater realisation may increase schools willingness to receive training on de-escalation and restraint. It may prove useful to help increase positive attitudes of adults who work in mainstream settings if there was more evidence of how safe staff felt when using Team Teach training to de-escalate or use positive handling strategies. Hayden and Pike (2004) report that course members often think it is only about restraint. This is why the researcher has included questions relating to de-escalation and legal defence. This may counteract the more usual feelings of mainstream staff feeling anxious or unsafe about using a model that advocates the use of physical interventions. Allen (2002) explains that a key component to responding to extreme behaviours is by using physical restraint in a well-planned environment with appropriate implementation.

Methodology:

Newman College Policy (2006) states that it is the student's responsibility to seek approval for the research. This was obtained and ethical approval has been granted through the Newman University College Ethics Committee. Gray (2003) states that ethical considerations must be taken seriously when collecting data. Cohen (2000) et al cites Pring (1984) who suggests that researchers need to balance the "right to privacy" with the "right to know". The researcher observed the Newman ethical guidelines by stating the purpose of the questionnaire and involvement as optional.

Diener and Crandell (1978) explain that to retain the participant's privacy, sensitivity of the information and how it is disseminated needs to be observed. In the case of this research, participant's privacy was protected by using an attachment email which did not contain their personal details and a message which proposed that their information may be cascaded to Team Teach with their approval. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmais (1992) describe the importance of protecting the anonymity of research participants.

According to Arbnor and Bjerke (1997) it can be difficult to logically determine the best research approach. Blaxter et al (2006) agree that selecting "which method is best?" has more to do with understanding social reality and what are the most appropriate ways of studying it. This research will be both quantitative and qualitative because it will explore feelings, attitudes and experiences, sometimes allowing the participants to rate them. Winter (1996) suggest by combining two research methods (known as triangulation) to collect qualitative and quantitative data may provide a more effective approach of collecting data. Dawson (2002) reports that many researchers believe that this is a good way of counteracting weaknesses of both methods. The research approaches for gathering both data to meet the provisional project question will be written questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Punch (2005) argues that there is an overlap in qualitative and quantitative research families. Blaxter et al (2006) agree with this idea of being multi-method in research approaches, as one method may back up or compliment the other. The use of two methods that show both quantitative and qualitative information will hopefully help to generate reliable statistics by using a Likert scale that will produce bar/pie charts to analyse information about the Team Teach

training. Bell (1998) explains that scales are devices to discover strength of feeling or attitude which can give valid measurement.

Denscombe (1998) states that the shrewd researcher works out the resource implications before sending out questionnaires. The researcher piloted the questionnaire with the CAT management team and one other colleague to receive feedback on the content of the questionnaires. Bell (1999) explains that questionnaires should be tried out on a similar population as the target group. The main purpose for piloting was as Wilson (1996) explains to check the clarity of the questions and the layout. Several suggestions were proposed and the researcher decided to incorporate these suggested modifications. Bell (1999) suggests that responses from the pilot sample will enable the researcher to revise the questionnaire for the main distribution. This researcher's decision to email the questionnaire and request that participants complete the email electronically did assist in saving time and produce a response of 13 returns from a possible total of 17. All of the participants except two were able to use this format by using their IT skills to record their replies on the original questionnaire and email them back. Pike and Ouimet (2009) explain that participants can save time when receiving questionnaires via the web. The two participants that didn't reply by email were able to give their response in person to the researcher. Denscombe (1998) reports that gathering information face to face can prove just as valuable. The design layout of the questionnaire was straight forward to complete, within the knowledge range of the participants and allowed participants to record additional information if necessary or appropriate. Simmons (2001) states that respondents need to have the

awareness of the research subject. Sankoff (1980) argues that the selection of the data may be more crucial than the quantity collected. Cohen et al (2000) mention that because the questionnaire is anonymous, it encourages greater honesty. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) agree as they suggest validity could be increased by some form of triangulation or diversity of method. The researcher attempted to increase the validity of the questionnaires by inviting seven of the participants who answered the questionnaire to take part in a semi-structured interview.

Aubrey et al (2000) suggest consideration of the size of the sample is important; looking at what is manageable and realistic. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. Nachmias (1996) explains that using a form of non-probability sampling can be perceived as manipulating or controlling the sample. The researcher was aware of this sentiment but as Dane (1990) explains the advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to focus on the people that will understand the research title/question. According to Oliver (2003) when using questionnaires it is more useful to have people who are generally interested to take part rather than unwilling participants. The CAT consists of 30 people but the actual sample size of participants was lower due to team members who didn't work in primary, management/administration team who do not work with children and members who are currently on maternity leave, which reduced the sample size to 17 CAT members. The researcher emailed 17 questionnaires including seven requests for semi-structured interviews. One other issue the researcher had to consider was the time restrictions that the CAT members work under. Cohen (2000) notes that for interviews to have validity, the interviewer needs to be well prepared and show

sensitivity. The research method of using questionnaires via email helped greatly in overcoming the difficulties of limited time, travel and location of the sample participants. The researcher understood the general pressures and stress of the work they are engaged in. Robsen (2002) suggests that the researcher needs to be organised and flexible when recording interviews. At the request of team members semi-structured interviews were arranged in their lunch breaks. Two team members cancelled several times due to work commitment. In order to complete the interviews the researcher decided to conduct them by telephone. Walliman (2001) suggests that interviews by telephone can save time and reduce the problems of traveling. Unfortunately there was a natural disproportionate gender makeup of the sample participants. Only one of the 13 staff replies is male (one of the non-responses is also male). However this is within the scope of the general gender difference of primary school staff as The Independent (2009) reports that male staff only represent 13% of workforce in primary schools.

Findings and analysis:

Information from questionnaires:

Fig. 1

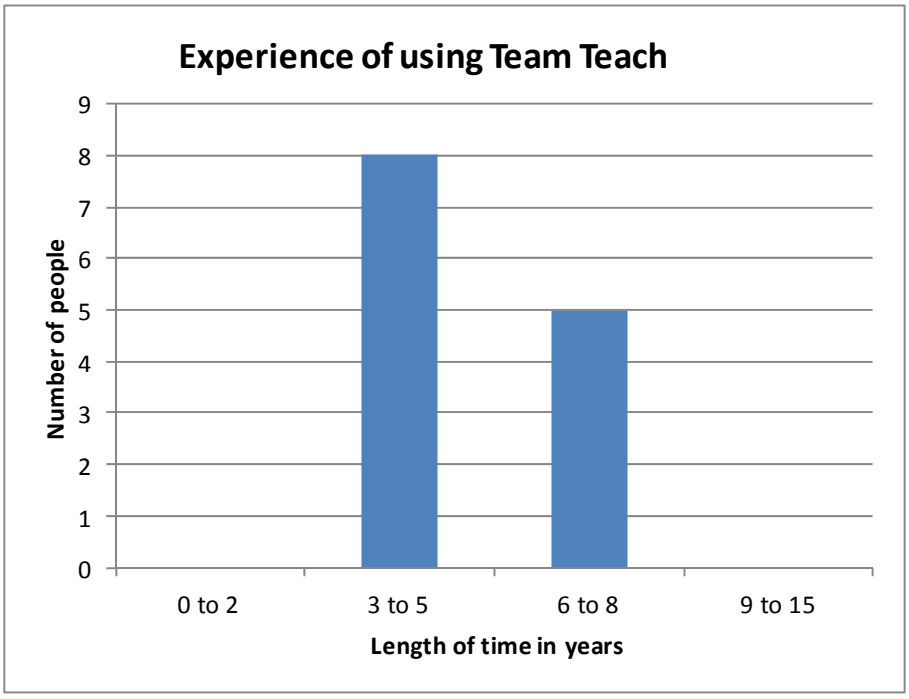


Fig. 2

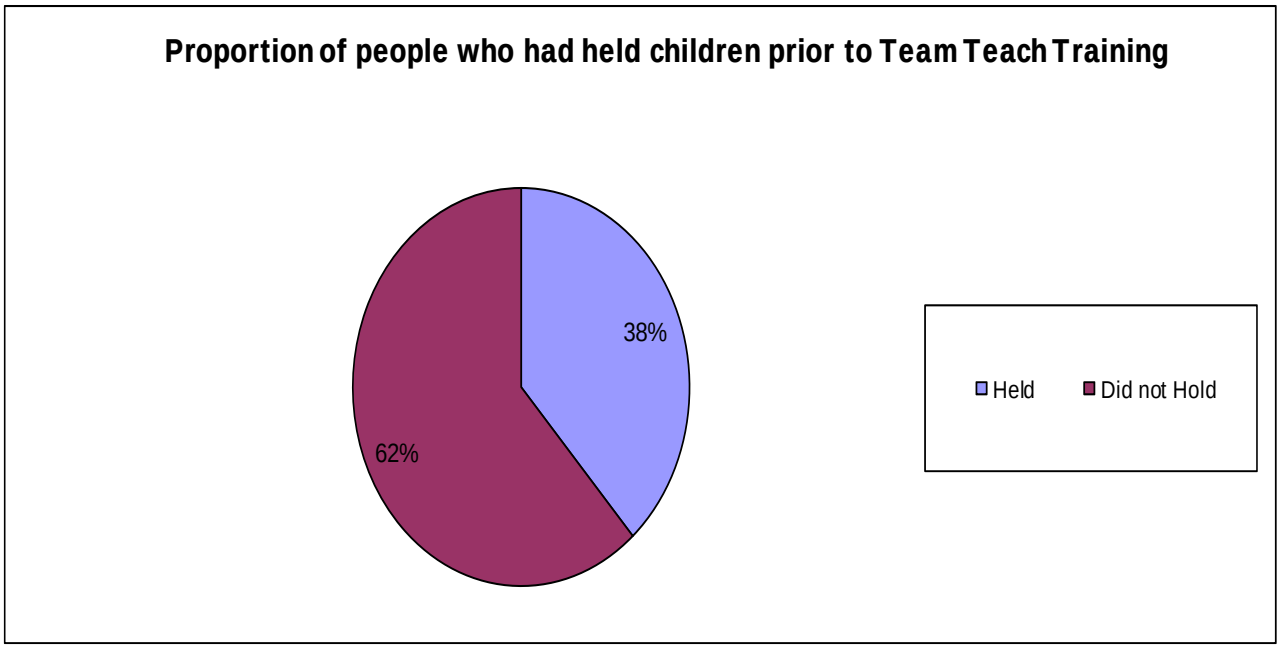


Fig. 3

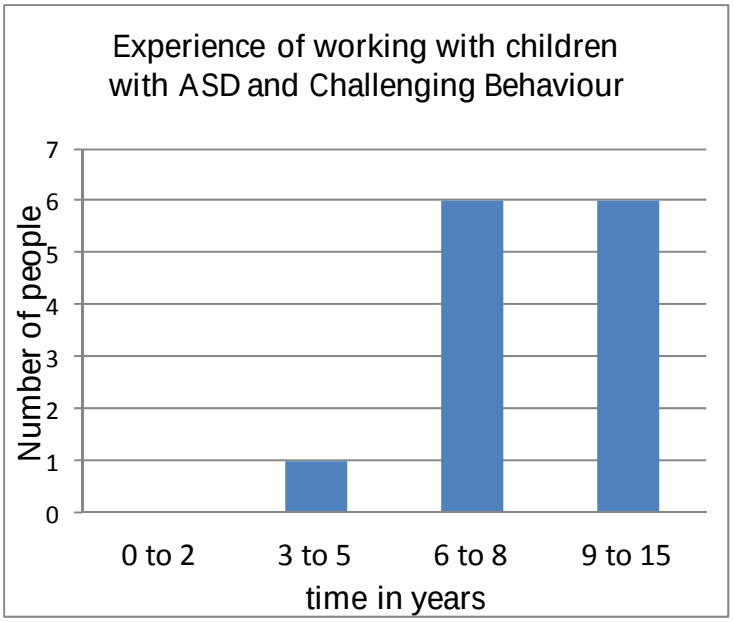


Fig. 4

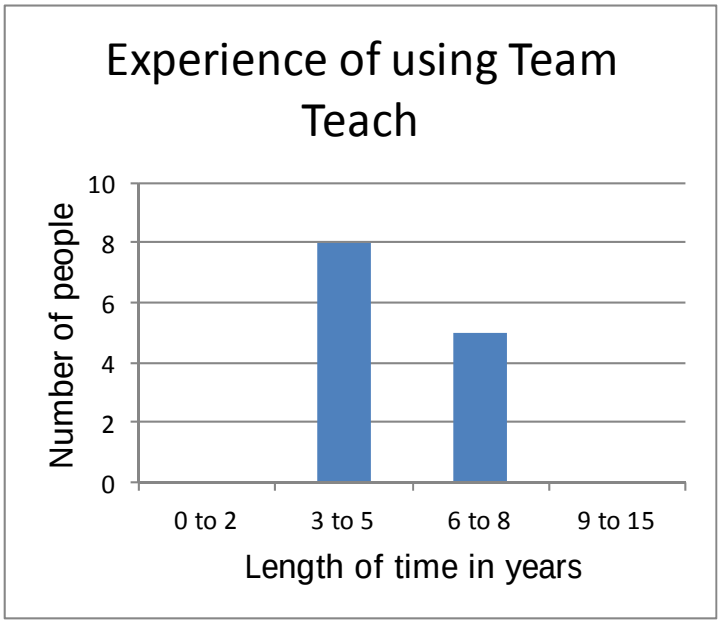


Fig. 5

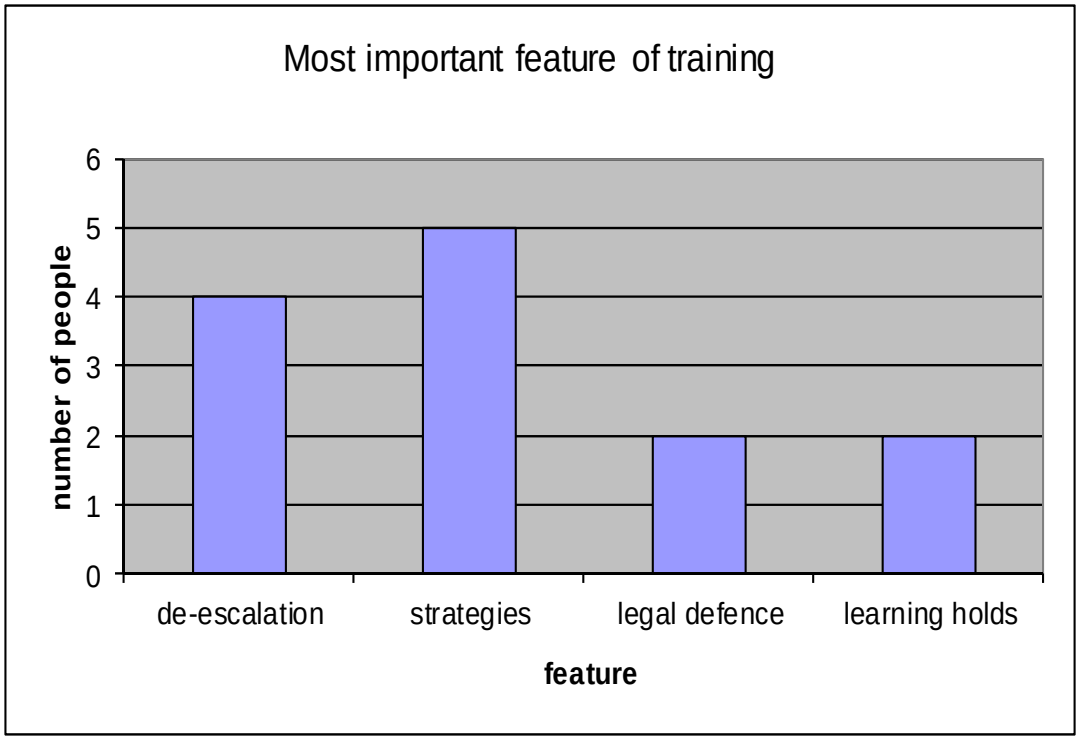

Most important feature of training
number of people
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
de-escalation
strategies
legal defence
learning holds
feature

Fig. 6

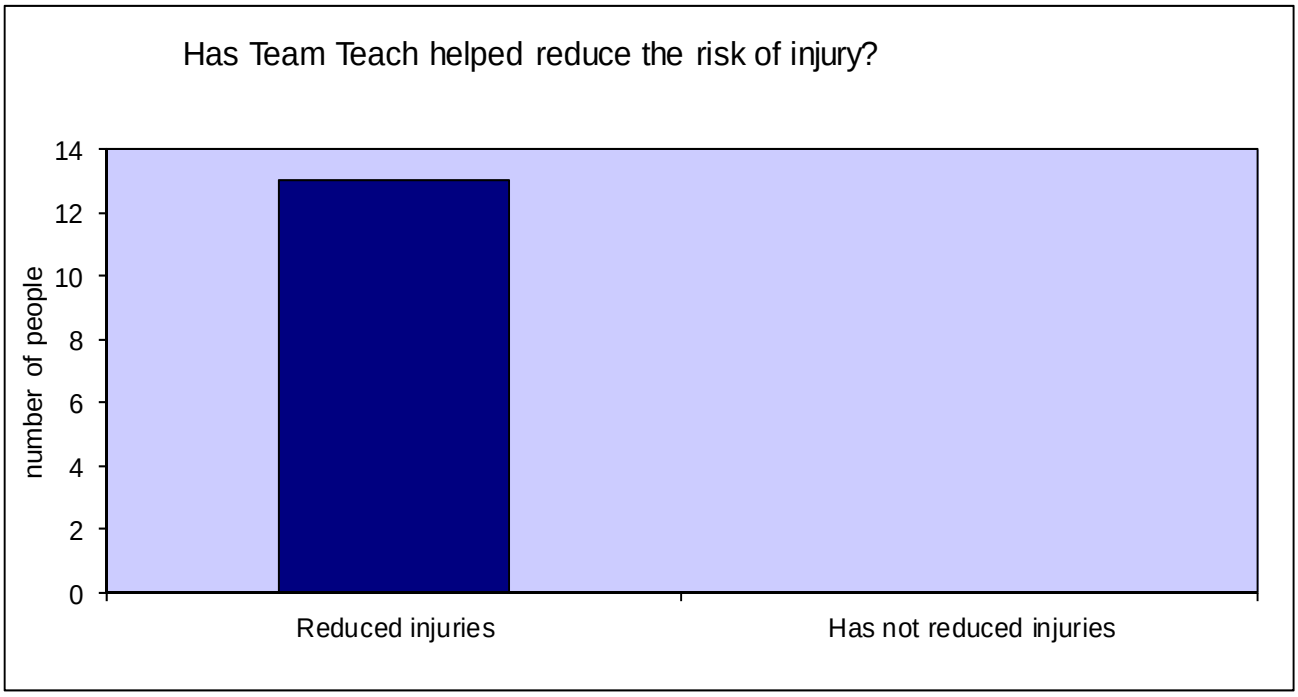

Has Team Teach helped reduce the risk of injury?
number of people
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
Reduced injuries
Has not reduced injuries

Fig.7

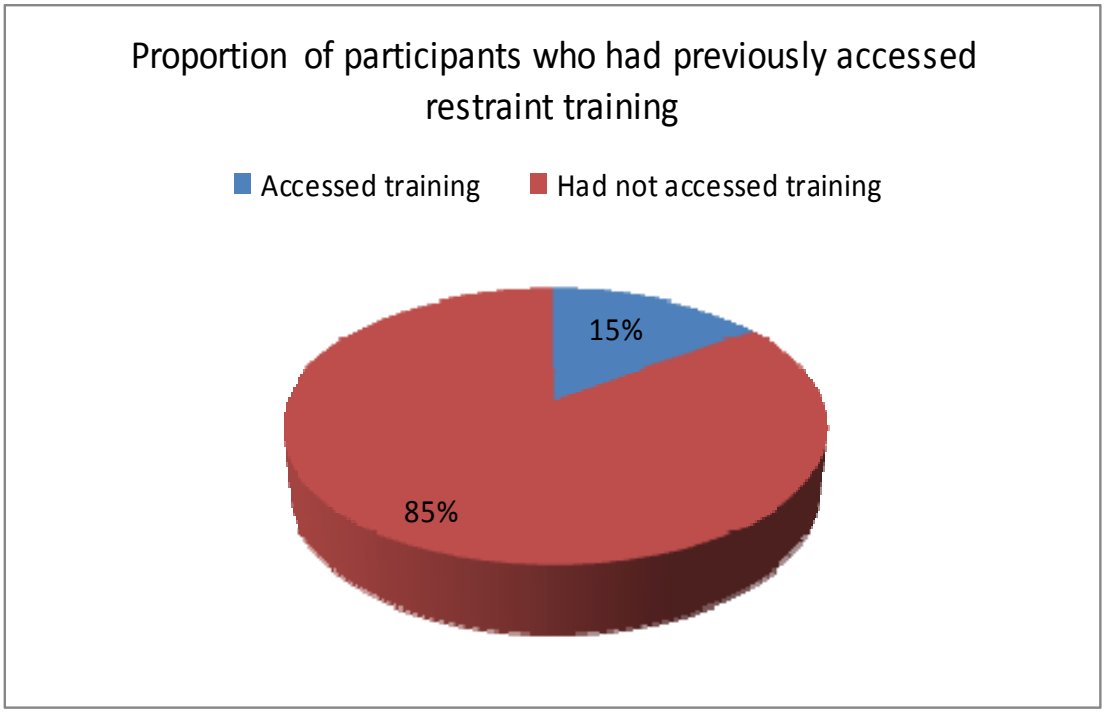

Proportion of participants who had previously accessed restraint training
Accessed training
Had not accessed training
15%
85%

Fig. 8

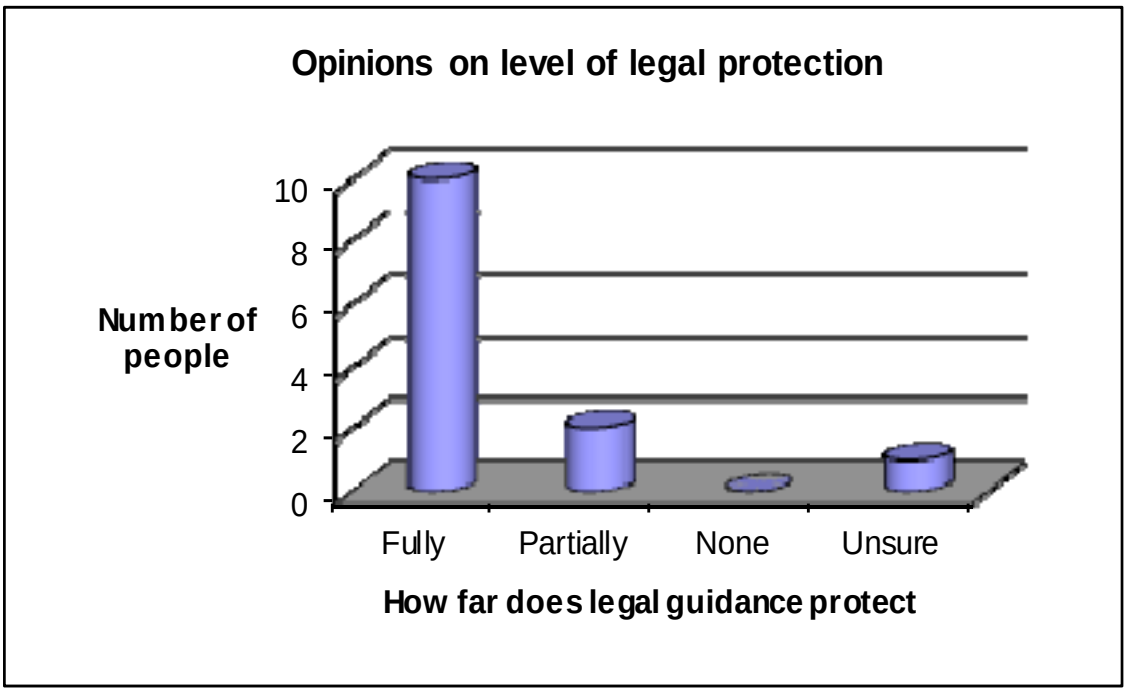

Opinions on level of legal protection
Number of people
10
8
6
4
2
0
Fully
Partially
None
Unsure
How far does legal guidance protect

Fig. 9

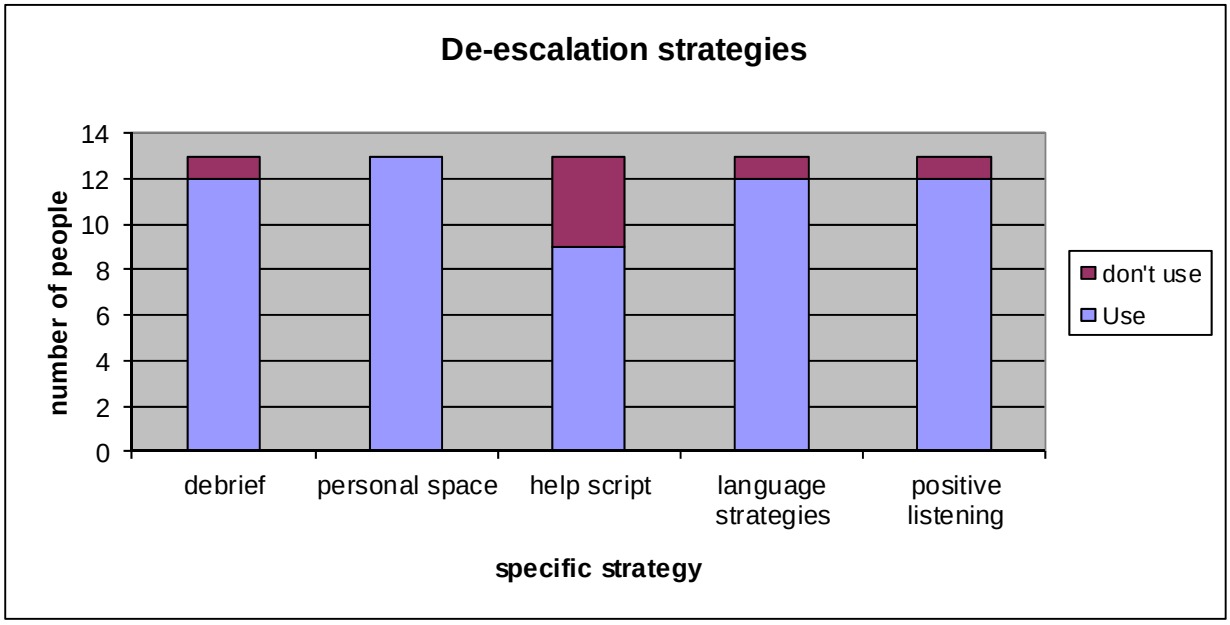
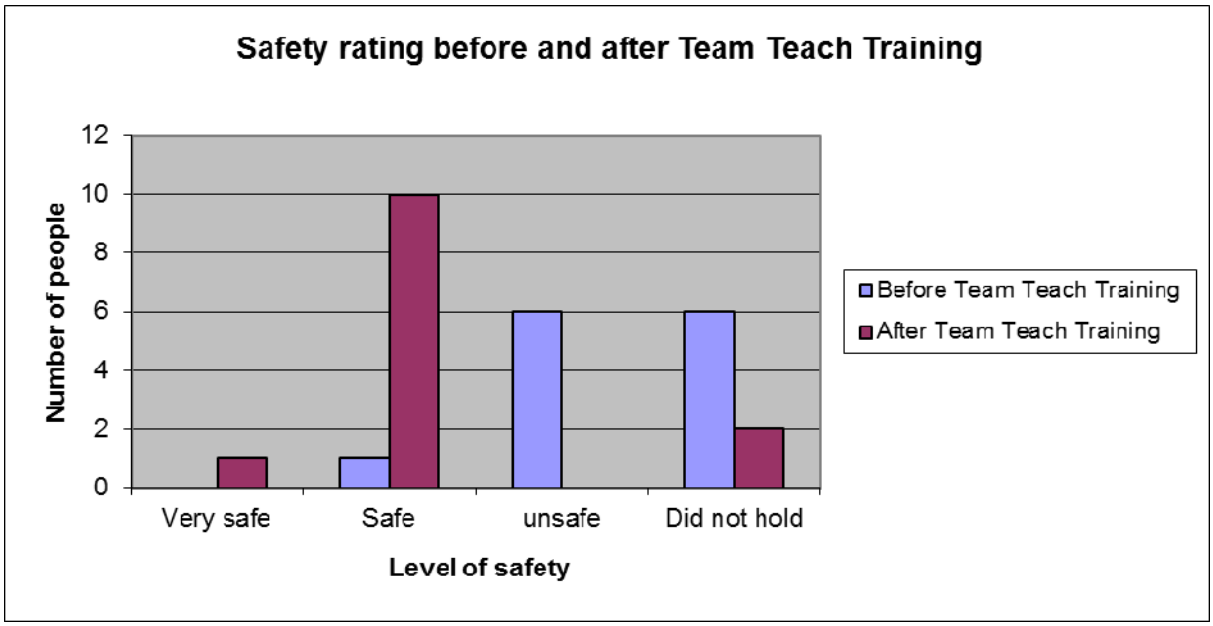

De-escalation strategies
number of people
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
debrief
personal space
help script
language strategies
positive listening
specific strategy
don't use
Use

Fig. 10


Safety rating before and after Team Teach Training
Number of people
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Very safe
Safe
unsafe
Did not hold
Level of safety
Before Team Teach Training
After Team Teach Training

David (1998) explains that a researcher is judged by the relevance of the findings to the theoretical stance and the chosen audience. From the questionnaires all 13 participants had used Team Teach as model of practice for between 3 and 8 years. This is sufficient time to form an opinion on using Team Teach. An over whelming majority had not partaken in any similar training before accessing Team Teach. There was a very positive response from all participants regarding current legal guidance. Figure 2 shows a minority of participants said they had held before accessing Team Teach training. Long et al (2011) suggests that staff who physically intervenes should receive appropriate training. Figure 10 demonstrates the vast difference between how “safe” participants felt when holding children before and after receiving Team Teach training. This information was crucial to the critique of the research.

Robson (2002) explains that data should be presented honestly. The question on de-escalation produced an overwhelming positive response for all the strategies. When answering which was considered the most important feature of Team Teach training, there was a more of a focus on de-escalation and strategies rather than learning the holds. Pike and Hayden (2004) mention that the majority of course members value the de-escalation aspect of the training. Figure 6 shows how the Team Teach approach received a positive endorsement because all the participants replied yes when asked if the training reduced the risk of being physically injured. All participants mentioned their use of de-escalation strategies which lead to a greater chance of avoiding restraint and if there was a need to hold, how to do it safely. One participant made the following comment “I also believe that not all of the holds

would always be practical or possible when dealing with a child with challenging behaviour." This is an appropriate comment as Allen (2001) and BILD (2010) explain the de-escalation content of the course being very important. This reflects the researcher's purpose and use of questions in the research methods, where there is mention of safety relating to a person having to holding/restrain in the key questions.

Wellington (1996) cites Bell (1993) who states that questionnaires are about fact finding by providing the answers to the questions What? Where? When? and How? Wellington (1996) and Walker (1985) explain that using interviews can help to provide answers to why? Burton and Bartlett (2009) report that using triangulation will attempt to relate different methods of collating information to counteract possible threats to the validity of data analysis. Responses from the interviews did increase the information from the questionnaires. Coleman (1999) and Cohen et al (2000) explain that using interviews can expand on the use of questionnaires. One of the participants remarked after the second question from a total of seven that "This is just like the questionnaire!" The researcher felt at the time that the participant had missed the point of expanding on the questionnaires. Denscombe (1998) explains that different research methods can combine to produce mutual ways of collecting data. Clark (1989) argues the need for interviews to increase the knowledge of interviewer. Cohen et al (2000) mentions that a qualitative research method amasses huge amounts of data. With this in mind the researcher attempted to collate the data over a period of time and use a system that Bogdan and Biklen (1992) explain as establishing units of data analysis. Coding the data alphabetically

assisted in clarifying the responses. When asked if their practice had changed since accessing Team Teach training, all seven participants responded with “yes” and “very” and said they incorporated the training into their practice. Related to the title and key research questions, the participants all stated that they felt safer after receiving training, mainly because they were more aware of de-escalation and the legalities’, felt more confident and although they all acknowledged they didn’t want to hold children some commented that they felt safer when they did have to hold. Allen (2002) argues the need for adults to feel safe when physically intervening. There was a definite response from the participants of feeling safer when asked if there had been a reduction in the risk of being hurt. No one said that they had been hurt when using Team Teach physical interventions or whilst de-escalating challenging behaviour. The final interview question was asked because the researcher was interested in an outcome of Team Teach training leading to a reduction in permanent exclusions. One participant said that 20 children had avoided permanent exclusion because of using the Team Teach approach, whilst another said a maximum of 10 children would have been excluded permanently if they had not have received Team Teach training. Three other participants said that they were unsure of the numbers but agreed that children had avoided being permanently excluded from the schools they visit because of the impact of Team teach training. Again there is little research into this positive outcome. Long et al (2011) and Ofsted (2005) mention the importance of outreach staff supporting settings with challenging behaviour. As with any training course there are cost implications and the time needed to complete the training. CAT receives the training at “cost price” due to the amount of Team Teach tutors it provides for training across settings

within Birmingham Local Authority. Each of the 3 tutors allows 6 days per year from their busy schedule to assist with Team Teach training. Due to participant's replies this research has helped to clarify the importance of Team Teach training being embedded in CAT policy. BILD (2010) states that policy helps to promote safe holistic practice.

Conclusion:

Opie (2004) explains that the crucial aspect of this research is determining whether the key questions and title of the research were fulfilled from the response to the research methods. Cohen and Manion (1994) explain that it is only after the information from the sample participants has been summarised that the researcher can notice how effective the research methods have been. The researcher's use of research methods to collect qualitative and quantitative data helped to answer the title and key questions of the research project. Almost all participants said they felt safer after receiving Team Teach training. Allen (2001) and Long et al (2011) report that staff need to feel proficient when considering the use of physical interventions. The responses from the participants were indicative of the extent to which Team Teach training can assist in helping CAT members feel safer when faced with challenging behaviour, understanding the legalities, the importance of de-escalation and when there is a necessity to physically intervene.

The lack of research that Bell and Stark (1998) and Leadbetter (2002) have identified is both limiting and potentially damaging towards perception of training that involves restraint in mainstream settings. Denscombe (1998) and Bell (1998)

mention that research can help to give validity. It is anticipated that this limited research project has been able to collect a small amount of data which quantifies the feelings and opinions of a Local Authority outreach team. Cohen and Manion (1994) state the importance of the data analysis when reflecting the participant's views. The validity and reliability of this data could have been further verified by interviewing more team members and including other outreach teams that support a similar cliental. The research concluded from this project could be used to feed into Team Teach as an organisation and into Team Teach training as evidence of how some educational professionals feel it helps to keep them safer.

Word count: 4350

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