

***Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child
and Adolescent Psychology***

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Institute of Education, University College London

**Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent
Psychology**

**How can Educational Psychologists facilitate Youth
Participatory Action Research to create change?**

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I, Jaspar Khawaja confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) is an emancipatory approach, based on the belief that children and young people (CYP) can and should participate as researchers in an inquiry-based process, aimed at analysing and taking action against oppression (Buttimer, 2018b). YPAR promotes the robust participation of children and young people at every research stage to ensure their voices are included in decisions that affect their lives. Unlike traditional research approaches that prioritise 'objectivity' in research, YPAR aims to conduct research for the explicit political purpose of taking action to create change (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Educational Psychologists (EPs) have a responsibility to elicit the voices of CYP in their work. This research represents an important contribution to the field of educational psychology research, as it provides the first account of Educational Psychologists facilitating YPAR within academic literature.

This research used a case study design to explore how EPs can facilitate YPAR. The project was conducted over one academic year involving 12 young people in Year 12, and was co-facilitated by a qualified EP and a trainee EP (the author). A range of qualitative sources were used to capture different perspectives and experiences of the project and were triangulated to inform the findings.

The findings from the research suggest that YPAR is a complex and challenging process to facilitate. YPAR has the potential to be a democratic, empowering approach that can be brought more widely into the field of educational psychology. However, careful considerations are needed by facilitators to mitigate the challenges of the process. For example, facilitators must consider methods to maximise youth researchers' participation

and monitor the extent of their own involvement. Implications are discussed in relation to how YPAR can best be facilitated and who is best positioned to facilitate YPAR in schools.

Impact Statement

This research was produced as part of the core requirements for the Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology. It was designed to contribute to both professional practice and academic knowledge.

This research used a case study to explore how educational psychologists (EPs) can facilitate youth participatory action research (YPAR) in schools. This represents an important contribution to the field of educational psychology research as, although there are accounts of participatory and action research being applied separately by EPs, this is the first account of EPs facilitating YPAR within academic literature. It, therefore, provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges of EPs facilitating YPAR.

Furthermore, the literature review expands on the recent calls (Williams et al., 2017) for EPs to use a critical perspective to reconstruct their role. The research expands upon their textbook by providing another approach that aligns with a critical perspective that EPs can implement.

The research used a case study design, which allowed for an in-depth analysis of how the epistemological principles of YPAR can be applied in practice. This highlighted some challenges and considerations that have not previously been cited in YPAR literature to my knowledge.

The findings highlight that it is valuable for EPs to continue exploring the opportunities and challenges of delivering YPAR. The findings have implications for future research, such as exploring the views of school staff and EPs on YPAR to understand the opportunities and challenges of its wider implementation. The findings also have implications for the practice of Educational Psychology Services (EPSs), EPs, school staff and others who want to implement YPAR:

- An infographic resource is presented within the thesis, which guides facilitators of YPAR on important considerations and guidance on decision making throughout YPAR. This includes guidance on using a reflective journal, considerations when planning sessions and advice on facilitating the different stages of YPAR. Guidance is also given on how technology can be used during YPAR and ethical considerations during facilitation, such as the power imbalances between adults and children and young people.
- The case study provides an example of YPAR being used in practice, which could be replicated and adapted by others.
- EPs could provide training and supervision to teachers who want to facilitate YPAR.

The findings of this thesis will also be disseminated at the UCL Institute of Education and the Education Futures in Action Conference in June 2022. The thesis will also be made available online through the university library, and at least one article will be written for publication.

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I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have been involved in the development of this research. I thoroughly enjoyed working alongside everyone in this project and striving to create change within the education system. I truly feel the work being done by States of Mind is the start of something bigger.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Focus of the research

This research aims to inform practice for educational psychologists (EPs) and others who seek to facilitate youth participatory action research (YPAR) in schools. YPAR is an emancipatory approach based on the belief that children and young people (CYP) can, and should, participate as researchers in an inquiry-based process design aimed to analyse and take action against oppression (Buttimer, 2018b). It is an approach that allows for a fluid, flexible and non-prescriptive methodology that will vary based on the needs of participants and their contexts (Cammorata & Fine, 2009). Still, it broadly involves four stages: (1) problem identification, (2) data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) action (Kornbluh et al., 2015).

Fox (2011) details how EPs should be involved in a range of research to complement professional practice and highlights the importance of the EP role in working alongside actors within their system to influence change. This appears to closely align with the aims of YPAR. Although there is an increasing amount of educational psychology research using participatory approaches (Wallace & Giles), there are no current accounts in the academic literature of EPs facilitating YPAR. Therefore, this thesis outlines a case study of an EP and trainee educational psychologist (TEP) (the author) facilitating YPAR with twelve youth researchers. The research aims to explore how YPAR can be conducted in practice, explore the outcomes of a YPAR project on youth researchers, and identify any challenges that need to be considered by facilitators of YPAR.

1.2 Research context

1.2.1 States of Mind's 'Breaking the Silence' Project

'Breaking the Silence' is a series of YPAR projects facilitated by the social enterprise States of Mind. The project's core aim is to challenge the mainstream assumptions of the education system and provide actionable alternatives by working alongside children and young people (CYP). To date, there have been four phases of the 'Breaking the Silence' project. At the start of Phase 2, States of Mind partnered with the Institute of Education, UCL. At this point, an opportunity arose for a doctoral student to work alongside States of Mind to deliver YPAR, for which I volunteered. After thoroughly enjoying facilitating Phase 2 of 'Breaking the Silence', I agreed to co-facilitate Phase 3 as part of my thesis.

1.2.2 Personal context

Flick (2006) points out that research questions usually originate with "the researchers' personal biographies and their social contexts" (p.106). I am personally and socially committed to empowering people and strongly believe in creating space for marginalised voices. During my work as a teaching assistant in a trauma-informed unit in a secondary school, I observed the impact of social, political and economic factors in determining the experiences of children and young people (CYP). Furthermore, when working in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) inpatient unit with adolescents experiencing mental health difficulties, I noticed the negative impact of the current education system on the mental health and wellbeing of many CYP. During these experiences, I reflected upon the systemic nature of these problems and the limitations that individuals and organisations can have in resolving these problems without wider political and economic change. My

reflections concluded that methods are needed to challenge the systemic economic and political causes of worsening inequality and mental health problems. I wanted to bring this perspective with me into my training as an EP.

During my wider reading around these topics, I have been influenced by the work of authors from a range of disciplines. For example, Fisher's (2010) descriptions of the widespread effects of neoliberal ideology on culture, work, education and mental health, which he describes as 'capitalist realism': "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it" (p.2). This theory seemed to apply to my own experiences of education, in which I observed a deep-rooted assumption that broader change was not possible, and that change could only exist within the parameters of the current system, rather than attempt to reimagine systemic alternatives. The work of the late anthropologist, David Graeber, has provided me with hope. Graeber and Wengrow (2021) evidenced, through a comprehensive and enduring history of indigenous communities, how the current organisation of our societies is not inevitable and that we have the power to imagine alternatives. As Graeber stated, "The ultimate hidden truth of the world is that it is something we make. And could just as easily make differently" (Graeber, 2015, p.89).

Shortly before I started my educational psychology doctorate, I read Cottam's (2018) book *Radical Help*, which described a research design, which I later identified was comparable to PAR, to revolutionise the welfare state in order to respond to the needs of communities. Cottam outlined a practical approach that can be applied to understand the problems faced by communities and empower them to find opportunities and solutions to these problems.

My inspiration from the book led to my desire to work with States of Mind to conduct YPAR when the opportunity arose.

Therefore, the YPAR project of focus in this case study cannot be considered objectively, nor do I want it to be. The exploration of YPAR was chosen for my thesis because I believe it has the potential to be a democratic, empowering approach that can contribute to social change.

1.2.3 Context of research in educational psychology

Research is widely considered to be one of the five main components of EP work (BPS, 2002), and there is a requirement from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) that practitioner psychologists will be able to engage in evidence-based and evidence-informed practice (HCPC, 2015). However, the drive towards evidence-based practice in applied psychology cannot be distinguished from the movement for evidence-based practice that has permeated many professions, including a wide range of health and related health care disciplines and education, management, and government policy (Trinder, 2000; Taylor, 2005).

The broader theoretical understanding of evidence-based practice came from the field of medicine, where it is generally acknowledged that the best evidence for a particular intervention comes from meta-analyses or systematic reviews of large-scale randomised controlled trials (RCT) (Burnham, 2013). Models of evidence-based practice tend to promote a positivist view of evidence and value concepts of objectivity and validity in research.

Within educational psychology, research from organisations such as The Education

Endowment Foundation, which predominantly uses RCTs, is commonly referred to as evidence for best practice.

However, whilst this research certainly has value in helping to support teaching practices in the current context and helping to increase the attainment of some students, it is limited in its suggestion of 'evidence'. This is because it uncritically conforms to many of the education systems' central values, such as the primary goal being to promote the attainment of CYP in standardised assessments. RCTs do not question whether the examinations used to test CYP are valid measures of their ability and worth. This means that the evidence of practices within a values-driven education system is presented as being value-neutral. This, in turn, leads to a situation in which the broader purpose of education is not discussed and, therefore, cannot be challenged (Biesta, 2004).

Furthermore, RCTs and evidence-based decision-making tend to only consider academic expertise and place CYP as 'objects' of research (Noguera, 2007). This can be problematic as it means that the knowledge base and innovation of CYP are largely ignored in research and subsequently in policy (Camarota & Fine, 2008).

Arnell (2018) proposed a new definition of what evidence-based practice should mean to EPs:

“Evidence-based practice in educational psychology is the integration of the critically appraised relevant research with reflexive practice, considered conjointly with both practitioner and client characteristics, culture, and preferences, in an ecosystemic context” (p.134).

YPAR could provide an approach that allows EPs to be evidence-based practitioners in line with this definition, as knowledge can be co-produced with CYP on topics that are important to them and are grounded in their lives (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

1.2.4 Participation in research

Participatory research approaches have become more popular as more researchers have questioned and challenged the principles and practices of traditional research approaches (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010). Participatory approaches acknowledge that CYP are experts in their own lives and provide a method for researchers to work alongside them (Christensen & James, 2008). Bagnoli and Clark (2010) explain how using participatory approaches allows for ethical issues of power and control within research to be considered, particularly between researchers and those being researched.

Since the introduction of participatory research approaches, there have been several attempts to conceptualise and offer frameworks for conducting such work (Wallace & Giles, 2019). The key models developed include Hart's "Ladder of Participation" (Hart, 1992), Shier's "Ladder of Children's Participation" (Shier, 2001), and Lundy's "Interrelated Concepts" (Lundy, 2007). However, these models have been criticised for being hierarchal and not representing the complexities of real-life situations (Wallace and Giles, 2019). More recent participation models have moved towards using a systemic framework (Wallace and Giles, 2019). For example, Gal's (2017) model applies Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach to consider the different dimensions of participation.

There has also been an increase in the practical applications of participatory research in the UK; for example, the organisation 'INVOLVE' and the Open University's Children's Research Centre have worked closely with CYP to support their engagement in research (Wallace & Giles, 2019).

YPAR aims to allow CYP to have robust participation at all stages of the research process (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Ingram (2013) argues that EPs are well positioned to gather and communicate the views of CYP, and Norwich et al. (2006) suggest that EP practice should involve the evaluation and support of participatory methods. This indicates a potential opportunity for EPs to be involved in the facilitation of YPAR.

1.2.5 The purpose of research

The epistemology of YPAR considers the 'why' or purpose of knowledge creation (Buttimer, 2018b). This differs from many epistemological stances that value notions of objectivity and neutrality. This is because YPAR was born out of a critical research tradition, which I discuss later, that aims to conduct research for the explicit political purpose of investigating issues and taking action to change them (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). As previously discussed, my personal view is that EPs cannot be apolitical figures as their work will either reproduce or challenge a values-driven education system. Therefore, EPs should consider whether their approaches reproduce or challenge oppressive systems, and to what extent a Critical Educational Psychological perspective is applied, discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.3 Overview of the structure of the thesis

In addition to the current chapter, this thesis comprises six further chapters, outlined below.

Chapter 2 outlines the rationale for examining the facilitation of YPAR from the perspective of educational psychology. The literature review also leads to the development of three research questions and provides the conceptual protocol used to analyse the data in relation to these three questions.

Chapter 3 justifies the methodology used to investigate the research questions and provides the philosophical assumptions of the case study.

Chapters 4,5 and 6 provide the findings in relation to the three research questions to better understand how EPs can facilitate YPAR. The findings are also integrated with an in-depth analysis and discussion, drawing upon relevant literature and potential implications.

Chapter 7 concludes the research with a summary of the research project and a critique of the strengths and limitations. Implications for EPs are discussed, along with opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter will review the theoretical background and relevance of youth participatory action research (YPAR) for educational psychologists (EPs). A narrative review of literature was chosen following a search focused on literature published within the last twenty years, using British Education Index, ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) and Google Scholar. This was due to the breadth of literature on YPAR across various disciplines and because there are no accounts of YPAR being facilitated by EPs in academic literature. Firstly, the need for YPAR from a psychological perspective is discussed with reference to Critical Educational Psychology (CEP). Then, YPAR is examined as an approach, using a similar structure to a previous review of YPAR (Buttimer, 2018a). Within this examination, four aspects of YPAR are reviewed: the epistemology of YPAR, the implementation of YPAR's epistemological principles, the outcomes of YPAR; and the challenges of implementing YPAR. The literature review of these four aspects of YPAR provides the foundation of the conceptual protocol used to analyse the current case study, which is explained in more detail in the methodology section. Finally, the relevance of YPAR to the role of EPs is discussed. After reviewing the literature, a clear rationale is presented for the current study and the research questions.

2.2 Why YPAR? - A Critical Educational Psychological perspective

Critical Educational Psychology (CEP) provides the framework within which this research is positioned. The concept of CEP has emerged in recent years, arising from Critical Theory and

then Critical Psychology (Billington et al., 2017). Critical Theory was initially developed by a group of German scholars in the 1920s, basing their ideas on the works of Marx, Kant and Hegel (Jacobs, 2018). A researcher using a Critical Theory perspective is focused on critiquing society to imagine new possibilities. The ontology of Critical Theory is that reality is usually constructed by those in power and is influenced by political, social, economic and cultural factors (Jacobs, 2018). Critical Theory is action-orientated, with its broad aim being to integrate theory and practice to inspire people to change the social contexts in which they exist (Jacobs, 2018); closely aligned to the aims of action research (Kemmis, 2006). YPAR follows a similar ontology based on emancipation, rooted in the idea that social reality is historically created and is produced and reproduced by people (Zwowski-Myers, 2009).

Critical Psychology turns the perspective of the psychologist back on the discipline (Parker, 2007a). It aims to illuminate people about the past 'errors and crimes' of psychology and shed light on how many of these harmful practices continue today within the discipline.

Critical Psychology takes the perspective that psychology is inherently political and argues that mainstream psychology tends to ignore this (Parker, 2007b; Sloan, 2000, Walkerdine, 2002). Therefore, "Critical Psychology is the study of the ways in which all varieties of psychology are culturally historically constructed, and how alternative varieties of psychology may confirm or resist ideological assumptions in mainstream models" (Parker, 2007a, p. 2).

When not contextualised, traditional psychological explanations of societal problems can be individualistic and fail to recognise systemic causes. These traditional explanations feed into a reductionist, neo-liberal narrative that individuals determine their own success or failure.

For example, Parker (2007b) argues that psychological explanations for events such as war and invasion are reductionist, and tend to examine the psychology of significant individuals and groups rather than the economic, social and historical contexts in which they occur.

Many psychological theories make broad, simplistic statements about 'human nature' and how it is essentially fixed, leading to harmful and dangerous political consequences, such as the widespread view that a neo-liberal society is inevitable as it is based on human nature (Parker, 2007b). He discusses the role that psychology often plays under capitalism: providing theories that closely align with those in power.

The conceptualisation of 'ability' and 'intelligence' is an example of how educational psychology can provide theories that support those in power. The first Educational Psychologist, Cyril Burt, focused on 'innate intelligence' within individuals, which had racist, ableist and class-based explanations for why different groups scored highly or not in intelligence testing (Billington et al., 2017). The use of 'ability' and 'intelligence' testing is still common within educational psychology, encouraging the view that children and young people (CYP) make individual psychological journeys through the educational system and 'achieve' or 'fail' based on qualities within themselves, which consequentially side-lines or ignores contextual factors such as class and race (Parker, 2007b). Failure within the education system in high stakes exams has been shown to have harmful psychological consequences, such as significant stress and worry (Putwain, 2007). The repeated underachievement of particular groups has been explained by psychologists as an individual problem, with the onus being on the individual's ability to access education rather than structural and systemic barriers to their achievement (Parker, 2007b). The psychologist's role has often been to provide individual solutions, such as the use of 'positive psychology'

for children and young people with mental health difficulties. This shows how educational psychology has the tendency to individualise the difficulties that CYP are experiencing and provide individual solutions to their problems, ignoring the social, political and historical contexts.

A CEP perspective reveals the ways in which the traditional practices of educational psychology have already been challenged. Billington et al. (2017) discuss how the traditional, positivist approach in educational psychology has been challenged by the work of Dewey (1903), Vygotsky (1927), Bruner (1980) and Gilham (1978), as well as Foucault's notions of power (1989), which have all helped to reconstruct the role of the EP. For example, Vygotsky's research on childhood challenged the fixed ideas about ages and stages of development, made popular by the work of Piaget, which led to a new perspective of human development being social rather than individual. Although these theories have led to a different perspective of human development amongst EPs, there are difficulties in enacting these principles due to the existing education models (Goodley & Billington, 2017).

In the first textbook of its kind on CEP, Goodley and Billington (2017) state that although the role of the EP has evolved, been reconstructed over time, and now has a more explicit focus on inclusive education, neo-liberal educational models act as one of the most significant barriers to inclusive education. This is because at the core of neo-liberal education is the need for common standards assessment and competition, where productivity and accountability are key (Goodley & Billington, 2017). This 'McDonaldisation' (Gabel & Danford, 2008) has led to a narrower curriculum, more testing and assessments, and more accountability measures to hold schools to higher standards than ever before (Ball, 2008).

This has had harmful impacts on the well-being of both students and teachers and has changed the common perception of what education is (Ball, 2008). Although Goodley and Billington (2017) do not refer to YPAR explicitly, they refer to the methods used by Freire, which were central to the development of YPAR, as a way to challenge neo-liberal forms of education. Parker (2000) explicitly outlines how action research aligns with Critical Psychology by breaking away from attempts to be 'objective' and 'neutral' and instead aims to encourage people to reflect and challenge the social structures in which they exist.

Critical Educational Psychology provides a rationale for the role of EPs in facilitating YPAR: to continue the reconstruction of the role of the EP, to give voice to CYP and strive for inclusive education. The following section will further highlight how a Critical Educational Psychological framework closely aligns with the ontological and epistemological positions of YPAR.

2.3 Epistemology of YPAR

2.3.1 Origins and Terms

There is no single origin of YPAR; the approach has been developed from the thinking and practices of individuals and groups from various disciplines (Schneider, 2012). Accounts refer to PAR's 'northern' and 'southern' origins (Schneider, 2012). Kurt Lewin is one of the founding voices of the global north and is generally credited with devising the term 'action research' (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). He used it to describe the practical approach to solving problems in a cyclical manner of planning, action and reflecting (Schneider, 2012). This thinking has been applied to the workplace and educational settings with the idea that

problems can best be addressed through democratic thinking (Schneider, 2012). The origins of PAR from the global south are highly influenced by the work of Freire (1970). Key ideas in this thread emerged from a Marxist perspective whereby “the important thing is not to understand the world but to change it” (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p.3). Freire’s (1970, p.47) concept of ‘conscientization’ is essential to PAR, which identifies education as a method of enabling socially-oppressed groups to come to ‘critical consciousness’ in order to challenge the oppressive status quo. Therefore, “Knowledge-making cannot be neutral and disinterested but is a political process in the service of particular purposes” (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p.6). Other contributors to the development of PAR include encounter group training from psychotherapy and community experiments done in England based on humanistic education, both of which are grounded in ideas around democratic inquiry (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Since its development, PAR and YPAR projects have often been undertaken in the context of social movements. These include the women’s movement, indigenous education and land rights, people’s movements aimed at community development, and fighting for civil rights (Kemmis, 2006, in Reason and Bradbury).

A distinction exists between Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Action Research, despite some shared characteristics (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, 2006; Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Action Research is an inquiry-based process that aims to balance collaborative research with impacted groups and problem-solving actions, which are continually evaluated (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). However, Kemmis (2006, in Reason & Bradbury) acknowledges certain aspects of PAR which distinguish it from other types of ‘action research’. The key distinctions are that PAR demands robust participation from co-

researchers through the whole process and must have a 'critical' focus. These two distinctions can be present in Action Research but are not essential to the process.

The current study will primarily use the term 'Youth Participatory Action Research' (YPAR) (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), emphasising Participatory Action Research being conducted with CYP. On some occasions, the term 'Participatory Action Research' (PAR) will be used when the author referenced is not explicitly writing about the involvement of CYP.

2.3.2 Epistemological Principles

It is important to clarify that YPAR is not a method, but an approach to knowledge creation, grounded in several epistemological principles (Fine, 2008). Embedded within the epistemology are issues around who can create knowledge and for what purposes, as well as how we create knowledge (Buttimer, 2018a). While there remains some debate around the epistemology of YPAR within the literature, there is generally concordance of the main principles (Buttimer, 2018a). The agreed principles are that YPAR is: (1) critical in nature, (2) takes an inquiry stance, (3) is situated in the lives of young people, (4) draws on the unique knowledge and expertise they have as youth, (5) features robust youth participation in every aspect of the process, (6) is designed to raise awareness about issues of injustice and create social change through action (Buttimer, 2018a; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Kirshner, 2010; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009; Valenzuela, 2016). I will examine the meaning of these principles in more depth.

Firstly, YPAR is 'critical in nature'. Kemmis (2006, in Reason and Bradbury) states that within the broader body of 'action research', very few studies are genuinely critical or

emancipatory, and this is predominantly through PAR. As discussed in relation to CEP, this is because an essential component of YPAR is to critique systems of power and oppression, and to take action to change them (Buttimer, 2018b). This differs from traditional epistemological stances that value notions of objectivity and neutrality. Kemmis (2006) uses the difference between schooling and education to explain 'critical research', and how it can be considered controversial. He discusses how critical educational scientists would challenge the notion that schooling is equal to education. However, this inevitably provokes controversy as it is often assumed that schooling and education are indistinguishable. Previous attempts to transform school systems have led to researchers and CYP being marginalised for attempting to challenge the status quo (McGregor, 2000). This research shows that, although a key principle of YPAR is to be critical in nature, attempts to be critical and change the social environment can be rejected by groups with a different worldview.

The second principle is to take an inquiry stance. An inquiry stance allows knowledge to be co-produced between adults and youth researchers to address complex socio-political questions (Schneider, 2012). This contrasts with typical schooling in which binary (for example, 'right' or 'wrong') answers are taught for the requirement of standardised tests (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009).

The third principle is that YPAR topics are situated in the lives of CYP. Young people are often directly affected by the issues chosen in YPAR which helps avoid the 'intellectual void', whereby young people's voices are excluded from research and policy decisions that impact their lives (Cammarata, 2008). YPAR aims to challenge positivist approaches to social

research, which use deficit approaches to marginalise people, by validating the knowledge of local communities as well as their right to determine truth (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009).

The fifth principle is the robust participation of CYP at each stage of the research. This is to avoid 'listening' to CYP in a tokenistic manner and misinterpreting their views (Kellet, 2009).

The robust participation of CYP distinguishes YPAR from other forms of action research, such as technical action research, which is not fully participative (Bergold & Thomas, 2012).

While not explicitly about YPAR, Hart's (1992) ladder of youth participation demonstrates the range of youth participation that can occur, with CYP being manipulated and tokenised by adults at the bottom of the ladder and CYP initiating, leading, and only using adult

support when necessary at the top of the ladder. However, this model has been criticised

for not accounting for the complexities of real-life situations and for being hierarchical

(Kindon et al., 2007; Shier, 2001). Multi-dimensional models of participation have more

recently been produced (Gal, 2017; Mallan et al., 2010; Moules & O'Brien, 2012). These

models view participation as a more dynamic and complex process. For example, Gal (2017)

uses Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological approach to consider the different factors and

range of ways that can influence YP participation in research. However, Wallace and Giles

(2019) highlight the little guidance provided by Gal on how to use the model in practice.

Within YPAR, there are debates around the extent to which CYP should lead the research.

Guishard and Tuck (2014) question the ethics of adult researchers working alongside CYP in

YPAR, due to the damage adult researchers have previously inflicted on CYP from oppressed

communities in more traditional research methods, where power dynamics and colonial

history are ignored. Alternatively, some researchers have argued that adults must take more

of a leadership role at times during YPAR (Mirra et al., 2015). This highlights how the

participation of youth in research is a complex process, and there is no agreed method of enabling it.

Within YPAR, the research must be designed to raise awareness about issues of injustice and create social change. This means that the action plans created are grounded in the knowledge generated through the work. CYP may also present their work more widely to attempt to maximise its impact (Buttimer, 2018a). Stringer (2007) considers this epistemological principle the best way to evaluate the success of a YPAR project.

Fervent epistemological debate exists around whether or not YPAR requires a collective approach. Some have argued that knowledge creation should be collaborative in nature (Cammarota et al., 2016; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009). Others have left the option for 'individual action or collective action' during YPAR (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). While individual action may be appropriate in some contexts, the current study used a collective approach to knowledge creation as it was considered that this would best meet the intended aims of the project.

The epistemology of YPAR differs significantly from many 'traditional approaches' to research. Table 1 shows the differences in the roles of researchers and participants, as well as the process. Therefore, in relation to the current study, YPAR was chosen as it was the only research approach that could attempt to engage YP as both co-researchers and agents of change. There are six main epistemological principles to the approach, informing the conceptual protocol used to analyse the current research. The implementation of these principles in practice will now be discussed.

Table 1. Differences in emphasis between traditional research and research using a Participatory Action Research paradigm (Adapted from Rogers & Palmer-Erbs, 1994, p.5).

Traditional Research Paradigm	Participatory Action Research Paradigm
Emphasis is on 'learning about' research subjects	Emphasis is on 'learning from and learning about' research subjects
Objectivity of research and subjects is valued	Subjective experiences of participants are also valued
Researcher acts as 'professional'	Researcher acts as 'co-researcher'
Research is best conducted by 'outsiders'	Research must have input from 'insiders', the group that is affected
Participants have one role, that of a research subject	Participants have dual roles both as subjects and as researchers
Participants are passive objects of study and do not contribute to the research process	Participants are actively involved in the conceptualisation, design, implementation and interpretation of research studies
Participants involvement in research ends when data collection is complete	Participants act as 'change agents', converting research into new policy, campaigns or research initiatives
Research agenda shaped by professionals	Research agenda influenced by the concerns of the concerns of the impacted group
Paradigm lends itself to controlled, experimental research studies	Paradigm lends itself to qualitative, ethnographic studies with marginalised groups

2.4 Implementation of YPAR Epistemology

YPAR is an approach that allows for a fluid, flexible and non-prescriptive methodology that will vary based on the needs of participants and their contexts (Cammorata & Fine, 2009; Buttimer, 2018a). However, some themes emerge from the academic literature on how adult facilitators can engage and work alongside CYP. Broadly speaking, YPAR involves four stages: (1) problem identification, (2) data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) action (Kornbluh et al., 2015). This method is most commonly used, but variations exist (Chiu, 2003; Ho, 2002). Lewin's cyclical application of steps is also applied, in which the action stage is evaluated, and the steps are then repeated to keep developing the action plan. The stages are not linear and often interact and overlap during the process (Pine, 2009).

2.4.1 Problem identification

The process often starts with youth researchers choosing a research topic that seeks to address a problem that affects their community (Buttimer, 2018a). Adult researchers often guide the choice of topic through activities, either beforehand or during this process, to ensure that the research is critical and grounded in the lives of CYP (Cammorata, 2016; Kirshner, 2015; Raygoza, 2016). For example, a teacher (in Buttimer, 2018a) asked a group of youth researchers the overarching question of 'Who has power in the United States and why?', from which they could then research in their chosen way. Youth researchers then co-construct open research questions alongside adult researchers. Adult researchers often design the process in ways which allow youth researchers to conduct the process as a whole group or in smaller research teams (Buttimer, 2018a). Youth researchers can then analyse a large issue as an entire group, or several issues in smaller groups that fall under a central issue (Buttimer, 2018a).

2.4.2 Data collection

In order for youth researchers to collect data, adult researchers must teach them the skills necessary to do so, including ethics protocols, data collection and analysis methods, theory, research design, and knowledge dissemination (Kirshner, 2008; Wright, 2015). Youth researchers can then develop methodologies and conduct research alongside adult researchers using tools that they believe are most relevant, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups and ethnographies (Cammarota, 2016; Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

2.4.3 Data analysis

After data is collected, the youth researchers conduct qualitative and/or quantitative analyses of the data, often in collaboration with adult researchers who have had more comprehensive research training (Kirshner, 2015). The involvement of youth researchers in data analysis has been highlighted as a common challenge of participatory research (Coad and Evans, 2008). Kirby (1999) argues that it is sufficient for youth researchers to be involved in some aspects of data analysis but not all. For example, only 'reviewing potential themes', 'defining and naming themes' and 'producing the report'. However, this could be criticised for not meeting the 'robust participation' criteria, which is essential to the approach.

2.4.4 Action

The research team then produces an action plan based on their findings, arguably the most important part of the research (Buttimer, 2018a). However, Rubin et al. (2017) and Tuck et al. (2009) claim that action should occur during the whole process, not just at the end. The

products of the research should be dynamic, interactive and disseminated in conjunction with youth researchers (Tuck et al., 2009). For example, in a YPAR project in which 24 high school participants aimed to explore and challenge narratives around teenage pregnancy, the participants decided to use strategies such as short videos, posters and photographic exhibitions to disseminate their findings (Wood & Hendricks, 2017). The action stage aims to maximise the impact of research and create social change (Stringer, 2007).

In summary, the implementation of YPAR's epistemology contains four main stages, which are fluid and often overlap. After the four stages, an evaluation of the action takes place, and then the process can resume cyclically. Based on previous YPAR studies that were not critical in nature, the current research involved adult researchers providing an overarching question that the youth researchers could then research in their chosen manner (Cammarota, 2016; Kirshner, 2015; Raygoza, 2016). The difficulties of implementing YPAR will be discussed later in the 'Challenges' section of the literature review. Next, the literature on outcomes of YPAR will be reviewed.

2.5 Outcomes of YPAR

Shamrova and Cummings' (2017) review of 45 YPAR studies provides the most comprehensive account of the outcomes of YPAR. They grouped different outcomes at three levels (children and youth, organisations and communities) based on Gal's (2017) ecological participation model. This section will explore outcomes at each level. This is to better understand the aims and possibilities for YPAR, providing a rationale for the benefits of using the approach. The review of outcomes of YPAR studies also informs the conceptual protocol used to analyse the current case.

2.5.1 Children and Youth

Shamrova and Cummings (2017) found five commonly cited outcomes relating to youth researchers. Many studies cited social justice awareness and knowledge, or 'critical consciousness' as an outcome of YPAR (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). 'Critical consciousness' - a term popularised by Freire (1970)- can be understood as one having achieved an in-depth understanding of the topic researched and realising that their problems are centred around systemic and structural causes in society. An example of this is youth researchers realising that tobacco vendors targeted neighbourhoods with high percentages of low income and minority groups, contributing to the reproduction of negative health outcomes (Ross, 2011). Additionally, several studies cited research skills and teamwork as positive outcomes (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017).

The second positive outcome was youth researchers taking responsibility and leadership roles, which could be connected to other outcomes of increased self-confidence and increased understanding of one's own identity (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). The third and fourth outcomes were: enhanced relationships between adults and CYP, in which power imbalances were challenged, and a strengthened connectedness between youth researchers and their community (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). The outcomes above combine to allow youth researchers to become agents of change within their communities (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). For example, Bautista et al. (2013) found that urban African-American and Latino students felt empowered by the responsibility of trying to enact educational change on behalf of their communities. Through YPAR, youth researchers have created new programs to meet their needs, presented their findings in front of decision

makers, helped peers to make positive changes in their lives around health prevention and empowered others when making life decisions (Stewart et al., 2008, Chen et al., 2010, Conrad, 2015, Garcia et al., 2014, Mathews et al., 2010, Bertozzi, 2010). The fifth outcome was the interaction between education, social-emotional, cognitive, and relational outcomes, and the process of shifting the norm of CYP as passive objects of social change to being essential, active agents in this process. The research cited indicates that YPAR can positively impact individual CYP that engage in the process.

2.5.2 Organisations

At the organisational level, it was found that CYP often became more active participants in service delivery and policy, having access to spaces generally exclusive to adults (e.g. city council meetings) (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Furthermore, organisations have developed awareness or advocacy campaigns and training informed by the perspectives of CYP during YPAR (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). For example, in a YPAR project in the Philippines, youth researchers produced a video about the impact of corporal punishment on their lives, which became part of a training toolkit for a local NGO (Wartenweiler & Mansukhani, 2015). It was also found that, for several organisations that conducted YPAR, the outcomes from projects promoted their ability to apply for grants and receive more funding (Flicker, 2008; Snider et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2010).

2.5.3 Communities

Multiple researchers referred to the respectful intergenerational dialogue that YPAR enabled within communities (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). YPAR has also led to the creation of bodies that further enable CYP's voices, such as youth advisory boards within

communities (Malone, 2013). Dissemination of action projects through social media or traditional media outlets (TV and newspaper) has also enabled YPAR projects to reach wider audiences (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). School level policies were the most reported outcome of YPAR, including menu changes for school lunches (Reich et al., 2015), adaptations to sexual education teaching (Soleimanpour et al., 2008) and the reduction of racism and discrimination (Bautista et al., 2013). An outcome of one YPAR project was the LGBTQ youth group in a school that changed the district level non-discrimination policy (Wernick et al., 2014). Another frequently cited outcome is the improvement of community infrastructure (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017), such as the building of gender neutral facilities (Wernick et al., 2014), changes to playgrounds (Hutzel, 2007) and transport accommodation for children with disabilities (Kellet, 2010). YPAR has therefore been shown to have a positive impact beyond that of individuals and organisations and has led to wider scale change at a community level in several studies. This provides evidence that the process of YPAR can be successful at reaching its intended aims.

2.5.4 Summary of outcomes

From their analysis, Shamrova and Cummings (2017) suggest that outcomes of YPAR at different levels are all interconnected. In the current study, analysis of the YPAR project was conducted shortly after the project had finished, meaning that any potential outcomes were more likely to be observed at the individual level of youth researchers rather than at an organisational or community level due to the longer time it usually takes to impact wider systems. Shamrova and Cummings (2017) found that YPAR can enable CYP to be exposed to social justice issues, develop healthy relationships with adults and feel a sense of belonging in their community, which in turn makes them more likely to display prosocial behaviour

and become agents of change. Similarly, Ozer and Douglas (2013) found that participation in research makes CYP more invested in creating positive changes in their schools. Shamrova and Cummings (2017) highlight that in their literature review, the term PAR is operationalised in different ways, making it harder to identify more specific aspects of research that led to positive outcomes. Brown and Rodriguez (2009, p.4) have claimed that some YPAR studies in academic literature tend to be “overly optimistic”, which could mean positive outcomes are overstated. Another limitation of outcomes in YPAR is that many are based on the author’s reflections and not the reflections of the youth involved. Therefore, the current study uses the views of youth researchers to analyse outcomes. The following section will discuss the challenges of implementing YPAR.

2.6 Challenges of facilitating YPAR

While it is clear that there are benefits of engaging CYP in research and as co-researchers, the assumption that participatory research with CYP is automatically effective has been questioned (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015; Fox, 2013; Holland et al., 2010; Horgan, 2017). Nakar et al. (2007) suggest that more openness and understanding regarding the challenges of CYP participation can produce some of the richest findings from participatory projects in order to develop this type of research further.

This section will examine three main factors that contribute to challenges regarding YPAR projects: (1) structural factors, (2) facilitator factors, and (3) student factors. Key implications will then be discussed. The review of challenges found in YPAR studies has informed the conceptual protocol used to analyse the current case study.

2.6.1 Structural factors

Structural challenges are commonly cited by those who attempt to implement YPAR in schools, including convincing schools to create space in the curriculum for YPAR (Cannella, 2008; Ozer et al., 2010; Phillips et al., 2010) and funding for YPAR (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). This challenge is further exacerbated by a political and educational climate centred around high stakes testing and a standardised curriculum (Kirshner, 2015). Teachers have found it particularly difficult to find space for YPAR in school time (Mirra et al., 2015; Raygoza, 2016; Rubin et al., 2017). Therefore, most accounts of YPAR in academic literature have been conducted outside standard curriculum time (Buttimer, 2018a). When YPAR projects were undertaken within an educational setting, researchers discussed how research plans had to be adapted according to school calendars, which led to a reduction in youth participation (Soleimanpour et al., 2008). Many projects have identified a lack of time as the main difficulty when conducting YPAR projects (Ozer et al., 2010).

2.6.2 Facilitator Factors

There are several ethical issues facing facilitators of any form of participatory research with CYP, which can become more problematic than typical research (Wallace & Giles, 2019). Ethical issues include: matters of power and control in the research, the use and value of the research, child protection, confidentiality, and unanticipated risks such as practical challenges (Smith et al., 2002). There is currently no ethical guidance or framework for participatory research with CYP published by the British Psychological Society (BPS) or any other similar body.

One of the main ethical issues of the approach is the meaningful participation of CYP (Kellett, 2005; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). The more the adult researcher is involved in the research, the higher the risk of them exercising power over CYP's opinions and misinterpreting their voices (James, 2007). CYP are often more involved in the later stages of YPAR and disengaged during the process of data analysis (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Although many YPAR projects are time-limited, expanding the stages in which CYP are involved must be prioritised (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Additionally, YPAR projects have been criticised for not being 'critical'. For example, Kemmis (2006) criticised several projects for only being aimed at improving techniques of teaching or assessment, without viewing these methods as being connected to broader questions about the importance of education for a better society.

Confidentiality and anonymity are other ethical issues of importance to protect CYP. Transparency and ongoing discussions about the limits of confidentiality are important throughout YPAR (Petrie et al., 2006). This is particularly important for YPAR as CYP should be aware that their anonymity will be lost if they choose to present and distribute the action plan resulting from the research.

Power relationships are a crucial issue and particularly difficult to navigate in participatory action research, as the aim is to reduce and/or eliminate power between the adult researchers and youth researchers (Jacobs, 2018). Foucault (1977) discusses how power does not only exist between individuals but in the positions they hold and therefore, an adult researcher could be assumed to hold more power than youth researchers. However, power is not necessarily harmful and can be used alongside others in solidarity rather than

power over others (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2001; Park, 2001). Stillwell (2016) found facilitators tended to presume adult norms for participation which inadvertently marginalised students and reinforced their lack of voice in society. Spyrou (2011) states that due to the importance of power within YPAR, adult researchers should use a 'critical, reflexive approach' in their research diary to constantly address potential power imbalances at every stage of the research. While this may be lengthy, Spyrou (2011) argues that it is the most ethical approach.

Beyond ethical issues, there are challenges relating to the facilitator's skills: It is important that YPAR facilitators have knowledge of adolescents' developmental, social and emotional needs (Salyers & McKee, 2007). YPAR facilitators must also be skilled in building trusting relationships with CYP, for example, by taking a gradual approach, valuing their perspective and maintaining space for fun (Sipe, 2002). Stillwell (2016) highlighted the importance of facilitators using strong leadership in order to create an egalitarian decision-making body, as a lack of leadership can lead to projects lacking direction and structure. Leadership should encourage positive group dynamics and cooperation (Minkler, 2004). Some projects have noted challenges with leadership as a reason for projects being less successful than hoped (Ozer et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2007). Another challenge for facilitators, particularly teachers, is having the necessary research training and skills to enable youth researchers to conduct research and identify links between research and action (Buttimer, 2018a).

The relationship between facilitators and schools can also impact YPAR projects. Facilitators employed by the school may find it hard to enable 'critical' research that may be controversial or challenge the practices of the school (Ozer et al., 2010; Rodríguez & Brown,

2009). Alternatively, outside researchers may face scepticism from CYP, who may question the perceived differential benefits of the research, such as researchers conducting it for their own benefits rather than for the CYP. Additionally, a challenge for outside researchers is their limited presence at the school, which can impact the relationships they are able to build with CYP and the channels of communication they can have with CYP and teachers in between sessions (Stillwell, 2016).

2.6.3 Student factors

A lack of engagement and participation from youth researchers during YPAR poses a significant challenge that has been previously discovered in projects (Stillwell, 2016).

Researchers have suggested that CYP are not used to sharing power with adults in the school context and are more familiar with their voices being excluded rather than encouraged (Kohfeldt et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be tough for them to take on the unfamiliar role of a youth researcher, which asks them to lead the learning process.

Furthermore, some youth researchers may find some YPAR tasks challenging, lack critical or analytical skills or be resistant to reading or writing tasks (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010).

The age and developmental stages of youth researchers can also pose challenges (Stillwell, 2016). The cognitive, social-emotional and linguistic development levels of children younger than 10 make it difficult to participate in YPAR (Jacquez et al., 2012; Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). Transferring power to young adolescents can be complex due to issues around maturity which could lead to behaviours such as putting peers down (Wilson et al., 2007), messing around (Ozer et al., 2010), and disrespect (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010).

Additionally, power dynamics exist within groups of CYP, which can lead to some voices

being heard above others (Horgan, 2017). This can mean that some youth researchers can become disempowered, marginalised and excluded from the research (Horgan, 2017).

2.6.4 Criticisms of the approach

Beyond challenges, many researchers criticise YPAR as an approach. The main criticisms are that the research is biased, the youth researchers are largely untrained, and the methods used are often not as rigorous (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). This common perspective means that YPAR is not prevalent in leading journals and is rarely cited in conversations about educational policy (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). However, the counterargument is that for marginalised groups, meaningful change can only come if they have full, active participation in the research process and have the opportunity to produce and use knowledge based on their own experiences, perspectives, priorities and concerns (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). It is a move from extractive research, in which small levels of participation benefit the researcher and the status quo, to co-produced research attempting to change the lives of people and the world (Kagan, 2012).

2.6.5 Implications

Following their review of YPAR studies, Shamrova and Cummings (2017) identified the methodological choices that supported the meaningful participation of youth researchers: training them in research skills, using child-friendly data collection tools, meaningful involvement in data analysis and the promotion of meaningful avenues for dissemination. Furthermore, considerations around research time and structure, ethical issues, the skills, leadership and position of facilitators, and the age and development of youth researchers are all critical for positive YPAR projects. While some structural challenges of facilitating

YPAR were inevitable in the current study, others were actively attempted to be minimised, such as power relationships and the meaningful participation of youth researchers. The research discussed in this chapter highlights that YPAR is a complex approach in which both structural challenges and unforeseen circumstances can impact the quality and impact of projects. The current research will explore the extent to which previously highlighted challenges are applicable to EPs and whether any new challenges emerged. The role, skills and position of an educational psychologist have the potential to address some previously cited challenges, as discussed in the next section.

2.7 The relevance of YPAR to Educational Psychologists

Authors have described EPs as having an 'identity crisis', centred around the distinctiveness of the role, which means that EPs constantly have to justify the purpose of their role (Cameron, 2006, Farrell et al., 2006, Love, 2009). Gersch (2009) raised concerns about the future of EP work and suggested that EPs need to anticipate the adaptations needed to keep the profession successful and relevant. A critical educational, psychological perspective would indicate that centring the profession around social justice and inclusion could provide the answer to the 'identity crisis'. Research has already shown that EPs are gradually moving away from cognitive assessments in favour of more systemic activities, such as research (Topping & Lauchlan, 2013). Schulze (2017) found that EPs interviewed considered social justice to be an important part of EP practice. When discussing what social justice looks like within educational psychology practice, themes from the research included 'doing what's right', 'challenging', 'having a wide a varied role', 'psychological skills and knowledge', 'child-centred approach', and 'relationships' (Schulze, 2017). The literature review in the current study highlights that YPAR could provide EPs with a platform to use all of these themes

within a single approach. However, it could be argued that there is a disparity between the values of EPs and much of their work in practice. This is because one of the profession's 'core activities' is statutory report writing (Buck, 2015). This involves writing reports for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans as part of the SEND code of practice (DfE, 2014). The number of EHC plans has increased each year since their introduction in 2014 (DfE, 2021), meaning that EPs can spend large amounts of their time on individual cases rather than having the wider varied role that could challenge harmful practices, as discussed by Schulze (2017). From a CEP perspective, it could be argued that EP's role in the EHC process makes them complicit in reproducing oppressive practices that individualise social problems. This shows that despite the intention of some EPs to conduct more research and fight for social justice, clear systemic barriers exist in the ways EPs are currently working, which would make the widespread use of YPAR difficult.

However, a strong argument can be made that EPs are very well suited to be conducting YPAR, both regarding their skills and position in relation to schools. As explained, YPAR seeks to link reflection (research and analysis) with practice (action), in what Freire (1970) referred to as 'praxis'. Such principles are very similar to the role of EPs. It has been argued that all work done by EPs is 'research' in its broadest terms; investigation and data collection to reach conclusions (Gersch et al., 2017). Furthermore, EPs frequently support others to make changes based on the conclusions reached, which will later be evaluated, identical to the process of YPAR. The SEN Code of Practice (2014) requires settings to use the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' process for any additional provision used. This highlights how familiar EPs are with using similar stages to YPAR in a natural setting, albeit in a more limited manner that does not have the scope of YPAR.

Additionally, consultation and assessment conducted by EPs involve including service users in the problem-solving process and working collaboratively with others (Wallace & Giles, 2019). The role of the EP also involves addressing power imbalances within relationships, situations and systems (Wallace & Giles, 2019). YPAR has the potential to add to the existing focus of the profession regarding the participation of service users. The position of the EP could also help to address the difficulties highlighted in the literature about the facilitator of YPAR's relationship with the school. EPs are usually based within Local Authorities and have close relationships with schools but are not placed within their immediate environment. The positioning of EPs has led them to be described as a 'critical friend' to schools (Hick, 2007). This could mean EPs have both the skills and positioning to address challenges found in previous YPAR projects. However, a potential issue is the model of service delivery that EPs use, which shapes the work EPs are able to do (Fallon et al., 2010). Currently, most EP services use either a partially or fully 'traded' model whereby the service is required to generate income from commissioners (primarily schools) to meet some or all of its costs (Truong & Ellam, 2014). This means that schools have considerable influence over the work that EPs conduct. Therefore, schools would need to agree to YPAR projects in order to allow for their facilitation.

There is an increasing amount of educational psychology research in the UK using participatory approaches (Wallace & Giles). For example, Pearson and Howe (2017) used a research team of children who investigated how to change behaviour in the playground, while Daw (2020) explored CYP's understanding of Education, Health and Care Plans. Furthermore, Hill et al. (2017) used a participatory approach to explore the experiences and

preferences of pre-verbal CYP with complex needs. However, participatory approaches to research by EPs have differed from YPAR by not being 'critical' in nature or action orientated. EPs have also used action research, but this has been around further development of their own role and services rather than alongside CYP (Douglas-Osborn, 2017; Law & Woods, 2018). While participatory and action research have been used separately, there are no current examples of YPAR being conducted by EPs within the academic literature. However, the current researcher has heard anecdotally that some EPs have used the approach in their practice.

2.8 Research Context

The current research draws on one of a series of YPAR projects being led by the social enterprise 'States of Mind', an organisation led by young people and psychologists aimed at understanding and addressing the causes of young people's distress. This case study is of Phase 3 of the ongoing YPAR project 'Breaking the Silence'. Each phase involves a new cohort of young people who are in Year 12 and attending sixth form colleges in a London borough. Young people applied to participate and commit to taking part in weekly sessions during the year as part of an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) (UCAS, 2019).

Phase 1 involved focus groups of young people, asking them about their experience of education and opinions about how schools are assessed. A group of students then volunteered to analyse the findings. Subsequently, they wrote a letter to Amanda Spielman (Ofsted Chief Inspector) explaining their findings as part of the government consultation about Ofsted's new education evaluation framework. During Phase 2, a new cohort of students decided to further investigate themes from Phase 1. They co-constructed a

questionnaire and focus group questions to explore the education system's impact on CYP's mental well-being, identity, and personal development.

Phase 3 is the focus of the current case study. It built on the previous phases by giving a new cohort of students the task of producing an education evaluation framework based on how they believe education should be evaluated. This YPAR involved youth researchers attending 29 weekly, 90-minute sessions throughout the academic year. The youth researchers also co-produced a questionnaire which was completed by 160 students (aged 16-18) and 56 teaching staff. Furthermore, youth researchers conducted two focus groups with students, one focus group with teaching staff, two interviews with head teachers and three interviews with ex-Ofsted inspectors. Phase 3 concluded with youth researchers producing their own education evaluation framework, which will be further developed and implemented by a new cohort of students in Phase 4.

2.9 Rationale and Research Questions

YPAR is growing as an approach used in social sciences (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017).

While 'participatory' approaches are common in EP practice and are increasingly used in EP research (Wallace & Giles, 2019), there are no accounts of YPAR by EPs in academic literature to date. A critical educational psychological perspective provides the rationale for EPs using YPAR to empower the voice of CYP and create new alternatives to solve social problems (Williams et al., 2017). YPAR aims to allow CYP to become independent researchers who investigate issues that hold value to them; an emancipatory approach that gives their voice equal value, removes hierarchy and power discrepancies and places YP at

the centre of decision making (Yardley, 2014). YPAR has previously led to positive outcomes for CYP, organisations and communities (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). However, previous research highlights many challenges, including the time required for the approach and structural barriers due to the current approach to education. The role and skills of EPs could make them well positioned to deliver YPAR. Therefore, the current case study aimed to explore the extent to which EPs could successfully facilitate YPAR in a yearlong project.

Three main research questions will be explored through this case study:

1. How can the epistemological principles of Youth Participatory Action Research be implemented by Educational Psychologists in schools?
2. What insights can be gained about outcomes for youth researchers engaging in Youth Participatory Action Research?
3. To what extent are there challenges for Educational Psychologists facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research in schools?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This case study analyses the process of using YPAR in order to better understand how educational psychologists can conduct research alongside CYP using this approach.

This thesis will now use “I” to reflect the role of the “adult researcher” due to the ontological and epistemological perspectives taken, described below. This is intended to highlight my subjective interpretation of the experiences and events that took place during the YPAR project. I co-facilitated the yearlong YPAR project to better understand how Educational Psychologists can conduct YPAR. This case study seeks to understand how YPAR works in practice and the considerations that need to be made when engaging in this type of research.

3.2 Philosophical positioning

Although it could be argued that aspects of the data gathered could be objectively measured (e.g. votes on decisions made by youth researchers), qualitative responses and comments were deemed to be subjective representations of the views of youth researchers and adults involved in the study. This approach acknowledges my subjectivity in my dual role as an action researcher and case study researcher, as well as the impact of the context on the case findings. My approach aligns with a relativist ontology, in which there are multiple constructions of reality and what is thought to be true changes with time and context. From a relativist perspective, there is no objective truth to be known, and reality cannot be separated from its subjective experience (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

The case study also takes a constructivist epistemological perspective, whereby “individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already believe and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come into contact” (Ultanir, 2012, p.195). This perspective acknowledges that reality is socially constructed and is dependent on the interaction between individuals and their culture and society.

The ontological and epistemological perspectives taken in the case study analysis differ from the critical/emancipatory research stance taken in the YPAR project itself. However, both perspectives are still consistent as they emphasise the subjectivity of reality and acknowledge that multiple realities exist. The main difference between ontological perspectives taken is that YPAR is an emancipatory approach drawn from critical theory that emphasises the role of power in shaping reality, with the explicit focus on addressing power imbalances as a means of social justice. The constructivist epistemological perspective taken in this case study does not explicitly highlight the role of power on reality or aim to address power imbalances.

3.3 Positionality of the researcher

Consistent with ontological and epistemological positions, I did not claim to have been neutral in my involvement in the YPAR project or to be offering objective analysis in this research. I co-facilitated the YPAR project because I believe it has the potential to be a democratic, empowering approach that can contribute to social change. This study did not aim to compare the effectiveness of YPAR with other research approaches. Instead, despite

my views on the potential strengths of YPAR, this study sought to address the challenges and tensions of using this approach in practice. Brown and Rodriguez (2009) claimed that some YPAR studies in the academic literature have been “very optimistic” (p.4) by presenting the facilitation of YPAR as being simplistic. Therefore, this study’s challenges, tensions, and failures are intentionally analysed to avoid presenting YPAR uncritically. Doing this also helped to reduce my own bias, whereby I presented the YPAR project favourably due to my involvement as a facilitator.

My role as an action researcher made me a participant in the YPAR project. In my dual role as an action researcher and constructivist researcher, I reflected on how my own professional experiences and personal and cultural beliefs have impacted how I approached the YPAR project and worked alongside youth researchers. I attempted to be transparent about this by making my experiences, thoughts and feelings visible by keeping a reflective journal throughout the research (see section 3.7.2). Furthermore, my dual role as an action researcher in YPAR and a qualitative researcher did not present a conflict. This is because I did not attempt to make any generalisable claims in a statistical sense, such as claiming that doing X will cause Y. Instead, I attempted to identify patterns and themes and compare this with previous research so that one can view the transferability of the case findings. For example, some findings may be more transferable because they have previously been found. In contrast, new findings specific to this case, such as it all being conducted online, may be less transferable.

For clarity, this research is not a presentation of the findings from the YPAR project itself; it is an examination of the experiences of those involved in the YPAR project. This is to better understand how EPs can facilitate Youth Participatory Action Research to create change.

3.4 Case Study

This research used a qualitative case study to explore how Educational Psychologists can facilitate YPAR. A case study provides a framework to explore complex social phenomena (Hartley, 2004). Therefore, it lends itself to this research as YPAR is a complex, non-linear process in which multiple factors can impact the facilitation of projects. Additionally, the case study framework allows the researcher to "understand how behaviour and/or processes are influenced by, and influence context" (Hartley, 2004, p.323). The focus on social context is critical when considering how the process of YPAR can be facilitated with CYP.

The use of case studies in education research became popular in the UK and USA in the 1970s as a reaction to the dominant positivist model of research, which focused on generating data on schools and classrooms through measurement and statistical analysis (Elliott & Lukeš, 2008). The positivist model of education research continued to have a perceived higher value from policymakers during the 1990s and 2000s, who were concerned with discovering 'what works' through the 'scientific' approach of experimental designs and particularly randomised control trials (Oancea & Pring, 2008). However, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2012) discuss the risk the 'scientific' approach poses by disempowering those at the centre of education and failing to recognise and value different types of engagement and issues in education. Stenhouse (1978) was a strong proponent of the value

of using case study in order to gain a greater understanding of education communities. The value of using case study can be viewed in a similar way to the value of YPAR. Both approaches aim to move away from the dominant, positivist strand of education research in order to understand and address the complexities of real-life situations.

However, there remain long-standing debates about the models of working within case studies to ensure quality research. Stake's (1995) focus on qualitative approaches and the interpretation of a case contrasts greatly with Yin's (2009) scientific approach to case study. Yin's work has focused on making case study fit a quantitative model of research in order for it to be considered quality research. He emphasises the importance of applying quantitative concepts such as validity to case study research. However, it has been argued that quantitative concepts are too simplistic when applied to educational settings and that there should be different definitions of quality for case study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2012). Unlike Yin, Stake's (1995) perspective of case study draws upon a social scientific approach with qualitative methods and thinking influenced by ethnography. Stake (1995) compares case study to creating a work of art. From his perspective, the aim is to highlight and acknowledge the uniqueness of a case whilst also encouraging the reader of the case to develop a new understanding of their own context. Although Stake did not explicitly state it, his perspective of case study is underpinned by constructivism (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2012). Therefore, Stake's approach to case study aligned with my epistemological position and informed my approach to data analysis.

Stake (1995) offered two main kinds of types of case study: intrinsic and instrumental.

Intrinsic case studies aim to capture the case in its entirety, and the research aims to fully

understand the person or institution that makes up the case. Instrumental differs by focusing on the key aspects or issues of the case. An instrumental case, therefore, offers a deeper analysis of aspects of the case that are often pre-determined through one's research questions. The current research used an instrumental case study. This was to ensure that the analysis and findings of the research were pertinent to the aims of the research: to understand how educational psychologists can facilitate YPAR. Whilst the research questions are still broad, they focused on the aspects of YPAR which are most important to consider when considering engaging in YPAR, as determined through my literature review. Qualitative research methods were used as they are best aligned to the philosophical underpinnings of the instrumental case, whereby the researcher, participants and reader all play a part in reconstructing the experience (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2012).

3.5 Design

3.5.1 Youth Researchers: Recruitment Process

States of Mind coordinated a YPAR project with Year 12 students aged 16-17 from two sixth form colleges in the same London borough. Both sixth form colleges conduct weekly projects for all students as part of an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). The founder and research lead at States of Mind recruited 12 youth researchers prior to my involvement in the research. After completing an online application, youth researchers were recruited based on their enthusiasm to participate in the project, explore issues around mental health and psychology, and create change. Reason and Bradbury (2006) argue that from their experience of conducting YPAR, it is better to conduct it with young people who want to make a change rather than trying to convince young people that a change is needed. When youth researchers consented to the YPAR project with States of Mind, they were informed

that it would likely be part of a doctoral research project from a student at UCL's Institute of Education (IOE). School staff leads were also informed and consented to the project being part of my doctoral research. After receiving ethical approval for my research, I provided the 12 youth researchers with an information sheet (Appendix J) and a consent form for my research. It was stated that the youth researchers did not have to take part in my research but could continue to participate in the YPAR project. All 12 youth researchers gave consent to participate in my research.

As part of the youth researchers' research, other CYP participants were involved in the YPAR project, which is discussed in the next chapter.

3.5.2 Demographics of youth researchers

Table 2 highlights the School, gender and ethnicity of the 12 youth researchers in the YPAR project.

Table 2. Demographics of the 12 youth researchers

Pseudonym	Year Group	School	Ethnicity
Mia	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Bilal	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Sadaf	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Neelam	12	School A	Black or Black British
Faiza	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Leila	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Amber	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Sara	12	School A	Mixed
Zita	12	School A	Asian or British Asian
Caleb	12	School B	Mixed
Emma	12	School B	White
Yasmeen	12	School B	Asian or British Asian

3.5.3 Adult Participants

The Deputy Head of Sixth Form for both School A and School B were the link contacts for the research. Both agreed for the YPAR project to be facilitated in their schools and consented to be interviewed by me after the YPAR project had finished. I have used pseudonyms for both teachers. The pseudonym for the School A link teacher is Mr Vickers, and the pseudonym for the School B link teacher is Mr Roberts.

Chris Bagley was the co-facilitator of the YPAR project. He is a practising educational psychologist and Director of Research at States of Mind. Furthermore, he is a tutor at the

IOE and one of my research supervisors. Chris agreed to be interviewed by me about his experience of the YPAR project. This provided a potential conflict of interest which is discussed in the ethics section below. I have not used a pseudonym for Chris to be transparent about a potential conflict of interest.

3.5.4 Summary of the roles in the YPAR project

Due to the length and complexity of the case study, Table 3 is intended to summarise the roles of different individuals and groups involved in the YPAR project.

Table 3. Positions and roles in the YPAR project

Position	List of roles
States of Mind founder: Bea Herbert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had previous connections to School A and School B • Negotiated and coordinated the yearlong YPAR project with School A and School B • Recruited youth researchers
Adult researcher: Chris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited youth researchers • Liaised with Lead school staff members • Planned weekly sessions • Facilitated weekly sessions • Weekly email the day before a session with a rough agenda • Attended weekly documentary sessions • Co-constructed methodology • Data analysis • Supported youth researchers to produce an alternative evaluation framework
Adult researcher: Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended the majority of weekly sessions • Co-facilitated some sessions • Co-constructed methodology • Recruited participants for the youth researchers research • Organised and attended interviews and focus groups conducted by youth researchers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held all confidential data • Re-watched discussions from some sessions to inform the next session planning • Data analysis • Supported youth researchers to produce an alternative evaluation framework
12 youth researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended weekly sessions • Attended weekly documentary sessions (this was optional and 7 attended throughout the year) • Co-constructed methodology • Conducted interviews and focus groups (optional) • Data analysis • Produced alternative evaluation framework
Documentary maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned weekly documentary sessions • Facilitated documentary sessions
Lead school staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed for the YPAR project to be conducted at their school. • Copied into all emails. • Followed up on absences from the research. • Termly conversations with Chris to check in.

3.5.5 Online sessions

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, both School A and B had restrictions on having visitors in their setting. Therefore, it was agreed that the YPAR sessions would all be facilitated online. Weekly sessions were facilitated on the online platform Zoom, and information and activities were presented on Mentimeter. Interviews and focus groups conducted during the YPAR project were also facilitated on Zoom.

3.6 Summary of YPAR project

As discussed in the first chapter, the topic of the YPAR project arose as part of a series of YPAR projects challenging the education status quo. Whilst reflecting on the research conducted in Phase 2 of the 'Breaking the Silence', youth researchers reflected that their research had found problems within the education system and raised questions about the school system's priorities. The topic of Phase 3 was refined and finalised in a States of Mind advisory board meeting. It was decided that the aim of the YPAR project would be for youth researchers to work with adult researchers to research and produce an alternative school evaluation framework. The development of the topic was an example of adults guiding the boundaries of the research to ensure that it was grounded in the lives of young people and critical in nature (Cammorata, 2016; Kirshner, 2015; Raygoza, 2016).

YPAR allows for a fluid, flexible approach that varies based on the needs of participants and their contexts (Cammorata & Fine, 2009; Buttimer, 2018a). Twenty-nine weekly sessions were conducted throughout the academic year. They proceeded in a semi-structured fashion, with facilitators broadly guiding the sessions and targets and timelines emerging

over time. Youth researchers were emailed each week on the day before a session with a brief summary of the session's focus.

Broadly speaking, YPAR involves four stages: (1) problem identification, (2) data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) action (Kornbluh et al., 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to divide the account of the project into six phases. Phase 1 was the 'introduction to the project'. During this phase, the focus was on building rapport between researchers, outlining the process of YPAR and discussions on youth researchers' experiences of school. Phase 2, 'researching the Ofsted handbook', involved the youth researchers reading, critiquing and discussing the current method of education evaluation.

Phase 3 was 'devising a methodology'. Youth researchers co-developed five research questions (see Appendix B) and decided that mixed methods (questionnaires, interviews and focus groups) would best answer them. Phase 4 was 'what does previous research show', in which adult researchers shared previous research on Ofsted and education evaluation.

'Data collection' occurred during Phase 5, which overlapped with Phases 4 and 6. During Phase 4, a questionnaire was completed by 160 students (aged 16-18) and 56 teaching staff. Youth researchers also conducted interviews with two head teachers and three ex-Ofsted inspectors, and conducted two focus groups with students (aged 16-18) and one focus group with teaching staff.

Finally, Phase 6 involved 'designing a new framework'. This included: analysing data that had emerged from their research, deciding aspects of education that were most important to evaluate, deciding how to evaluate these aspects, and putting their framework into a document.

3.7 Methods of data collection

I used a qualitative, multi-method approach to data collection. This included data and artefacts from the YPAR project, my reflective journal and follow up interviews.

3.7.1 Data and artefacts from the YPAR project

All 29 Mentimeter¹ presentations were saved. They contained slides on tasks and questions for youth researchers and their anonymous responses and thoughts. Mentimeter is an online application that can create presentations and generate real-time feedback from users. Furthermore, from session 5 onwards, all sessions were recorded after youth researchers had provided consent for this. Recordings contained all group discussions and decision making, excluding discussions that occurred in the 'break out room' function on Zoom that could not be recorded.

The year's final session involved youth researchers being asked to give their reflections from the year in a focus group format. I transcribed this part of the session to be analysed in more depth, as it provided the most detailed account of youth researchers' reflections on the project as a whole whilst they were still engaged in the project. Ten youth researchers

¹ <https://www.mentimeter.com/>

took part in the focus group, and two youth researchers were absent, so their opinions were not captured. Other research sessions were also transcribed to triangulate the different sources or data and either confirm or disconfirm initial themes that had emerged from my analysis (discussed in section 3.8).

3.7.2 Reflective Journal

Using a reflective approach through a journal is a widely accepted method in qualitative research and is accepted practice from a constructivist, interpretivist, poststructuralist and feminist perspective (Ortlipp, 2008). Ortlipp (2008) offers guidance to novice, and specifically doctoral researchers on how their reflections can act as an important part of the research process. Ortlipp (2008) discusses the importance of allowing decisions, thoughts and feelings during the research to be visible. A reflective journal also allows for reflection on one's personal assumptions, belief systems and subjectivities. In my journal, I discuss the changes made to the research over the year and reflect on the challenges at different stages. I logged my reflections after each session and after any interviews or focus groups conducted by youth researchers. I also commented upon group dynamics and individual contributions during sessions. Additionally, I logged decisions made about the research in phone calls with Chris that occurred in between sessions and any meetings with school staff.

3.7.3 Follow Up Interviews

Youth Researchers

I wanted to further investigate youth researchers experience of YPAR the following academic year. Interviews were chosen as the best method for gathering their views as we had already conducted a focus group in the last session of the year, and it was unlikely that a questionnaire would have elicited the same amount of information. November was chosen for the interviews as it (a) allowed sufficient time to have passed from the end of the YPAR project so that they could reflect on their experiences, and (b) it gave youth researchers enough time to settle into the new school year but was before mock exams. I emailed the 12 youth researchers with an information sheet and consent form and aimed to interview at least half of them. Seven youth researchers provided consent to be interviewed. It was likely that the youth researchers that consented to be interviewed would be those that were most engaged in the project. This largely was the case, however Table 4 highlights that two of the seven youth researchers who agreed to be interviewed did not take part in some of the optional parts of the YPAR project, which is one indication of engagement.

The first interview was a pilot. I adapted one question following the pilot interview due to its length and lack of clarity.

Table 4. The seven youth researchers who participated in follow up interviews

Pseudonym	School	Participated in the documentary (optional)	Conducted an interview or focus group (optional)
Leila	School A	No	Yes
Neelam	School A	Yes	Yes
Mia	School A	Yes	Yes
Sadaf	School A	No	No
Zita	School A	Yes	Yes
Caleb	School B	Yes	Yes
Faiza	School A	Yes	Yes

After consideration, I decided to conduct the interviews online on Zoom. This was because I knew that the youth researchers were already familiar with engaging with me online and it would allow for greater flexibility when arranging the interviews. When deciding to interview, I considered the risk of social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985), whereby youth researchers could answer questions favourably as they knew me and therefore may not state potential unhappiness about the project. However, I thought that there was sufficient evidence from the YPAR project and specifically the final session of the year, that most youth researchers were comfortable openly voicing their criticisms of the project. This suggested that the youth researchers may have been more open to voicing unhappiness with aspects of the process because a relationship with the interviewer had already been built. I chose to use a structured interview format in which I would not follow up on pre-arranged questions. This was to reduce the impact of my personal assumptions, which had

the potential to dictate the direction of the interview. A limitation of using a structured interview format was that it may not have elicited as much information as a semi-structured format in which I could have asked follow up questions. However, due to the amount of data already gained, I decided that it was most important to try and reduce the potential bias I may have had.

When planning the structure of my interviews, I tried to follow Patton's guidance on beginning interviews with non-controversial questions focusing on the interviewee's experiences. I therefore opened with, "If you were telling a student in the year below what it was like to be a Student Researcher in Participatory Action Research, what would you tell them?" I saved any more challenging questions such as "What do you feel might have improved the experience for you?" until later in the interview in the hope that the youth researchers would feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts. See Appendix H for the interview schedule.

Lead school link teachers

I also wanted to explore the two lead school links experiences of the YPAR project. This was done to further address research questions 2 and 3 in regard to the outcomes and challenges of the YPAR project. There was potential for school link teachers to identify factors not raised by either youth researchers or adult researchers that either supported or acted as a barrier to the facilitation of the YPAR project. Both school staff also saw the youth researchers in person throughout the school year, so they may have observed the YPAR project from a different perspective and gained different insights. Both school link teachers agreed to participate in an interview. See Appendix I for the interview schedule.

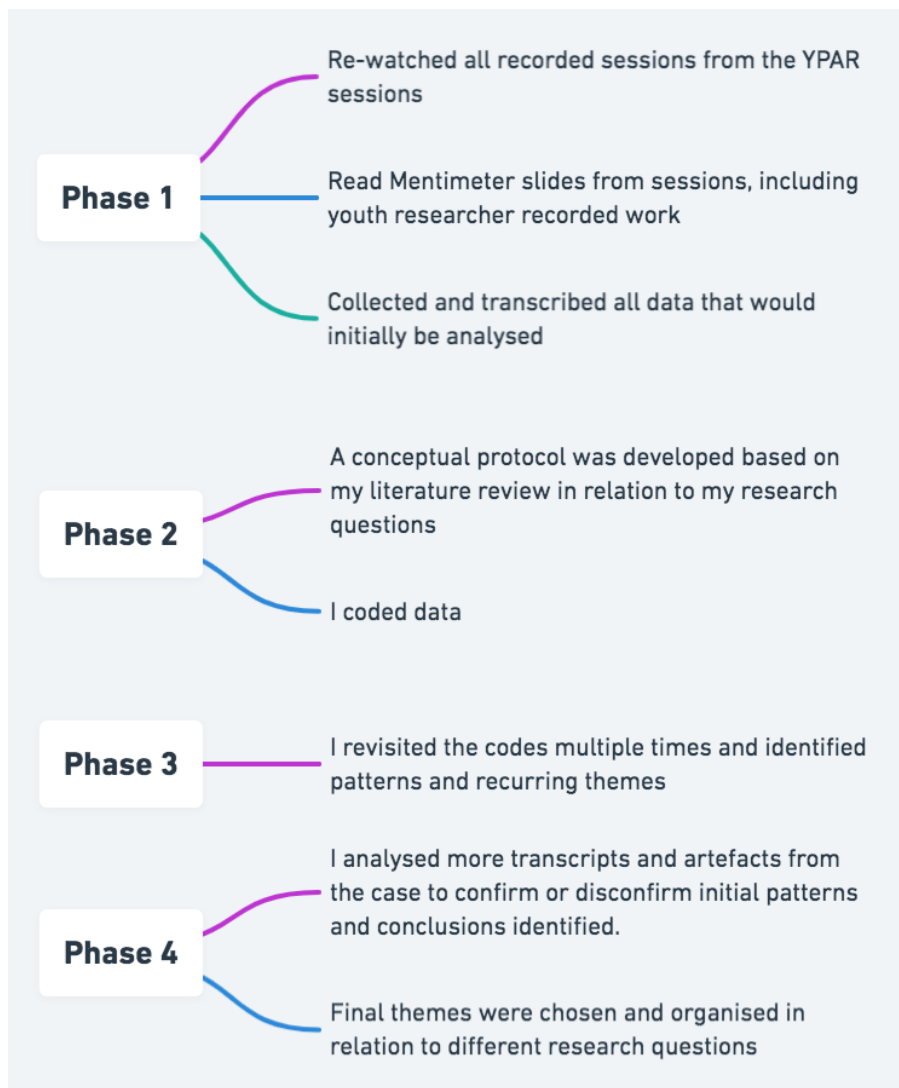
Co-facilitator

Furthermore, I wanted to interview Chris as a co-facilitator of the YPAR project. I wanted to explore his experience of the YPAR to elicit the similarities and differences between my own experiences. The interview would also allow for greater insight into challenges and supportive factors when facilitating YPAR projects. Again, I used a structured interview schedule to try to reduce the impact of my assumptions and bias. See Appendix J for the interview schedule.

3.8 Data analysis

I used a qualitative approach to analyse the data gathered from the case study. Qualitative researchers often refer to the case study analysis as an iterative process, which involves moving back and forth across data in a critical manner, reflecting on possible choices as patterns or themes emerge (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2012). Miles and Huberman (1994) capture this approach as: data collection, reduction, display, conclusion drawing and verification. Analysis evolved through four distinct phases, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Phases of data analysis



3.8.1 Phase 1: Familiarising myself with data and transcription

In the first phase of data collection, I re-watched all recorded sessions from the YPAR sessions to familiarise myself with the project. For early sessions that were not recorded, I looked through the Mentimeter slides, which included youth researcher contributions to discussions. I then collected and transcribed all data that would initially be analysed: the focus group from the final session of the year, 9 follow up interviews and my reflective diary.

3.8.2 Phase 2: Developing a conceptual protocol and coding

The second phase involved reducing the data to that which was most relevant to my research questions. Stake (1995, p.72) stated, "they (researchers) have certain protocols that help them draw systematically from previous knowledge and cut down on misperception. Still, there is much art and much intuitive processing to the search for meaning (p. 72)." I therefore developed a conceptual protocol (Appendix E). Conceptual protocols are useful in helping to guide the focus of a case study to the parts that are of most interest (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2012). The protocol allowed me to reduce a large amount of data to the most relevant parts, as full coverage would not have been possible. I developed deductive codes from my literature review and allowed inductive codes to emerge from the data in relation to each research question. A code was defined as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3).

I generated deductive codes based on previous literature specific to my research questions. For example, for research question 1, deductive codes were identified as being: (1) critical in nature, (2) takes an inquiry stance, (3) is situated in the lives of young people, (4) draws on the unique knowledge and expertise they have as youth, (5) features robust youth participation in every aspect of the process, (6) action as necessary part of research process for social change. As well as coding for instances of deductive codes, I also coded for instances where we failed to adhere to epistemological principles, achieve outcomes of YPAR, and potential reasons for this.

In reference to research question 2, an example of a deductive code that emerged from the literature review on the outcomes of YPAR was 'Social justice awareness and knowledge'. I only coded for positive outcomes that were or were not achieved at the individual level for youth researchers, as the project had not been presented to wider audiences at the time of analysis and therefore it was considered to be unrealistic to see action at an organisation or community level.

Finally, in relation to research question 3, deductive codes on structural, facilitator related, and youth researcher related challenges of implementing YPAR were put into my conceptual protocol. This was done to identify whether similar and/or new challenges emerged when YPAR was facilitated by educational psychologists.

In addition to using deductive codes in my protocol, I allowed inductive codes to emerge. This was because, although it was important to reduce the large amounts of data, I did not want to miss new findings that were unique to this YPAR project. For example, the 'use of technology' emerged during my coding, which I added to my protocol. Using my conceptual protocol, I coded salient statements from my reflective diary, follow up interviews and focus group in a preliminary round of NVivo coding to allow themes to emerge.

3.8.3 Phase 3: Generating themes

During the third phase, I revisited the notes and identified patterns and recurring themes. Stake (1995) explained two strategic methods of developing meaning: direct interpretation of an individual instance and aggregation of instances. I used aggregation of instances when identifying emerging themes. This meant that themes were initially developed from

repeated mentions or observations of an event or experience. As suggested by Stake (1995), I allowed myself to take time with this process and revisit the data multiple times. I reorganised the data into blocks of notes under different themes relating to different research questions.

3.8.4 Phase 4: Triangulation of the data

The fourth phase involved triangulation of the data, drawing on multiple sources of data to increase the trustworthiness of the case. To do this I analysed transcripts and artefacts from YPAR sessions for the confirmation or disconfirmation of initial patterns and conclusions identified. I analysed sections of the YPAR project that were more salient during my initial analysis. This was because Stake (1995, p.84-85) stated that "it also is important to spend the best analytic time on the best data. Full coverage is impossible, equal attention to all data is not a civil right. The case and the key issues need to be kept in focus. The search for meaning, the analysis, should roam out and return to these foci over and over". This meant I transcribed and analysed particular sessions and instances that were referenced in Phase 3. During this process, clearer themes and patterns emerged whilst others were disconfirmed or were not as salient during the analysis of the sessions. Finally, themes included in my analysis were based on their 'keyness' and relevance towards my research questions. I discussed my final themes during peer supervision with fellow doctoral students, consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) peer debriefings.

3.9.4 Presentation of findings

To analyse the findings succinctly, they are integrated with an in-depth analysis and discussion. My findings are presented in a narrative structure to capture the arc of the year-

long project. This means that for each chapter on findings, when appropriate themes are presented in chronological order. The reasons for this were twofold: a) themes in isolation would not be contextualised and therefore not coherent b) Stake (1995) discusses the importance of presenting findings in a manner which also allows the reader to reconstruct the case, which can only be possible if findings are presented in a narrative structure.

3.9 Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by UCL Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee and the project was registered with UCL Data Protection Office. The British Psychological Society codes of ethical research practice were followed (BPS, 2021). In order to ensure that the research conducted was ethical, the following considerations were taken into account.

An information sheet and consent form (Appendix F) was given to the 12 youth researchers online through REDCap, a secure, web-based software platform (Harris et al., 2009). As previously stated, youth researchers had already consented to the States of Mind YPAR project at the point of my involvement. However, consent forms specific to my doctoral research were provided to all youth researchers and it was made clear that they could continue with the YPAR project without consenting to my research. Youth researchers were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any point. Consent was gained from all 12 youth researchers.

I explained that all data would be treated confidentially and reported anonymously so that individuals would not be identifiable. I have used pseudonyms for youth researchers in my

analysis. However, when the opportunity to participate in a documentary about the YPAR project arose, youth researchers were made aware of the limits of their confidentiality if they agreed to be in the documentary.

Following the YPAR project, I planned to interview youth researchers about their experiences. New consent forms were provided, in which it was made clear that they did not have to participate in an interview. Consent was gained from 7 youth researchers.

Following the YPAR project, I also planned to interview the co-facilitator of the YPAR project which was also my research supervisor, which posed a potential conflict of interest and risk of identifiability. To address these issues, I discussed them with my research supervisor, prior to the interview. I also made the purpose of the interview explicit: to understand their experience of implementing the PAR research to better understand how educational psychologists could use this approach. This was to reduce any potential social desirability bias in answers which could have arisen if the aim of the research was to compare the approach to other research.

3.9.1 Ethical considerations during the YPAR project

During the YPAR project I was also responsible for gaining the consent of any participants involved in the youth researchers' study (Appendix G shows the consent form for the teacher focus group). I also pseudonymised focus group and interview data once I had transcribed the recordings and I anonymised survey data for analysis from the youth researchers.

I also supported young people to keep the confidentiality of participants in their research. One method of doing this was to make sure youth researchers did not conduct focus groups with other students from their school. I also discussed the importance of maintaining participant's confidentiality with youth researchers before and after they conducted interviews and focus groups. Additionally, I informed participants in all focus groups not to discuss any personal information that was disclosed during the focus group by other participants once the focus group had finished.

The participatory approach to the research meant that I was working alongside youth researchers throughout the YPAR project. This opened up the possibility of power issues and risk of coercion between myself and the youth researchers. However, the participatory research approach actively aims to redistribute any power issues that can occur in research by promoting participants' equal participation in the research rather than the researcher being the ultimate source of authority. In order to adhere to this, I tried to facilitate, rather than lead, all discussions on decisions that needed to be made during the research. I aimed to be non-biased and impartial in any comments I made during the research planning sessions, and allow all youth researchers opportunities to provide their views during decision making. To do this, I used open questions during discussions and avoided leading questions. We also used break out rooms on Zoom and Mentimeter to help gather the views of all youth researchers.

If youth researchers had any concerns about the research, they were told that they could contact Chris, myself or talk to the lead staff member at their school.

In later focus groups and interviews with external participants I followed the same principles as those mentioned above. Focus groups and interviews were conducted by youth researchers but I was present, which could have led to ethical issues around power between myself and the youth researchers. Before any interviews and focus groups, I met the youth researchers beforehand (online) to clearly outline the boundaries and remit of our roles during the interview/focus group. For example, I explained that I would introduce the interview and focus group (allowing questions to be asked) and debrief participants at the end. While the youth researchers would ask pre-agreed questions during the interview/focus group, with the opportunity to follow up answers with their own questions. I also explained that they could contact me directly using the 'chat' function on Zoom to ask me any questions or concerns they had during the interview.

Chapter 4: An analysis of how the epistemological principles of YPAR were applied

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings from the case study in relation to the first research question: How can the epistemological principles of Youth Participatory Action Research be implemented by Educational Psychologists in schools? The implications of findings relating to this question will also be discussed. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes come from interviews conducted in autumn 2021.

As summarised in my literature review, the agreed epistemological principles are that YPAR is: (1) critical in nature, (2) takes an inquiry stance, (3) is situated in the lives of young people, (4) draws on the unique knowledge and expertise they have as youth, (5) features robust youth participation in every aspect of the process, (6) and is designed to raise awareness about issues of injustice and create social change. Below is the analysis of the implementation of these epistemological principles, which I will refer to throughout this chapter.

This chapter is structured by introducing three themes from the findings. The first theme identified concerning research question 1, was ‘the importance of creating a safe space’ in order for epistemological principles to be applied. Several youth researchers commented on this theme during the year’s final session and during follow-up interviews. A sub-theme is how technology impacted the creation of a safe space. The second theme discussed is

'difficulty allowing for the robust participation of youth researchers during Phase 2 of the research'. This theme emerged during follow up interviews when youth researchers made negative comments about this period and was confirmed through the analysis of sessions in the phase. In contrast, the third theme is 'meaningful participation of youth researchers during their research design in Phase 3'. During follow up interviews, youth researchers discussed both their enjoyment and sense of ownership during this phase. The final theme in this chapter is 'the complexities and challenges of implementing the epistemological principles of YPAR during the action phase'. This theme emerged after analysis of my reflective journal and highlighted that the youth researchers had changed their views on certain topics towards the end of the project. An analysis of the sessions during this Phase revealed the complex application of epistemological principles that may have led to youth researchers changing their views to become more 'critical'.

4.2 The importance of creating a safe space

Youth researchers pointed to the importance of EPs creating a safe space in YPAR projects so that the epistemology could be applied. They discussed the importance of feeling comfortable in the group to give their opinions. This is evident in Mia's reflections on the atmosphere that was created, which enabled her to offer her views:

I think it became quite like a friendly atmosphere. And nothing felt tense... It was very non-judgmental. We could also say opinions. (Mia)

Therefore, creating a safe space can be viewed as a prerequisite for robust participation from youth researchers, a critical epistemological principle of YPAR. If the youth researchers did not initially feel comfortable within the group to offer their thoughts, there would have been a significant barrier to meeting many of the other epistemological principles of YPAR, such as drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of youth. Stillwell (2016) found that youth researchers' lack of engagement and participation meant that it was very difficult to facilitate a YPAR project, further demonstrating the importance of youth researchers needing to feel comfortable when participating in YPAR. Mia's comments highlight a few factors that led to the 'friendly atmosphere', such as there being time for 'fun', 'joking around', and it feeling 'non-judgemental'. Sipe (2002) previously discussed the importance of facilitators maintaining space for fun to allow the development of trusting relationships, further supported by this case study.

The ability to work alongside others in this manner is familiar to the role of EPs. EPs are increasingly using a consultation service delivery (Fallon et al., 2010), a process of joint planning, assessment, and problem solving in which the EP is not the 'expert' (Wagner, 2000). This is very similar to the methods of working during YPAR. Similar to this case study, it has been argued that positive relationships are among the most important aspects of consultation. It is widely acknowledged that consultation is one of the five main components of EP work (Fallon et al., 2010). The skills needed for consultations (building relationships, creating a safe space for others and managing conflict) are directly applicable to facilitating YPAR, which indicates that EPs should apply the skills developed for consultations when conducting YPAR. Chris commented upon this in his reflections on facilitating the project:

So I think those general EP skills that we develop around managing meetings and space... are mega powerful when it comes to running PAR. I remember a few moments where I really noticed some of the young people started to open up... I think that came from being in that space with them, reflecting back things they said so they felt powerful, they felt listened to (Chris)

4.2.1 The use of technology in the case study was both an enabler and barrier to creating a safe space

While a body of YPAR literature has used a hybrid of in-person meetings and online meetings, this appears to be the first study of a YPAR project conducted solely online (Gibbs et al., 2020). Zita discussed how being able to offer opinions anonymously on Mentimeter helped her to feel comfortable:

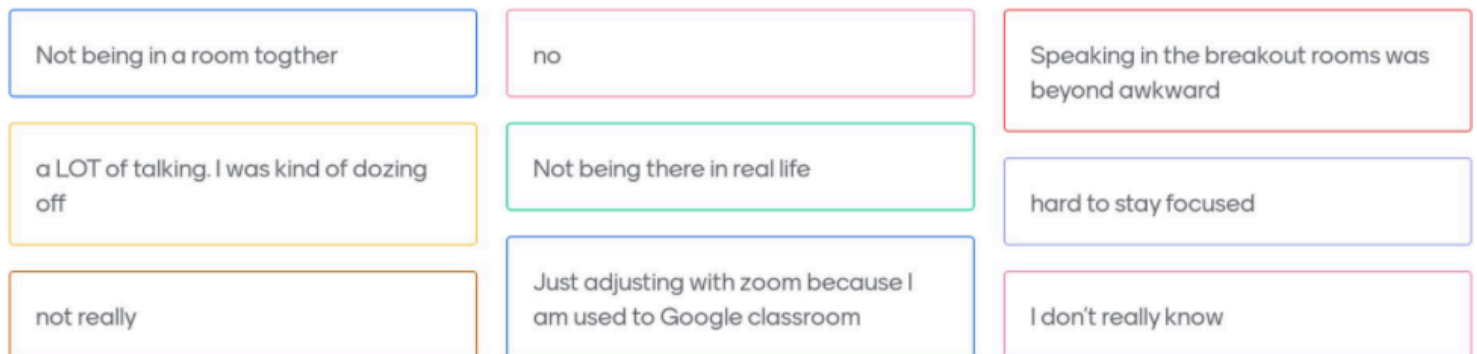
in our other online classes, our teachers normally make us just put, like the answers in the chat box or something. But this was anonymous, and I found that that made it more easier to give my opinion... and see other people's opinions without actually knowing like who it came from. That made me more confident and more comfortable. (Zita)

Allowing responses to be anonymous also appears to have supported youth researchers to provide honest feedback from earlier on. Figure 2 provides an example of youth researchers feeling comfortable criticising sessions, for example, "Speaking in the breakout rooms was beyond awkward"

Figure 2. Youth researchers' feedback during Session 2

How did you find session 1? Any difficulties?

Mentimeter



Furthermore, the use of anonymous online feedback allowed us to generate the views of all youth researchers, providing a platform for discussions. Previous research also found that comments online can be beneficial to document conversations which allows for a further in-depth exploration of specific issues (Gibbs et al., 2020). This reduced the potential for certain voices to become dominant and others excluded within the group, a previously cited challenge of YPAR (Horgan, 2017). This is evident in Figure 3, where several students made comments on 'school counselling'. Chris then asked the group whether anyone wanted to elaborate, and it led to an interesting discussion on some issues of school counselling. The anonymous comments allowed youth researchers to see that this was a shared experience, which may have meant they felt more comfortable to discuss the issue openly. This has implications for EPs and any professionals attempting to create a safe space for groups of CYP, indicating that online platforms that can generate real-time anonymous responses can help CYP to be more open, and build confidence around their ideas.

Figure 3. Session 4: Youth researchers' responses



Caleb discussed how breakout rooms on Zoom were supportive, 'because we had time to sort of build trust and build connections with each other' and the space to 'check in' at the start of sessions:

I liked how we got asked how we were feeling at the start of each session. It wasn't just jumped straight into content. It was like, let's warm up. Let's try and be a bit human. (Caleb)

This further indicates that youth researchers need time and space for informal conversations with each other to develop trusting relationships with each other, which in turn allows them to engage and participate in YPAR. Goessling (2020) emphasised the importance of allowing time to 'check in' with young people before engaging in collective inquiry during YPAR. Youth researchers in the current study appeared to value this time.

The case study also highlighted several barriers and challenges of attempting to implement the epistemological principles of YPAR online. Emma had difficulties with her Wi-Fi throughout the year when she was at home, which meant she missed discussions and decisions made during the project. This was the most explicit, long term example of a barrier of facilitating YPAR online. It meant Emma was excluded from significant parts of the project and other researchers also had Wi-Fi difficulties at times. This meant it was difficult for Emma to have meaningful participation throughout the YPAR.

My reflective journal also indicates that I only felt that I had started to build a closer relationship with some of the youth researchers a few months into the project, when I had the opportunity to work with a smaller group:

It was also really nice to get to know the students a bit better and have a joke which is harder to do online in bigger groups. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 04.03.21)

This suggests that facilitating YPAR online created a challenge in building relationships with youth researchers, which is important in creating a safe space. Chris' reflections on facilitating sessions online were similar to both youth researchers and my own experiences of using technology during the YPAR project:

I had lots of somewhat stressed conversations trying to figure out how... do we deliver an interesting piece of participatory action research on the screen... But finding the Mentimeter I think overcame that barrier... it's just an incredible way of

pulling together, generating data, anonymously in a way that's really interactive and quite fun. But again, the screen was a barrier... I think it's difficult to argue that we wouldn't have had better relationships with the students if we were face to face.

(Chris)

Overall, the case study seems to support some findings from Gibbs et al. (2020) on the use of technology during YPAR, such as that online tools can be a useful way of gathering the views of all youth researchers, which can then be used to build discussions around. A new finding in this case study is that using an online tool, such as Mentimeter, to gather youth researchers' views anonymously can be beneficial in allowing young people to feel comfortable and confident sharing their thoughts and opinions. Another new finding, likely because the entire YPAR project was online, is that it was difficult to build relationships with the youth researchers. The impact of technology will also be discussed in relation to other themes throughout the presentation of findings.

The case study demonstrates the importance of first creating a safe space for youth researchers in YPAR projects, which can allow for the facilitation of YPAR's epistemology. In short, if youth researchers do not feel able to talk or provide their opinions, they will not be able to have robust participation during YPAR projects, making it difficult for new knowledge to be co-produced alongside youth researchers. EPs have training on creating safe spaces and building attuned relationships, and are regularly required to use these skills in consultations, making them well suited to facilitating this aspect of YPAR. The case also highlighted how technology can be both, utilised to help create a safe space and act as a barrier to the development of relationships.

4.3 Difficulty allowing for the robust participation of youth researchers during Phase 2 of the research

During the YPAR project, the period the youth researchers reported feeling least involved was Phase 2 (Appendix A provides a summary of these sessions), when they evaluated the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework:

I think at the start... the reading of that handbook... felt a little bit detached, because we were just reading words off the screen... it felt like an English lesson, well it's very similar to what we do in an English lesson. Sort of like read it, analyse it, critique it, like just pick it apart kind of thing. (Caleb)

Caleb referred to feeling “detached” during this phase, while others discussed how this period went on longer than they would have liked. Consequentially, several youth researchers reported finding this period repetitive and boring:

I felt like there were parts of it that wasn't that enjoyable... it was like very repetitive on certain aspects, like... looking at the Ofsted framework over and over again, which for purpose, it was there, but then everyone did kind of zone out. (Sadaf)

And other parts like reading the framework shouldn't have taken as long. At one point it felt like we were just doing the same thing for two or three weeks. (Mia)

I reviewed the early sessions and found that, in total, six sessions were spent on the 2019 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework. Analysis of this phase highlighted that those sessions had longer periods of individual reading than other phases, and less interactivity. A review of my reflective journal found that at no point during this period did Chris or myself consult the youth researchers about their thoughts on examining the framework. My reflective journal highlighted how Chris and I projected our view of the importance of understanding the Ofsted framework onto the youth researchers, “to ensure that they have a good, detailed knowledge on who Ofsted are to allow them to identify what they want to research.”

This indicates that we had difficulty adhering to the epistemological principle of ‘robust youth participation’ during this phase as the youth researchers were not consulted about the direction of the project and no clear explanation was given on why we thought it was important to examine the Ofsted framework. The implications of this are that EPs facilitating YPAR need to continuously evaluate the extent to which they are involving youth researchers and handing control to them, in order to avoid inadvertently limiting their participation. Youth researchers also offered their reflections on how their participation could have been increased during this phase:

I don't think that was like yours (Chris') or Jaspar's fault. I think it was just like a misunderstanding type of thing. We probably did know a bit more than you thought... So I think you could like just ask the students a bit more where they stand or like what they feel like should be the next step. (Faiza- Session 29: 01.07.21)

Faiza raised the importance of asking the youth researchers about how confident they feel on a topic and what the focus of future sessions should be. Analysis indicated that more autonomy was given to youth researchers to lead on the direction of sessions in later phases, which also aligned with more enjoyment during those phases. Others also commented on how Phase 2 could have been improved by being more interactive or, ideally, face to face:

I don't think there may have been an alternative because reading the Ofsted Handbook, it's just you need to do that... But possibly... if we all had to read different bits, we did do a little bit of this actually, and retell it to the whole cohort, then I think that would make us feel a bit more involved because then you're not just reading off a piece of paper... So it feels like it's coming from us. (Caleb)

It being in person would have made it a little bit more interactive because we could have just been there talking face to face and coming up with ideas together.
(Mia)

Shamrova and Cummings (2017) review of YPAR projects found that youth researchers typically had less involvement during the earlier stages of the research. The findings from this case study indicate that youth researchers were involved at earlier stages. However, triangulation of the data shows that the youth researchers were not involved in some important decision-making during the second phase where the Ofsted framework was critiqued and therefore felt 'detached' and 'bored' at times. This case study, therefore, builds upon Shamrova and Cumming's (2017) finding, indicating that the 'involvement' of

youth researchers does not necessarily mean that their involvement is meaningful. This is because, although the youth researchers were involved in this phase, they reported that they did not feel ownership because they were not involved in the direction of the project. Youth researchers also suggested some key ways in which this phase could have been improved, which has implications for EPs on how to ensure that there is robust participation for youth researchers during all phases of projects. For example: checking in with them about what they know and want to do next, explaining the purpose of sessions and increasing the interactivity of sessions, which involve reading and critiquing.

4.4 The meaningful participation of youth researchers during their research design in Phase 3

The youth researchers discussed how the research design phase was one of the phases in which they felt the most control (Appendix C shows a summary of sessions from this phase):

interviewing the other people, we actually like took the main role in doing it. Or the other research methods, like all the surveys, we constructed the questions, you checked it, we checked it. Everyone just did a mixture of jobs and it just felt like we... all had the same like status. (Leila)

I think the most the bit where we had the most involvement obviously was creating the research questions and doing the research... Because it felt like we were in charge kind of thing. So yeah, those were definitely the two most involved stages. (Caleb)

Both Caleb and Leila discussed feeling “in charge” and taking “the main role” at this time. Leila also discussed the back-and-forth process between myself and the youth researchers at this time.

Analysis of the sessions had implications on how facilitators can allow meaningful participation during the research design. For example, in order to work collaboratively with youth researchers, adult facilitators need to lead at times to teach research skills, to allow for youth researchers to have greater participation in designing their own research. If time was not taken to do this, it would have likely meant that adult researchers would have had to have a larger role in designing the research, as youth researchers would have found it difficult to design a coherent methodology.

Analysis of the sessions also found that youth researchers were regularly offered opportunities to vote on decisions (see figure 4).

Figure 4. Session 12: Youth researchers’ vote on research questions



Furthermore, smaller groups appeared to support the collaborative approach during this phase:

We participated a lot like we got to choose what the questions were... It was a group effort. We were split into groups, we did different sections. And then in the end we came together and then he looked at all the questions everyone read through it.

(Neelam)

My reflective journal shows that I considered to be my role to be refining the youth researchers' questions, without influencing them too much myself:

Based on the last few sessions I have been trying to devise a draft methodology to bring back to the students using their questions. I'm trying to keep some the same and adapt the wording in others... I'm also trying to develop some questions based off previous discussions and as I have more time than students... I am trying not to direct to much of the questionnaire but it can be difficult at times to not put my own influence on it. (Jaspar- Reflective Journal: 12.02.2021 - 25.02.2021)

My involvement during this phase definitely left potential for me to take ownership away from the youth researchers by changing their questions. Following my input into the questionnaire, I presented a document back to youth researchers (Figure 5) and we asked for their thoughts.

Figure 5. Session 14: Youth researchers' feedback on the questionnaire



As evident, the youth researchers were able to provide critical feedback around potential issues, which appears to have allowed them to maintain control and ownership during this phase. Furthermore, youth researchers were again given the opportunity to vote to on whether to spend more time on the research design (Figure 6). This showed that asking students about the next step allowed them to take greater ownership of the project. This was not done during Phase 2.

Figure 6. Session 14: Youth researchers' vote on methodology



The findings indicate that youth researchers had a high level of participation during this phase despite me doing a lot of work in between sessions to refine their methodology. The positive feedback from youth researchers during this phase indicates that facilitators of YPAR can have a large role in the research design but do so in a manner in which youth researchers have ownership and lead at each point. One of the main reasons for this was that youth researchers had the skills required to design and critique research methodology and could vote on decision making. It is important to note that the time needed to teach research methods is likely to vary in YPAR projects depending on the youth researchers' understanding.

Furthermore, the period was collaborative and involved a back-and-forth process with lots of opportunities for small group work. However, some of the factors that helped to enable their participation during this may be difficult to replicate by facilitators of YPAR. For example, it required time for me to revisit youth researchers' research design and refine it in between sessions, to be taken back to them. This was possible as I am a trainee EP (TEP) and had scheduled research time, however this might not be possible for qualified EPs.

4.5 The complexities and challenges of implementing the epistemological principles of YPAR during the action phase

Findings during the final phase of the YPAR project highlighted that some of the epistemological principles are easier to apply than others, which can pose challenges for facilitators.

During the final phase of the project, youth researchers were tasked with producing their own education evaluation framework, with the intention for it to be used at some point in the future (Appendix D provides a summary of these sessions). As the sessions in the phase developed, two key questions emerged which the youth researchers needed to consider: 1) What is important to evaluate in schools? 2) How can schools be evaluated?

The first of these questions was easier to facilitate. As facilitators, it was quite simple to allow for the following epistemological principles to be implemented in regard to this issue: take an inquiry stance, make sure the topic had relevance to the lives of the youth researchers and draw on the unique knowledge and expertise that they have as youth. For example, the extract below demonstrates that the youth researchers were able to provide detailed responses based on the research they had conducted and their own experiences. The response came after youth researchers were asked to discuss their initial ideas about what was important to evaluate in schools in small groups and then give feedback to everyone:

Student voice should definitely be included and the circumstances of the school should be included in the evaluation too... for example if there is a lot of disadvantaged students or if the background of the students or the location of the school... Student preferences should be taken into account as well so if there is a larger amount of students who prefer art it should affect the evaluation because I think we can't just focus on the maths and sciences... Student and teacher relationships should be evaluated... When you build a relationship with someone, I think that's when you learn the best... Another key thing is teacher autonomy and

how much freedom a teacher has to teach... The availability and accessibility to extra curricular's to aid with the personal development side of things and finally how well the school deals with mental health and wellbeing issues. (Mia- Session 21: 29.04.21)

Mia's response shows the depth of answers youth researchers were able to give when asked an inquiry based question which was grounded in their educational experiences. Youth researchers from other groups were also able to provide detailed, comprehensive accounts of what they had discussed. The findings show that the application of these epistemological principles was relatively easy to do as facilitators, because youth researchers were comfortable providing detailed opinions.

However, facilitating the YPAR project became more challenging when the youth researchers debated *how* schools could be evaluated. During this debate, implementing the epistemological principles of being 'critical in nature' and 'creating social change' was complex and challenging. This was because the youth researchers were asked to discuss the strengths and limitations of different forms of evaluation that could be used and found that they were having doubts about using approaches different to Ofsted. The following extracts were taken from the initial debate around how schools could be evaluated:

One disadvantage in schools helping each other is it might not actually work in all schools because of the size of the schools, or the areas they are in... Another thing is schools they might not treat each other equally, there's still some level of hierarchy, schools think they are better than each other and might wanna keep their methods to themselves. (Faiza- Session 21: 29.04.21)

The contradiction in the project is talking about how Ofsted is restraining for us but now we are saying Ofsted could be necessary. (Bilal- Session 21: 29.04.21)

The extracts above show the difficulty the youth researchers faced when deciding on evaluation methods. Bilal nicely summarises how the group had previously agreed that an external form of evaluation like Ofsted caused problems, but now they were struggling to see an alternative. In Sara and Faiza's responses, they discussed how self-evaluation could be problematic because schools would be biased in giving themselves higher ratings. It was noticeable here that the youth researchers were having difficulty imagining a form of evaluation which would not involve standardisation. Following this initial discussion, the project had the potential not to meet the epistemological principles of being 'critical in nature' or attempting to 'creating social change', as the youth researchers might not have changed some core aspects of Ofsted, such the use of external inspections with national standardisation. This provided a tension for facilitators, as it appeared as though the epistemological principles of YPAR could contradict each other. This raises the question of whether facilitators should intervene if youth researchers' decisions lead to a non-critical action plan. If so, this would limit youth researchers' participation and freedom. Furthermore, being reflexive, the youth researchers' debate highlighted that I had certain perceptions of what 'criticality' meant during this project, which I did not comment upon in my reflective journal. Closer attention to my own idea of criticality would likely have been useful for me to do to guide my thinking at the time.

Pearce and Wood (2019) discussed how research that values student voice can lead to the reproduction of dominant discourses despite the intention of finding alternatives. This is because the voices of youth are still situated within the context in which they exist. In relation to the context of this project, youth researchers' voices exist within an education system built around the idea of standardisation and external monitoring, such as high-stakes exams and accountability measures including Ofsted. Pearce and Wood (2019) stated that this can mean attempts at student voice initiatives can reproduce systems of power, rather than provide alternatives, a theory which looked likely at this stage in the YPAR project. I will now explore some of the factors that led to the youth researchers' action plan increasing in its criticality.

The youth researchers shifted towards using self-evaluation in the last few sessions of the year, which meant they were challenging the existing system of school evaluation. One reason for the change in their thinking seemed to occur during Session 23 when they were asked what method they would use to evaluate specific aspects of school that they had chosen, such as mental wellbeing, student voice, teacher autonomy and teacher/student relationships:

(On measuring teacher autonomy) I think it's looking at more of a focus group because it would be hard to get them standardised. (Bilal- Session 24: 20.04.21)

We said that with student teacher relationships, it's going to be hard to do that (external evaluation) because people are within a student teacher relationship...

there's no way to evaluate it from an outside point of view really effectively.

Because you can't exactly look at an interaction between two people and know their relationship automatically. (Leila- Session 24: 20.04.21)

These examples highlight how youth researchers realised many of the parts of school that they thought were important to evaluate were subjective, and therefore could not be evaluated externally. This indicates that one reason youth researchers were able to be 'critical' in their final framework and move away from the current dominant system was that they had time for critical dialogue about how education could be evaluated in their framework. If there was less time, it is highly possible that the youth researchers would have concluded that external evaluation was necessary after their initial discussion.

Another factor that changed some of the youth researchers' views towards self-evaluation was the data arising from the interviews and focus groups that they conducted during this period. Of the nine teachers and ex-Ofsted inspectors that participated in an interview or focus group, seven stated that they were in favour of schools using self-evaluation and being trusted more. The extract below is from Faiza feeding back some of the key points after conducting the teacher focus group:

The teacher mentioned how it (an Ofsted inspection) felt like sitting a really important exam and that it was for teachers, and how they think of it as an exam instead of like feedback to become a better school. He also said that how, from the very top of the system, it's one that ranks schools and it sets a certain tone on the

ones lower down... how the message of how Ofsted is inspected trickles down to staff, students and parents. (Faiza- Session 26: 10.05.21)

The youth researchers seemed to better understand teachers' perspectives of Ofsted through their own research and by examining previous research. Several teachers discussed systemic issues of Ofsted such as it contributing to league tables and competition between schools, which the youth researchers started to discuss. In their reflections on the YPAR project, some youth researchers reflected upon their changing perspective of teachers:

It was so different to hear a teacher talking about it. Because along the way we found out about the teacher mental health thing... it never really occurred to students, that teachers sort of go through the same struggles that we do. So hearing that first-hand, that a head teacher, sort of agreed of us and said yeah, we need self-evaluation because we know the school better than anyone else... It just made me feel less disconnected from like the teaching body. (Emma- Session 29: 01.07.21)

The youth researchers were also capable of engaging in complex discussions around epistemology. Certain individuals who were more vocal, were more in favour of self-evaluation, and made strong arguments about why a subjective approach was necessary:

I just think that subjective isn't necessarily a bad thing, because obviously from school to school it's going to be different but as long the school is improving, why does it matter what comes out of it. (Caleb- Session 27: 17.05.21)

Responses such as this may have been persuasive to others and helped to change their perspective. Learning from each other was reflected upon in the follow-up interviews:

For example, we'd heard how external people come into school. I thought, okay, that's perfectly fine. They come in and inspect this, there's no bias. But then someone else comes up with an opinion saying, okay, but they could still be biased... this school is from a deprived area, so they might have these certain thoughts on it. And it makes you see things differently (Neelam)

This indicates that while 'critical dialogue' is important in YPAR, the voices of some may be more dominant and influential than others. As researchers, it was difficult to evaluate how we responded to different youth researchers' comments, depending on whether they were closer to our idea of 'criticality'. For example, we may have been happy for certain voices to be more dominant if they aligned more with our own views. Alternatively, I did not want to undermine the agency of youth by suggesting that they only changed their mind because of the influence of others, rather than the weight of arguments provided in discussions.

It is important that facilitators of any YPAR project are aware of the potential for a contradiction in the epistemological principles and consider how they will approach such circumstances. When it occurred during the current case study, adult facilitators used an inquiry approach to further question why the youth researchers had made decisions. However, there was certainly potential for bias in using this approach, as we could have inflicted our own views upon the youth researchers, either verbally or through our body language. The case study revealed that balancing 'criticality' and 'drawing upon the

knowledge of youth' in YPAR is complex and requires consideration. This is an area of YPAR that has not received much debate within the academic literature. This case study indicates that it needs to be considered by any facilitators of YPAR.

Overall, the findings indicated that a few factors were influential in changing youth researchers' views on external evaluation and self-evaluation, which allowed the project to become 'critical in nature'. These factors were: the length of the project (which allowed for critical dialogue), the influence of more dominant members of the group, the potential bias and transference of views from adult facilitators, and the findings from the youth researchers' interviews with teachers/ex-Ofsted inspectors. The epistemological principle of being 'critical in nature' has previously been highlighted as one in which a number of studies have struggled to adhere to (Kemmis, 2006). This case study further highlighted the tension that this principle offers facilitators of YPAR. It appears as though there is no clear solution for facilitators in ensuring that YPAR projects are 'critical'. However, the implications from the current case are that facilitators of YPAR need to be particularly aware of their own critical viewpoint and continue to monitor the criticality of the YPAR project that they are facilitating, so they are able to make informed judgements if tensions arise. A reflective journal appears to provide the best format for doing such monitoring (Spyrou, 2011).

4.6 Summary of chapter findings

This chapter highlights the importance of facilitators attempting to create a safe space for youth researchers in order to increase their participation. Online tools that allow youth researchers to make anonymous comments can be helpful in creating a safe space, but the case study showed that conducting sessions online also acted as a barrier. The findings also

highlighted that the implementation of different epistemological principles can vary in difficulty and can also vary depending on the stage of YPAR projects. For example, the robust participation of youth researchers was difficult when they were mostly reading, but easier during the construction of the methodology and creation of their own framework. The final theme demonstrated the tension the facilitators can experience between YPAR projects being 'critical' and 'drawing upon the knowledge of youth'. One of the main implications of the current case is that facilitators of YPAR should keep a reflective journal to ensure that they continue to reflect upon some key aspects of YPAR. Based on this finding, I have produced an infographic for facilitators of YPAR, which contains guidance on keeping a reflective journal (Appendix K).

Chapter 5: Insights on outcomes from the YPAR project

5.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings from the case study in relation to research question 2: What insights can be gained about outcomes for youth researchers engaging in Youth Participatory Action Research? As with the previous chapter, the findings are integrated with analysis, drawing upon relevant literature and potential implications. The research question aims to better understand the reasons why EPs may want to conduct YPAR and to further explore how youth researchers experienced the epistemological principles of YPAR.

In the literature review, I discussed the evidence of positive outcomes from YPAR at an individual, organisational and community level (Shamrova & Cummings, 2017). At the time of my analysis, the findings from the YPAR project had not yet been released by the youth researchers in the States of Mind project. Therefore, I have not attempted to examine the outcomes of the YPAR project at an organisational or community level. Instead, the analysis focused on the outcomes for the individual youth researchers involved in the project. Whilst outcomes from the project are unique to each youth researcher, themes emerged from their reflections of the project given in the year's final session and their follow-up interviews. Due to my dual role as a co-researcher in the YPAR project and as a case study researcher, a potential conflict of interests existed in which I could have exaggerated the positive outcomes of the YPAR project as I co-facilitated it. I have tried to reduce my personal bias by centring my analysis around comments made by youth researchers and using a structured interview schedule. I have also tried to use more objective measurements at times, such as examining the number of times youth researchers engaged in optional

aspects of the YPAR project to evaluate their motivation and engagement. However, I acknowledge the influence of my own subjectivity in my analysis.

The first theme discussed in relation to the research question is 'youth researchers found the epistemology of YPAR empowering'. Four sub-themes are reported, which draw from aspects of the epistemology that the youth researchers discussed finding empowering. Throughout the discussion on this theme, I explored how the epistemology found to have positive outcomes differs from the epistemology of typical schooling. The second theme discussed is 'the high level of engagement and motivation of youth researchers'. Analysis revealed that youth researchers' autonomy appeared to have been an important factor in motivating them, a theory supported by Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The third and final theme is the 'differing longer term outcomes of the YPAR project'. Follow up interviews indicated that some youth researchers had experienced long term 'critical consciousness' and had continued to view themselves as 'agents of change'. In contrast, some youth researchers cited research skills they developed as the primary benefits.

5.2 Youth researchers found the epistemology of YPAR empowering

Youth researchers referred to having a sense of empowerment during the YPAR project. Comments about having control, power, and autonomy were themed under empowerment. Youth researchers linked the empowerment they felt with the epistemological principles of YPAR, as demonstrated in the sub-themes below.

5.2.1 Collaborative approach

The youth researchers discussed how the role of adults as facilitators was collaborative, and this enabled them to have a greater sense of control:

It was very like, us having the power in our hands. We hear a lot of times where things like workshops or something are student led, but it's always staff bossing the students around. But we didn't have that... it was very much taking responsibility over our own learning.

(Neelam)

So yeah, it wasn't so much someone's in control, someone's in charge. It was more we're here to... sort of guide you, so I think it was a really nice, dynamic.

(Caleb)

Both Caleb and Neelam praised the role of the adults in YPAR and compared it to their experiences of school. Caleb stated that “it didn't feel like you were teachers or anything”, while Neelam discussed how student led workshops at school still often result in “staff bossing the students around”. These differences can be understood by comparing the role of adults and CYP in the epistemology of YPAR and typical schooling. YPAR positions CYP as experts who have the capacity to challenge and change systems, and facilitators are positioned alongside youth researchers in a collaborative role. This contrasts with the epistemology of typical schooling, which is structured for CYP to learn and produce work individually rather than work collaboratively, as they will ultimately be assessed as individuals (Buttimer, 2018b). Furthermore, in typical schooling, teachers are positioned as

experts who possess knowledge that must be passed on to students (Buttimer, 2018b). Freire (1970) referred to this as the banking model of education, comparing teachers to banking clerks who 'deposit' information into CYP rather than attempting to draw out knowledge from CYP or allow them to have control over their learning. The findings from this case indicate that youth researchers valued having control over the project's direction and working alongside adults. However, the findings highlighted in the previous chapter indicate that there are still times when it is beneficial for adults to lead in YPAR, as long as this is done with transparency.

5.2.2 Breadth of topic and time for inquiry

Youth researchers explained that they enjoyed having the time to explore a broad topic:

I liked it in the sense that... I've never done anything like it before and it wasn't very narrow minded. Like, you guys didn't say this is what we need to do... it was more like our broad topic is Ofsted and how they're working. So I think the fact that the research was like, more our space, I preferred that (Faiza)

The Head of Year at School A, Mr Vickers, also commented on how the outcomes he observed in youth researchers seemed to come from them having the time to explore a broad problem:

I did speak to the students and I know that some of the outcomes for them were feeling really empowered to kind of tackle, what is a really big and relevant problem, in a way that you just don't really get to in a lesson or in a tutor period or in a PSHE

day... Some of the standout students like Mia, Bilal were just phenomenal. And I am confident that we never would have seen that side of their personality had they not taken part in the project. (Mr Vickers)

Mr Vickers explained how the epistemology of YPAR led to strong outcomes for youth researchers and stated that there are currently not many opportunities for this at school. He went on to expand on how the skills developed are driven by YPAR's epistemology:

If there's less of a kind of top down, teacher or curriculum focused drive from it, and it's much more based around kind of a problem or an inquiry question and getting the students to kind of address it in the most suitable way possible. I think the skill set that the students develop is broader than they would have the opportunity to develop in other circumstances in schools. (Mr Vickers)

The benefits of having an inquiry question and using a problem-solving approach were also discussed by youth researchers in their reflections:

It (YPAR) makes you see things differently and in different spaces... and so you understand others a lot more, and being able to be open minded and understand the different alternative ways we can solve things. (Leila)

Being empowered through YPAR appears to have been connected to having the breadth of the topic, which youth discussed enjoying as it was not 'narrow-minded'. Furthermore, it appears that having time for in-depth inquiry, rather than setting outcomes, was valuable.

As Mr Vickers discussed, opportunities for long term problem solving are rarely available in the current school structure. Again, the epistemology of typical schooling differs from these principles of YPAR, as learning in school tends to involve binary (right/wrong) answers and can be standardised/measured.

5.2.3 Challenging Ofsted

Furthermore, youth researchers appeared to value having the opportunity to challenge a system above them that influences their experiences:

It kind of felt like I was taking control of what's happening, because Ofsted is out of my control, I don't really have a say in it. Even during the inspection, I can only answer a questionnaire. So, it was like I could finally take control of something that's always been external to me. (Emma)

I think it was very, very empowering to sort of pick apart Ofsted, just because our schools are kind of run by Ofsted. So for us as students to pick apart like an institution, with that much authority over us and that much power over us, felt very empowering. (Caleb)

The comments of the youth researchers seem to reflect the benefits of taking a 'critical' approach in YPAR, which allowed them to challenge a system above them, which impacts their schooling experience. There are often limited opportunities for 'critical' work in schools as they are generally positioned as apolitical institutions, and learning rarely takes place to change or challenge oppressive systems (Buttimer, 2018b). Successive governments

have strived for political impartiality in schools,. However, the core learning principles of competition and meritocracy mirror that of neoliberalism, which, when using a critical perspective, inherently makes learning a political process. YPAR greatly differs in this respect, providing CYP, particularly marginalised groups of CYP, opportunities to challenge systems that oppress them. Youth researchers in the current case appear to have valued this opportunity and the responsibility of doing so. However, there are inevitable challenges for EPs in trying to conduct ‘critical’ research in schools, which are typically not ‘critical’ spaces. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

5.2.4 Participating in data collection

The youth researchers said that within the YPAR project, designing their own research and conducting interviews and focus groups was empowering:

It kind of showed me what like actual research is, because I've always thought of research as being something quite abstract and something that only really smart people or really high up people do. We realised it's not as difficult, well still difficult, but not as abstract as I thought it would be. (Mia)

Mia discussed the transformation in her views about what research was during the YPAR project and who is able to take part in the process. Her comments emphasise the intention of YPAR to allow groups impacted by issues to research them themselves and contribute towards knowledge creation, rather than only outsider ‘professionals’.

Other youth researchers discussed their experiences of collecting data:

The interview with the headteacher (was my favourite part). We didn't just sit by; we genuinely asked the questions. And it was just a normal, well, I thought it would just be a normal headteacher, but he had some strong conservative like opinions. And it was just quite unexpected, but it was quite like amazing just to see. (Leila)

It felt good (conducting focus groups). It felt like you had power even though that sounds really weird, but it feels nice to bring your ideas to life. (Faiza)

Allowing the youth researchers to conduct the interviews themselves appears to have been an important part of demonstrating to them that they were viewed as experts capable of collecting data. This supports other evidence that the youth researchers felt most empowered when they were handed control to lead during the project, providing implications for facilitators of YPAR.

In summary, the findings above show that the epistemology of YPAR can lead to CYP feeling a sense of empowerment. This has been observed in previous YPAR studies when youth researchers have taken on responsibility and leadership roles (Merves et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2008; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007). The current case, therefore, builds upon these findings to provide stronger evidence that YPAR can be empowering for youth. The findings suggest that EPs and other educational professionals should consider methods and spaces in which the epistemological principles can be applied more widely within schools so that CYP can have these experiences. In recent years, books have been written endorsing the idea of

using YPAR as a pedagogy that can be applied in schools (Kirshner, 2015; Valenzuela, 2016; Wright, 2015).

5.3 Engagement and motivation

Youth researchers' engagement in optional aspects of the YPAR project indicates that they had a high level of motivation. Over half of the youth researchers (seven) attended weekly documentary sessions that lasted between 60-120 minutes and came out of their own time. Furthermore, nine youth researchers conducted interviews/focus groups, five of which did so more than once. The interviews and focus groups conducted usually took place on Thursday and Friday evenings and lasted up to 60 minutes. All youth researchers who participated in the documentary sessions also conducted an interview/focus group, whilst the three youth researchers that did not conduct research did not attend documentary sessions either. This indicates that although most youth researchers displayed a high level of motivation, it is unclear whether they all did. In her follow up interview, Sadaf explained that she would have conducted an interview, but she was finding online communication difficult at the time:

Honestly, I was just nervous, like it's actually very frightening for me to be able to go on a call itself. So I think that stopped me. If it was face to face... I would have 100% done it... And at that time, I just wasn't feeling good with my mental health. (Sadaf)

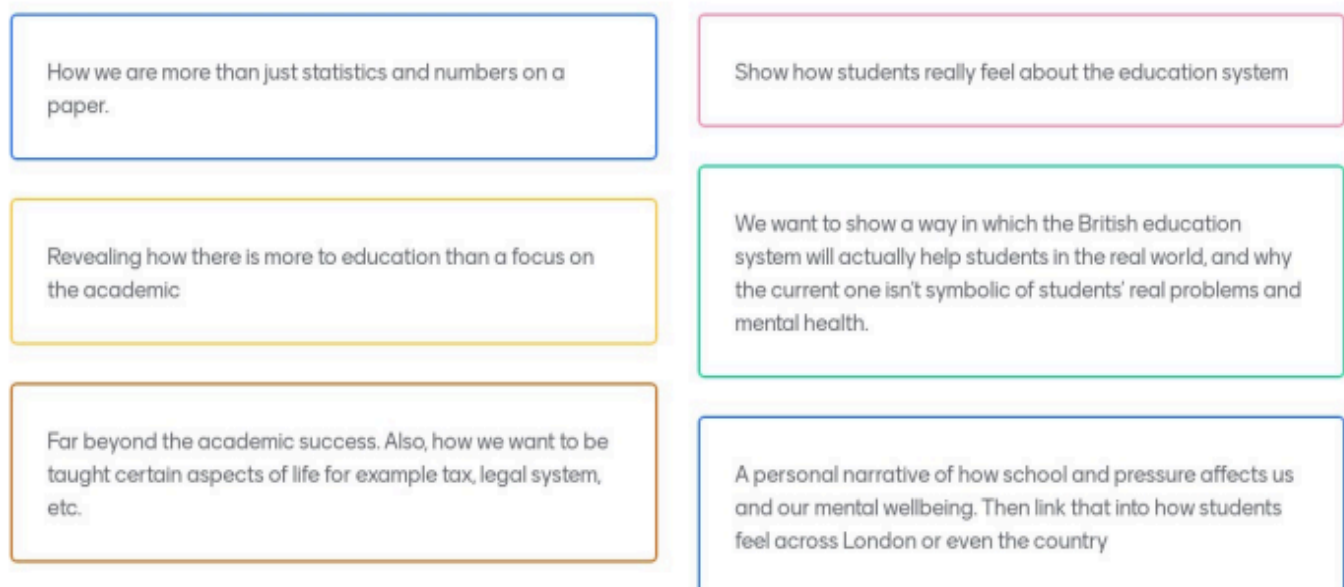
This shows that non-participation in interviews is not a clear demonstration of a lack of motivation, as other factors could have contributed. It must also be noted that

documentary session attendance does not necessarily mean that youth researchers were motivated, as they might have felt pressure to do so from their peers.

Figure 7 highlights some of the reasons in which youth researchers were motivated to create a documentary taken from their first session.

Figure 7. Slide from documentary session

What story do we want to tell?



Trying to produce the maximum impact from the YPAR project and explain CYP's experiences to others seems to be a core reason for wanting to make a documentary. Youth researchers follow up interviews also supported this factor as a key reason for their motivation:

We'd just discuss how we'd like to create a film about what we're doing. Like the whole movement.... we want to show everyone and make it like, very impactful.

(Neelam)

I think when we were doing the work I realised, like, this is amazing stuff that we're doing and it's beneficial if we show process of what we're doing rather than just the output... I think that's what gave me motivation, I thought it would have more of an impact. (Caleb)

In addition to maximising impact, 'creativity' and 'fun' were cited as a reason for participating in the documentary sessions.

There was also evidence of youth researchers engaging in additional reading outside of YPAR sessions, again highlighting their motivation and engagement in the project:

I did reading on my own terms, because I just wanted to look into it a bit more... I invested my own time because I kind of enjoyed it and looked back on my notes beforehand... it was out of our own time, but it was willingly because it was enjoyable. (Leila)

Other youth researchers also appeared to have engaged in reading outside of sessions as they discussed topics that had not been mentioned in sessions. For example, Bilal asked questions to Chris about the impact of academies on the delivery of education, while Emma commented on the role of neoliberalism in education:

We spoke about how Ofsted came about after neoliberal policies of the Thatcher era and because of that a lot of Ofsted is focused on breeding students to focus and take on careers and jobs and is very individualistic in that way so that a lot of the consequences are actually intended and strategic. (Emma- Session 20: 22.04.21)

The motivation youth researchers displayed to engage in extra work during the YPAR project appears to be connected to the autonomy they felt:

I think we had pretty much complete autonomy to create something that we thought was important. (Caleb)

This is further evident as the youth researchers discussed feeling boredom and having the least enjoyment during Phase 2 (as discussed in the previous chapter) when they had less autonomy and control during sessions. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a theory on human motivation based on human's innate psychological needs, can help explain why increased autonomy contributed to youth researchers having high levels of motivation. SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) labels intrinsic motivation as internal for an individual, gained through interest or a desire to do something. In contrast, external motivation is driven by the influence of other people or rewards/punishments. A sub-theory of SDT is Cognitive Evaluation Theory, which outlines how intrinsic motivation can be facilitated in others. Cognitive Evaluation Theory indicates that one is likely to feel intrinsically motivated when three basic psychological needs are met: a sense of relatedness, a sense of competence and a sense of autonomy.

The epistemology of YPAR closely lends itself to Cognitive Evaluation Theory. For example, it could be argued that youth are more likely to experience a sense of relatedness when working collaboratively. Additionally, when youth are positioned as experts, this provides them with opportunities to feel a sense of competence. And finally, as highlighted by Caleb's comment, youth researchers can be provided with a sense of autonomy. It is important to emphasise that the epistemology of YPAR does not guarantee that these basic psychological needs will be met. Still, it does provide a framework in which they can be met, and therefore intrinsic motivation can be experienced. Intrinsic motivation is more difficult to achieve in typical schooling contexts, as research shows that evaluative pressures undermine intrinsic motivation (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). The findings from the current case study indicate that YPAR can provide opportunities for CYP to feel intrinsically motivated, as discussed by Caleb:

It gave me something to work on for myself. Because I think obviously in sixth form, it's very like you're working for your grades and you're working for A levels and for uni. But this was I'm working for myself and I'm working for something that I'm passionate about and that I believe in. (Caleb)

Neelam also discussed how her intrinsic motivation led to self-awareness and personal development.

I'd say it's the best way of finding yourself. Wow... Now we're in sixth form and it's all about your three subjects or four that you're doing... and being able to handle that

workload. But if you were to put that aside and think, who am I besides the curriculum? If you don't have hobbies and all that stuff, it's very difficult to find who you are as a person and have that personal development. But being offered that opportunity... to develop my own mind, was a really good opportunity. (Neelam)

This again highlights the potential powerful impacts of CYP having autonomy. However, it is important to note that the youth researchers in the case study initially applied to take part in the YPAR project, highlighting that they displayed motivation to participate in the YPAR project before it started. It is difficult to know if they would have felt intrinsic motivation to do extra work if they were required to participate in the YPAR project. The requirement for CYP to participate in YPAR would not meet Hart's (1992) core principles for genuine youth participation; however other university researchers have left this option open to allow YPAR to be conducted more widely in the current school system (Buttimer, 2018b). There is no current research to my knowledge on the motivation and outcomes experienced by youth researchers who have been made to participate in in YPAR rather than volunteer. This is an area that future research could examine.

5.4 Differing longer term outcomes of the YPAR project

During follow up interviews, youth researchers all discussed the varied longer-term outcomes from the YPAR project on them as individuals. It is important to note that only seven of the twelve youth researchers participated in a follow-up interview, four months after the YPAR project had finished. It could be argued that those who had a more positive perspective of the YPAR were more likely to volunteer to be interviewed. However, whilst this may be true for some youth researchers, a few of the youth researchers who were most

involved in the YPAR did not volunteer, whilst one who did not participate in the documentary or conduct any interviews, did volunteer. This indicates that the sample may have been skewed towards those that were most engaged in the project. Either way, the findings discussed below are not representative of the whole cohort. However, I still chose to include the findings as one of the main aims of YPAR is to have longer term impacts on CYP.

5.4.1 Critical consciousness and agents of change

Mirra et al. (2016) argued that the development of 'critical consciousness' and of long-term scholar-activist identities are the primary objectives of YPAR. By 'critical consciousness', I am referring to CYP's ability to identify the causes of oppression/social-political issues within structural problems rather than within themselves. Freire (1970) argues that structural problems must first be understood before they can be challenged. Findings from the follow up interviews indicate that some youth researchers both experienced 'critical consciousness' and continued to view themselves as agents of change after the YPAR project had finished:

I think like when you've learned something, you just apply it to daily life. Like I'll see teachers act in a certain way or I'll see like, decisions being made about schools on the news and stuff and you just apply the knowledge that I learned from the project on to that. (Leila)

I'm so much more active when it comes to school, like our school and what happens... I feel like seeing all the issues that I saw arising like just kept hitting us

like, oh, that's what's happening, that's what's happening. I just couldn't stand that... So whenever there's an issue that I feel like is unfair, or like, if students' voices are not heard enough. I'm right up to the head of year. I don't like that, could we maybe change that? Obviously very politely and respectfully... If something isn't helping us... I obviously want that changed and if my peers are feeling that way then clearly someone has to speak up, and it (YPAR) has definitely helped me, I guess, speak up about my own opinion, like what I think needs to be done. (Neelam)

This indicates that both Neelam and Leila had critical consciousness around their school experience and continued to view themselves in an active role in which they could challenge decisions being made which impact students. Furthermore, three of the youth researchers (Bilal, Mia, Caleb) have continued working with States of Mind following the end of YPAR project to continue to disseminate their findings to other schools and at conferences. Caleb commented on his hopes:

I want Ofsted inspections to just basically be abolished. Like I'm not saying I want them to be replaced with our RPD (Review of Progress and Development). But I want our RPD to show that there are other options... But I just hope that this tells people all across the country that you need to wake up and realise Ofsted inspections are causing just more harm than good. That's my main hope. (Caleb)

Caleb's comment highlighted his desire to change the education system and show others that alternatives are possible, placing himself as an agent of change. The current findings add to existing literature which has shown that YPAR can provide CYP with opportunities to

become agents of change (Conrad, 2015; Mathews et al., 2010; Bautista et al., 2013). Roffey (2015) makes the case that EPs should position themselves as 'agents of change' by working as pupil advocates, promoting the value of agency in CYP and increasing participation and connectedness in CYP. The findings of this case study go beyond that by indicating that EPs can allow CYP to become 'agents of change' themselves, through the facilitation of YPAR. However, whilst the breadth of the topic appeared to be important in enabling 'critical consciousness', it may have also limited youth researcher's exploration of the education system:

It might be hard because it's a lot to focus on... I'd say it shouldn't just be about Ofsted. It narrowed it in the sense that you made me feel like Ofsted was made like superpower in education when really it's not. (Faiza)

Here, Faiza demonstrates her own 'critical consciousness' by demonstrating an awareness of other systemic issues within the education system, and indicates that the YPAR project may have been overly focused on Ofsted, which may have meant youth researchers were not able to explore the "other higher up people that influence our current education". This provides a challenge for facilitators of YPAR in providing youth researchers with the tools, time and space to explore systemic issues that they are interested in, whilst also keeping youth researchers on task to produce action. Whilst Freire (1970) makes the case that action is not possible without 'critical consciousness', it can be difficult to ensure this in YPAR projects, particularly those with shorter time limits.

5.4.2 Research skills

During the last session of the year, a few of the youth researchers felt that the biggest impact from the YPAR project was in the practical research skills that they had developed. I have chosen this as a sub-theme to highlight the variety of outcomes within YPAR and avoid only presenting the more important intended outcomes.

I'd recommend people to do the project because it has helped that I've run a lot of new skills that are need for university, for independent research and stuff like that.

(Amber- Session 29: 01.07.21)

My reflective journal noted that Amber appeared to be one of the least engaged youth researchers during the YPAR project, although she would make insightful comments when she was asked to speak. Her comment shows that she may have perceived and experienced the project differently to some of the other youth researchers. She valued the skills developed in the YPAR project, rather than outcomes that tend to be valued more highly in YPAR literature. This highlighted the range of outcomes that can occur through YPAR. Zita also valued the research skills developed which were transferable to other subjects:

I really liked this project because some aspects of the project such as finding like a research question... I found that similar in my geography coursework. I found that that was really helpful because I think that that's what I'm going to need to do in university. So like I could talk about how this project has really prepared me for University and has given me a head start compared to like other students. (Zita-

Session 29: 01.07.21)

Previous studies have also highlighted the development of research skills as an outcome of YPAR (Ross, 2011; Hampshire et al., 2012). This increases the transferability of this finding as it builds on previous research. Buttmer (2018b) discussed how a potential limitation of teachers facilitating YPAR is that they may not have the research skills themselves needed to support youth researchers, while university facilitators may have the research skills but not be as confident working with CYP. This provides a potential role for EPs, who learn research skills during their training and have experience working alongside CYP, meaning that they are well positioned to support youth researchers with their research design, data collection and analysis.

Both Amber and Zita also discussed how the YPAR project had provided them were skills that they think will be useful at university. While this may be applicable to other youth researchers who engage in YPAR during sixth form, it is unlikely that younger CYP engaging in YPAR will consider this as an outcome. This highlights the limitations of the case study in its transferability for some outcomes, as they are dependent on the context of the YPAR project.

5.5 Summary of chapter findings

The findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate that YPAR can have a range of positive outcomes for the youth researchers involved. It has the potential to be empowering, motivating and engaging for youth researchers. YPAR can also lead to youth researchers changing their self-perception, as they can start to view themselves as 'agents of change'. Central to these outcomes appear to be the epistemology of YPAR, which allows CYP to

have increased autonomy compared to typical schooling and the responsibility and opportunity to attempt to create change.

However, there are some limitations regarding these findings. It could be argued that youth researchers displayed social desirability during their follow up interviews with me, exaggerating positive outcomes as they thought that was what I wanted to hear. A counterpoint to that is the frequency in which they also made negative comments about aspects of the project, as highlighted by comments made in the previous and subsequent chapters. It is also important to note that five of the seven youth researchers interviewed had attended the documentary sessions, so they were likely to have reported more positive outcomes than those who did not as engaged in the YPAR project.

Chapter 6: The challenges for Educational Psychologists facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research

6.1 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the key findings from the case study related to research question 3: To what extent are there challenges for Educational Psychologists facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research in schools? It is paramount to answer this question in order to understand whether it is a) possible for EPs to conduct YPAR in schools, and b) understand the challenges that need to be considered before and during the facilitation of YPAR. Some challenges have already been identified and discussed within the previous two chapters, specifically relating to challenges facilitating the epistemology of YPAR and achieving the intended outcomes. This chapter will provide a deeper analysis of some previously raised challenges and introduce challenges that have not yet been commented upon.

The first theme discussed is 'timing and the need for flexibility was a constant challenge'. This theme emerged during the analysis of my reflective journal and Mentimeter presentations, and was supported by comments made by the youth researchers and Chris. Five sub-themes are presented under Theme 1: 'the plan for the year', 'scope of the YPAR project', 'constructing the methodology', 'data analysis' and 'lack of time dedicated to Phase 6'. The second theme examined is 'the extent of involvement of adult researchers'. This theme emerged from my reflective journal and my interview with Chris and highlights the difficulty for facilitators in knowing the extent of their involvement in YPAR. The third theme

discussed is ‘the challenges and opportunities of implementing YPAR more widely’. This theme developed from my interviews with the link teachers at School’s A and B, as well as my interview with Chris and my reflective journal. Two sub-themes are presented: ‘challenges and opportunities for educational psychologists’ and ‘challenges and opportunities in schools’.

6.2 Timing and the need for flexibility were a constant challenge

YPAR is an approach that allows for a fluid, flexible and non-prescriptive methodology that will vary based on the needs of participants and their contexts (Cammorata & Fine, 2009; Buttimer, 2018a). While this can be considered a strength of the approach, it was found to cause challenges for the facilitators in this case study. The following sub-themes will outline how the high level of flexibility led to timing and planning difficulties during the YPAR project.

6.2.1 Initial plan

Firstly, there were difficulties in predicting a timeline for the yearlong YPAR project, and thus brought challenges with communicating a clear timeframe to the youth researchers at the start of the project. This is evident by the disparity between the anticipated phases of the YPAR project presented to the youth researchers in Session 1 and the actual phases of the YPAR project (shown in Table 5).

Table 5. Changes into the anticipated phases of the YPAR project

Phase	Anticipated	Actual
1	Research- education inspection	Introduction to project
2	Data gathering	Researching the Ofsted Handbook
3	Data analysis	Devising a methodology
4	Implementation of youth researcher's framework	What does previous research show
5	Evaluation	Data Collection
6	Sharing insights	Designing a new framework

As displayed in Table 5, several phases of the YPAR project were not initially anticipated, such as the need for a more extended introduction, and the time required to devise the methodology and design an alternative framework. The need for flexibility in YPAR and the lack of a clear timeframe for the project made it difficult to manage the youth researchers' expectations. Although Chris explained in Session 1 that there was no clear schedule for the project, we provided youth researchers with the impression that their new framework would be implemented in a school if possible, which did not happen. This demonstrates the difficulties of predicting a YPAR project and communicating how the project may proceed to youth researchers. Whilst preparing youth researchers with a timeframe for different stages during their YPAR project can be important in helping to manage their expectations, it is very difficult to do this accurately. The implications of this are that YPAR facilitators should be tentative if giving youth researchers timeframes for projects and should mainly focus on explaining the broader four stages of YPAR to avoid misleading youth researchers on what might occur during the project.

The anticipated phases initially outlined to the youth researchers that were not adhered to potentially highlights some lack of experience of myself and Chris as facilitators. Although we both had previous experience facilitating YPAR, the previous projects were shorter in length and did not have the same breadth in scope. From very early on, the anticipated plan changed as it did not account for the time needed for youth researchers to feel comfortable sharing their views and building relationships. Chris discussed his early thoughts and feelings about facilitating the project:

I think emotionally it was a barrier as well... especially early on, I had nagging what you would probably call in CBT... negative automatic thoughts. Thinking, is this just a load of rubbish? Are they listening? Those with cameras off, have they gone for a cup of tea? So... I found that personally quite difficult, thinking I'm running this session and I don't know whether they give a shit. (Chris)

These comments indicated that Chris' nerves and self-doubt were his personal response to wanting to prioritise the youth researchers' engagement over maintaining the initial timeline for the sessions. This highlighted Chris' awareness of the group dynamics in determining the direction of the first few sessions. Instead of starting to plan the research as initially thought, the first few sessions were designed to be very interactive, with lots of opportunities for youth researchers to discuss their experiences of education and their thoughts on how it could be different. Chris' comments suggested that he prioritised the engagement and enjoyment of the YPAR for youth researchers during the first few sessions. This indicated that facilitators of YPAR should account for the time taken for youth

researchers to become comfortable and plan for the initial sessions to be interactive to create the safe space discussed in Chapter 4. Overall this indicated that facilitators need to be responsive to the youth researchers' way of working during YPAR projects and consider when to shift conversations from 'problem-free' talk to research activities. It worked well in this project when the facilitators embraced the uncertainty and responded to the needs of the youth researchers rather than keeping to the rigid structure. However, it is also important to note that facilitators in other YPAR projects may need to keep to a more rigid structure depending on the needs of the youth researchers and the time and capacity restraints of the project. The following sub-themes explore some of the other factors, as well as the challenges of taking a flexible approach to the YPAR project.

6.2.2 Scope of the YPAR project

Although the topic of the YPAR project met the criteria for being grounded in the lives of youth researchers and enabled the project to be critical in nature, it was also hard to contain at times. I reflected upon the challenges and opportunities of the topic in my reflective journal:

I think that this project is so broad and there is so much to know about the current systems in place for education... I think in some ways it makes the project difficult to keep within certain parameters... in other ways, it allows us to break down all the current systems in place and rethink the basics of education... We asked the students to discuss 'who education is for?' and 'what education is for?'. It was fascinating to hear their thoughts. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 26.11.20)

While I discussed how the project was hard to contain, Faiza thought that the project was not broad enough:

I think it would have been nice to get, like, even if it was like a week where we just did extra info I guess, like, about other organisations or other higher up people that influence our current education. I think it's just good for general knowledge. (Faiza)

This further highlights the challenges of the scope and breadth of topics chosen in YPAR. They are required to be 'critical in nature', which often means targeted at systems responsible for the causes of oppression. Inevitably, topics will be complex and therefore difficult to contain, as the causes of oppression and concentration of power are interactional and cannot be reduced to one topic or institution, such as Ofsted. As facilitators, it was difficult to balance the time needed to explore Ofsted and the time needed to conduct research and create an alternative form of evaluation. One method of reducing this problem is to narrow the scope and ambition of YPAR projects. However, this then risks becoming uncritical and consequentially less impactful. The current case indicates that facilitators of YPAR need to continually be thinking and reflecting on how to balance the time needed for criticality as well as the time needed to develop action plans during YPAR. It also indicates that it would be very difficult to conduct meaningful YPAR projects in a short amount of time, as youth researchers need time and space to develop critical consciousness to these expansive topics as well as produce action plans, as discussed by Chris:

The challenge is to create something really complex and meaningful and accessible in an hour and a half a week is very difficult. So then, that was a barrier. And if we'd have three hours a week, I think we would have created a really clear document there. We might even have trialled it. (Chris)

However, it is important to note that although the topic in the current case was grounded in the lives of youth researchers, they did not have much prior knowledge about the specific topic. This meant that the youth researchers were required to engage in critical reading to have a foundation of knowledge on the topic so that they could effectively carry out the research and take a critical stance. Completing these additional readings is potentially specific to the content of *this* research, rather than a feature of all YPAR projects. If projects do not require as much extra learning and reading for youth researchers, it is likely that the project could be shorter in length.

6.2.3 Constructing the methodology

Constructing the methodology alongside youth researchers was challenging in several ways. The students' lack of experience, and the effort of facilitators in recruiting participants were two key challenges of taking a joint approach to constructing the methodology.

Firstly, the lack of experience among youth researchers presented difficulties. As summarised in my reflective journal:

as the students don't know the difficulties with sampling and certain methodologies they are keen to do more than is possible. Therefore, we have to keep reminding

them what is not possible within our time frame and resources. However, their thoughts and creativity are very impressive and inspiring (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 04.02.21)

My reflection highlights the difficulty of trying to support the youth researchers in constructing research that they wanted to do, considering the time and resources available. It is likely that a combination of the inspiration I felt from youth researchers and the pressure I felt to meet their expectations, led me to take on more work than I had time for in order to recruit the participants the youth researchers wanted. This resulted in issues around my wellbeing:

I've been quite busy over Easter trying to recruit participants, as well as writing my research report and other placement work. It has been quite exhausting but I have some interviews planned ... I think that the stress imposed on teachers by Covid-19 is adding a layer of difficulty in trying to recruit participants this year. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 20.02.21)

Balancing the recruitment of participants in the YPAR project with other work I had at this time was particularly challenging for me. I struggled to have a good work/life balance during this time. The recruitment of participants for the youth researchers' study is likely to be a transferable time challenge for other facilitators of YPAR. It was potentially more challenging in this particular research due to the impact of Covid-19 on staffing and capacity of participants. Furthermore, the range of participants the youth researchers wanted to interview added recruitment challenges. The challenges faced in the current case may have

been reduced if potential participants, such as school headteachers, had been contacted earlier on. Another alternative for future facilitators of YPAR could be allowing youth researchers to be involved in recruiting participants. However, this could pose ethical issues whereby youth researchers pressure people they know to participate. Furthermore, it could increase risks to participants confidentiality as several youth researchers may know them, rather than just the two conducting the interview/focus group, as in the current case study. This challenge is dependent on the participants chosen within YPAR projects and is therefore not transferable to all YPAR.

6.2.4 Data analysis

There were significant challenges in trying to find the best method of analysing data alongside youth researchers, particularly with sessions being conducted online. Data analysis for the student and teacher questionnaires involved me sharing a document of the quantitative findings with the youth researchers. They were then given time to look through the data independently and make notes on the key findings. These findings were then discussed as a group. The following extract from my reflective journal discusses how the decision was made around how qualitative data could be analysed as a group:

I spoke to Chris earlier in the week to briefly discuss how findings can be fed back to the rest of the group and analysed. Although I would not have time to do a full analysis, I would be able to look back at the interview in the morning before the session. I suggested to Chris that Leila should first feedback her experience and main takings from the interview. Following that I could feedback anything else that arose

that could help them, specifically in their production of a framework. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 29.04.21)

Allowing youth researchers to analyse the quantitative data was easier than the qualitative data, as it was provided in an accessible format. Although we encouraged youth researchers to make notes when interview/focus group feedback was provided, it was not possible to conduct a rigorous thematic analysis. I also found that the role I had suggested for myself in the data analysis was difficult to keep to within the timeframe:

I am having to attend interviews and re-watch them, as well as put together themes from each week or combine student notes into one document. I'm finding it hard to balance this with my placement work. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 20.05.21)

The implications for this are that facilitators of YPAR should consider the time outside of sessions where they might need to do additional work and whether they are able to do this in addition to other commitments they have. As with the current case study, it may be beneficial to have two facilitators in order to share some of the planning and research responsibilities.

In their meta-analysis of YPAR studies, Shamrova and Cummings (2017) found that only 11% of studies had included youth researchers in the data analysis, compared with 71% of studies including youth researchers in data collection. Coad and Evans (2008) also stated that a common challenge of participatory research is the involvement of co-researchers during data analysis. This case study supports previous research that highlights the

challenges of conducting data analysis alongside a group of youth researchers. For example, my role in the data analysis meant that I may have included my interpretation of findings, which could have been different to that of youth researchers. Therefore, qualitative analysis may be more difficult to conduct than quantitative analysis alongside youth researchers. This may depend on the age range of participants and their familiarity with statistics. The difficulty of analysing qualitative analysis appears to have been exacerbated by online sessions. Recent research has explored the use of participatory thematic analysis approaches (Liebenberg et al., 2020; Neill et al., 2021). Liebenberg provides a step by step guide to participatory thematic data analysis with youth researchers. At the time, we were unaware of this research as facilitators. However, this provides a potential solution to the current challenges of data analysis found in many YPAR studies.

6.2.5 Lack of time dedicated to Phase 6

The action plan for the YPAR project shifted from implementing a youth-led education evaluation framework to creating one. However, this still became difficult due to time challenges and unforeseen circumstances in the summer term at School's A and B.

Attendance during the last phase of the project varied due to end of year mock exams, youth researchers suffering from Covid-19 and a few end of year school activities. Analysis of the sessions from this period (Table 6) revealed that in the final eight sessions of the YPAR project, the attendance of youth researchers was low and inconsistent, which meant that it was difficult for youth researchers to design their own framework collaboratively.

Table 6. Attendance of youth researchers during Phase 6

Session	Youth researchers present (out of 12)
21	10
22	10
23	4
24	10
25	8
26	9
27	2
28	8

My reflective journal highlights some of the unforeseen circumstances that arose during this time:

Only four student researchers were able to make the session as mock exams were going on. Mr Vickers is currently on paternity leave so no one had passed on this information to Chris so he could plan accordingly. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 13.05.21)

This reflects the disruptions that were felt at this time. Some youth researchers felt very involved during the final phase, while others said they did not:

I feel from all like the phases I'd say like the very last, like by the end of it, we became less involved, but I feel like maybe because it was timing and stuff but it sort

of like dissolved... So I think we were pretty involved throughout most of it. But towards the end it sort of diverged, if that makes sense. (Faiza)

The varying attendance of youth researchers was likely a contributing factor to the involvement they felt during this phase. Other youth researchers commented about trying to balance the YPAR with their schoolwork during the end of the project:

And during exam week and like just before exam week, like when everyone was revising and stressed, we couldn't put our whole like 100% into it because we were worried about other things. (Leila)

This supports previous research findings that have discussed the challenges of creating space in the curriculum for YPAR (Cannella, 2008; Ozer et al., 2010; Phillips et al., 2010). This became a larger challenge during the youth researchers' mock exam period during the current case, as the project had been built into their timetable. The implications of this are two-fold. Firstly, in large, the youth researchers reported being able to balance the YPAR with other school commitments:

It was fine. It was only once a week, which was fine and it was a little bit less than two hour session and it was completely fine. There was nothing wrong, I think that was just the perfect amount of time. (Zita)

Secondly, time planning needs to occur during YPAR projects with link school teachers from early on to end projects before exam periods and plan around other school events. This requires close coordination with school link teachers.

6.3 The extent of involvement of adult researchers

A frequent challenge cited in YPAR literature is the extent of involvement of adult researchers. James (2007) warned that the more the adult researcher is involved, the higher the risk of them exercising power over CYP's opinions and misinterpreting their voices. Shamrova and Cummings (2017) suggested that expanding the stages in which CYP are involved must be prioritised, particularly as many YPAR projects are time limited. Despite having a longer timeframe than many YPAR projects, this case study's findings still indicate the difficulty for facilitators in knowing what the extent of their involvement should be in the YPAR.

6.3.1 the potential for presenting a biased perspective

During Phase 4, the methodology construction had been completed and data collection was in process. However, data collection was taking place outside of sessions and the youth researchers did not have any data to base their own education evaluation framework on. This meant that Chris and I needed to decide the structure of some sessions before data analysis could start. We thought it would be helpful for youth researchers to critique previous research around the topic of education evaluation to support them with their own framework. In typical research, this would take place earlier on through a literature review. However, this brought challenges regarding the research that was provided to youth researchers to critique, as discussed by Chris:

One of the big challenges that we've discussed a bit, is how much do you present to them and how much do you let them present back? So you obviously have a lot of reading around this subject and we shared with them what I would perceive to be, a number of really legitimate academic papers that I think are as balanced as they can be... But I guess we have to be reflexive here don't we and go maybe, accidentally, we've chosen research that challenges Ofsted when we could have found other sources of information that are supportive. (Chris)

This demonstrates the challenge in finding the balance between the potential value of facilitators taking a leading role and risking projecting a bias onto youth researchers. This tension is discussed by Yang (2009) in relation to what they describe as the two fallacies threatening YPAR. The first is 'the fallacy of idealized democracy' in which people mistake the student-led element of YPAR for equal participation. The aim is not to create a situation without a leader, but to distinguish between authority and authoritarianism in knowledge production. In Yang's own YPAR study, this was evident by the project being split into two phases, the first being the reading of texts which was teacher-led, while the second involved the creation of original texts, which was student led. Yang (2009) states that "Freire did not immediately provide men and women with pen and paper and solicit descriptions of the world. Rather, reading of text preceded writing" (p.100). Yang's argument indicates that adult researchers presenting research to youth researchers in this research was necessary, as the reading of texts promotes youth researchers' critical thinking and their development of independent thought, and provides youth researchers with a reference point for chosen topics.

The second fallacy discussed by Yang (2009) is 'predetermined criticism', which, in contrast, occurs when YPAR merely leads to the reproduction of the critical worldviews held by the facilitator and no new ideas are constructed. This raises questions on whether facilitators of YPAR should attempt to be impartial and objective in order to avoid this problem. Chris discussed his thoughts on this during the YPAR:

People I think will make that argument won't they, did we frame things for them to be shaped in a certain way and there's always a really tricky balance. There isn't an easy answer to how much shaping of the sessions you do, and how much you let them run the sessions. And I just think in an hour and half a week, it's just not possible to have a completely open approach, is it? You have to have some things that you bring in. I think we overcame that challenge by checking with them, the things that you summarised, actually makes sense to them. That said, again, being reflexive, it's possible that when you did that, you might have been biased in a certain direction. And again, that criticism is probably valid, isn't it. (Chris)

As Chris asserted, it is difficult to determine the impact of your own view as adult researchers on the perspectives of youth researchers. Because of the difficulty of facilitators measuring the extent of their potential influence on youth researchers, the best practice would be for facilitators to use a reflective journal to support facilitator self-awareness (a guide for using a reflective journal is in Appendix K). Another way to mitigate this issue is for adult researchers to be transparent about any desires to change the topic of focus, whilst

limiting their own suggestions as much as possible. One youth researcher, Mia, discussed this from the perspective of a youth researcher:

We were given a couple of research, like papers and stuff. It wasn't like we went out and found them. But I think like we were able to form our own opinions about them, I think that's where our bit came in, so I don't think we had like full control in that section... Like it would have been nice if he found our own research papers but it wouldn't have been practical because we only had an hour and a bit in our sessions... Overall the amount of involvement we had was good. (Mia)

Mia's comments showed her awareness of the importance of youth researchers directing YPAR and the need for adult researchers to lead for practicality. The findings from this case indicate that it is important for facilitators of YPAR to be aware of the two fallacies that Yang (2009) discusses in order to understand when and how they arise. The current case study indicates that transparency with youth researchers and using a reflective journal are useful tools for balancing the need for leadership with the bias that may come with it.

6.3.2 The challenge of trusting youth researchers

As adult researchers, handing control over to youth researchers presented challenges, at times. For example, my reflective journal shows my experience of trusting researchers to work independently.

It is hard to know how youth researchers are engaging when we ask them to do individual study or group tasks in breakout rooms when we are online... Working this

way requires a lot of trust in them and their personal motivation to do the task as we have no way of monitoring what they are doing. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 17.12.21)

My comments highlighted the doubt that can be felt when control is handed over to youth researchers. This was increased by carrying out sessions online, which meant not having the same ability to observe them during breakout rooms and individual study as one would if they were in a classroom. The doubt and uncertainty I initially felt were probably partly due to the deviation of working *alongside* CYP in YPAR compared to my previous experiences as a teaching assistant. Adult facilitators may be required to unlearn some of the methods they may previously have practised when working with CYP, where they may have been viewed as the 'expert', rather than working alongside CYP. However, although not found in this case study, previously handing over control to youth researchers has led to 'messaging around' (Ozer et al., 2010) and disrespect (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010). This also explains some of the doubt felt about handing control over to youth researchers in the current case.

Furthermore, facilitating youth researchers to conduct their own interviews and focus groups brought challenges. A semi-structured interview format was planned in which youth researchers would be able to ask follow up questions if they thought it was appropriate. While the feedback of youth researchers post-YPAR project suggests that they found this empowering, it also meant that the quality of the research conducted was problematic at times. For example, my reflective journal shows that there were several examples of youth researchers asking leading questions or questions that were not relevant to the research questions. It raised questions as an adult researcher regarding whether I should intervene or

not. On a couple of occasions, I privately messaged a youth researcher to guide them back to the interview schedule. One implication from this is that facilitators of YPAR need to consider the different aims of YPAR during data collection, as working alongside inexperienced youth researchers is likely to provide a challenge to producing rigorous research. For example, in the current case, I needed to decide whether the benefits of youth researchers conducting research was more valuable than more rigorous research potentially being undertaken. While this is a subjective decision, it is important for facilitators to refer back to the intended aims of YPAR. Alternatively, facilitators could address the challenge through more preparation with youth researchers, however time considerations would need to be taken into account.

6.4 The challenges and opportunities of implementing YPAR more widely

This theme predominantly arose from the data collected during the interviews with the school link teachers and Chris. Despite not including the voices of youth researchers, I chose to include the theme due to its value in addressing the purpose of this case study, to explore how EPs can facilitate YPAR.

6.4.1 Challenges and opportunities for educational psychologists

Chris discussed EP's ability to facilitate YPAR based on the way they are currently working:

it does not align at all with the way the EPs are working within the education system, and the alignment that the education system has in terms of EP practice being based around standardised assessments and education, health care plans and continuing and slightly bizarre in my opinion, focus around special educational needs. (Chris)

Chris discussed how the current methods in which EPs are working do not lend themselves to conducting YPAR. A recent workforce survey found that over four-fifths (85%) of EPs work in a local authority (LA) setting at least some of the time (Lyonette et al., 2019). However, 93% of the LA Principal EPs surveyed said that the demand they were receiving for EP services could not be met. The most commonly cited reason for this was the increase in statutory assessment work following the SEND reforms in 2014. Additionally, 78% of EPs surveyed thought that their workload was increasing, and 76% said that they never seemed to have enough time to get everything done in their job. Principal EPs discussed seeing a decrease in the variety of work EPs did due to the amount of statutory work required. This evidence supported Chris' assertion that it would be very difficult for EPs to currently facilitate YPAR more widely due to the current work climate, including workload pressures. This case highlighted the importance of having long term, scheduled time to facilitate YPAR, which is unlikely to be available to most EPs working in LAs.

However, there may be potential for EPs to support teaching staff to deliver YPAR themselves in schools. EPs core functions have been identified as consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training, and these functions can be applied at the levels of the group (for example, class, group, family) and the organisation (for example, the school, the local authority) as well as with individual CYP (Fallon et al., 2010). Therefore, the EP's role in facilitating YPAR could be at the level of the group or organisation rather than working with youth researchers themselves. This could involve supervising and supporting teaching staff who want to deliver YPAR. Although conducted in the US, Buttner (2018b) found that teachers were able to conduct YPAR successfully and discussed the opportunities for

teachers and university-based researchers to work more closely. This is a role which EPs are well positioned to do in the UK because they are required to conduct research within universities during their training and have links to schools. Also, EPs could potentially supervise multiple YPAR projects with teachers taking the role of the facilitator. This could increase the potential of YPAR to be conducted on a wider level due to minimising existing time constraints on EPs. However, there are no current accounts of EPs supporting teachers to deliver YPAR, which would be useful for future research to explore. The willingness and capacity of teachers to facilitate YPAR would also need to be considered in any future research.

Alternatively, there is potential for trainee EPs (TEPs) to facilitate YPAR in schools. While the findings from this case highlight that YPAR can have a high workload and be tiring, my final reflections on the project show my own positive experience:

I feel really proud of the work we have all done over the last year. The youth researchers have grown so much and have done some really incredible work. I think we realised as we went on how ambitious the project was and how we couldn't do everything we initially hoped for. But the process has been transformational for me personally and I've learnt so much about education evaluation, YPAR and developing a range of skills around working collaboratively. I really hope that I can do more of this work in the future. (Jaspar- Reflective journal: 01.07.21)

My comments highlight the positive impact that conducting YPAR had on my professional development. It allowed me to develop my critical consciousness and build on skills learnt during my doctoral training.

TEPs potentially have more potential to deliver YPAR than EPs working in LAs as they do not have the same workload commitments and are required to undertake research as part of doctoral courses. Assistant EPs (AEPs) may also have more opportunities to facilitate YPAR. Woodley-Hume and Woods (2019) found that the AEP role emerged from EP recruitment difficulties and that AEPs work in diverse ways that enhance and extend the EP services offered to schools. Therefore, they may not experience barriers to the same extent as qualified EPs. One potential challenge for TEPs and AEPs would be contracting the work with schools. Mr Vickers discussed how the YPAR project of focus in this case study arose from a school perspective:

I receive quite a few emails, in any given term a week, from kind of outside organisations kind of with sort of offers of like mental health, well-being courses and kind of student leadership opportunities and things like that. And they all sound pretty good. But to be honest, I give them a once over and then because I don't know the person because it might be good, but it might not... I'm really pushed for time... I rarely sort of look at it again. So yeah, obviously we've worked with States of Mind quite a long time. So we already had a good understanding of the organisation and I'm really keen to help support in any way possible. But getting that one sort of foot in the door thing can be quite tricky. (Mr Vickers)

Here Mr Vickers emphasises the importance of schools having prior relationships with individuals, as well as time to deliver extracurricular projects when they are contracting work with external professionals. This could be a barrier for many TEPs, while others may already have contacts at schools due to previous experience through their placement work.

Overall, implications drawn from the experience of facilitators in the current case study and the format in which EPs currently work, are that the greatest opportunities for EPs delivering YPAR are through supporting teachers to deliver YPAR and in TEPs/AEPs facilitating YPAR, rather than through EPs working in LAs. However, Chris asserts that this project demonstrates the potential of EPs to reimagine their own role:

I think if EPs decide as a group, as an organisation of human beings, that this type of work research is valuable and should be done. I actually think because of the relationships we often have with schools, putting this to head teachers and senior teachers showing the evidence of what can come out of it. I do think it's possible that EPs in the future would be able to use this approach significantly more in schools... in my mind, I think it's a collective psyche shift in EPs actually. (Chris)

6.4.2 Challenges and opportunities in schools

The findings from the follow-up interviews with the link teachers also elicited factors that impact the potential and willingness of schools to value the facilitation of YPAR in their settings:

I think it really rests on the priorities of the school and the people within a school because school A have got this kind of dedicated two afternoons a week on Tuesday and Thursday, where we're doing these kinds of longer sort of social action or research or enrichment projects. It fits really nicely with both the school structures and also the kind of values of the school... So, for that reason for us, it's the perfect project because we have the structures to support it and we have the kind of an aligned vision and kind of values. (Mr Vickers)

Mr Vickers stated that the values of School A closely aligned with those of YPAR, which meant that the project was desirable for them. It suggests that EPs should consider the values and methods used in certain schools when proposing the use of YPAR. Mr Vickers also discussed the importance of individuals within school settings who promote such projects:

But I was really keen to make sure that happened because I'm really personally invested in the kind of outcomes of the project. I think if you had someone who, through either lack of interest or perhaps kind of the busyness of school roles didn't have that same drive, then it could quite easily sort of fall off the radar. (Mr Vickers)

Although EPs have little control over this factor, it highlighted the importance of having a close relationship with school contacts and having consistency with teaching staff when attempting to deliver YPAR. Furthermore, both teaching links discussed how the YPAR project was made easier from their perspective, by their lack of involvement:

the advantage of this project is that it didn't demand huge amount of time, it was delivered through external channels. I think a with a lot of schools they would say that's a really, really good idea, but we don't have the capacity or maybe even the knowledge and skills to lead on it. Like you need someone who themselves has kind of that academic background and knowledge about how to conduct research. Most schools wouldn't have somebody who does that. So it would have to be through a university and the university doing 90% of it. (Mr Roberts)

Schools are really busy places it's hard to find sometimes the time... So I think yeah, it comes down to the sort of day to day logistics of a school... If those things are in place, then it's super easy. (Mr Vickers)

Both teachers discussed the lack of time available in schools for teachers, indicating that YPAR is made more feasible if they know that it will be held by external professionals rather than require more work for teachers. This provides a barrier to EPs attempting to support teachers to deliver YPAR as it may be unlikely that they have time to do it based on their own time commitments. However, Buttiner (2018b) found that teachers in the US were able to facilitate YPAR, an area that requires more exploration in the UK educational context.

Mr Vickers also discussed the challenges of convincing schools of the value of YPAR:

I think measuring engagement, it needs to be measured in a different way to how you measure the engagement of, for example, a maths lesson. Because dead time or

time that isn't kind of rigorously planned in a in a subject lesson is often seen as wasted time. Whereas, I think the beauty of things is what happens in the kind of spaces in between, and if you just kind of like throw loads of activities on people and just keep them busy for two hours... you don't necessarily get the kind of depth of thoughts that is required. So, in terms of kind of measuring the engagement I sometimes feel like these kind of projects need a different yardstick. ... You know, it's not like the students have got an A grade in participatory action research... but I think that's something in terms of thinking about other schools or more widely taking this approach is actually how is engagement in progress measured because often it'll be compared to existing things in education which are very different format. (Mr Vickers)

This highlighted that those who want to conduct YPAR may find it difficult to explain its value to schools, as the current forms methods used to evaluate student education do not apply to YPAR. As previously discussed, this was evident through the clashes of the epistemology of YPAR compared to typical schooling, whereby CYP are normally assessed as individuals based on standardised assessments, rather than their ability to work collaboratively to produce social action. As evident in Mr Vickers' comments, the school contracting the YPAR with EPs would need to value the benefits that cannot be measured in a standardised form.

Finally, Mr Vickers offered some thoughts on how the topics of YPAR projects could become a motivator for them to conduct YPAR:

Being able to sort of tap into how it might benefit the school can be really helpful. And the students. So actually thinking about what the kind of schools priorities are, and maybe that's to do with the sort of the organisation itself, and the kind of school improvement plan they might have, or it could be to do with the kind of community that they serve and the area that they are positioned in. (Mr Vickers)

This indicated that facilitators of YPAR should consider how the broad topic of YPAR, which youth researchers can later refine, could align with the schools and communities where they will be situated. However, attempting to align YPAR topics with the aims of a school could risk the topic not being grounded in the lives of the CYP or not being critical.

Overall, the findings discussed in this theme have started to suggest who, within the field of EPs, is best placed to facilitate YPAR. There are also implications for the school conditions necessary to conduct YPAR. However, the conclusions drawn in this theme are not generalisable as they are based on a limited number of participants. Therefore, although the views of participants are important, they cannot be extrapolated to other EPs and teaching staff. A valuable area of future research would be to explore the views of more teaching staff and EPs on YPAR to better understand the possible routes and avenues in which it can be facilitated. This is particularly important due to the challenge of facilitating an epistemological approach that greatly differs from that typically used in schools, as well as challenges around the capacity of professionals within the education system in the UK.

6.5 Summary of chapter findings

The findings discussed in this chapter raise the challenges for adults when facilitating YPAR.

Firstly, the approach requires flexibility, which leads to challenges around time management, as well as feelings of uncertainty as the facilitator. This can also lead to aspects of YPAR that are already challenging, such as data analysis, becoming more difficult.

This finding has high transferability as it builds on previous YPAR research that has raised the difficulties of finding time for YPAR during school time (Mirra et al., 2015; Raygoza, 2016; Rubin et al., 2017), particularly due to a political and educational climate centred around high stakes testing and a standardised curriculum (Kirshner, 2015). This indicates that facilitators of YPAR should consider the priorities of YPAR during projects, in order to allow time for the most valuable aspects, such as the action plan.

Secondly, the case study revealed the challenge for facilitators in understanding how to maintain a leading role, whilst refraining from presenting a biased view. This finding is also transferable to other YPAR projects as the difficulties are intertwined with the ethical issues of the power imbalances when implementing an epistemology attempting to conduct research 'alongside' CYP rather than 'to' CYP. The implications of this are the facilitators should be transparent with youth researchers and negotiate times when they may need to lead more. Findings also indicate that facilitators should continuously reflect on the potential for them to inflict their own 'critical' worldview onto youth researchers in a manner that is uncritical, as this will not lead to new ways of thinking.

Finally, the third theme raises some of the wider challenges of EPs facilitating YPAR more widely. The initial indications are that TEPs and AEPs are likely to have more opportunities

to facilitate YPAR, and there may be opportunities for EPs to supervise teachers facilitating YPAR. However, more research is needed in this area better understand how EPs can find opportunities to conduct YPAR.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis concludes with a summary of the research and considers its strengths and limitations. The implications and contribution of the study are discussed, as well as potential future directions of research in this field and concluding comments.

7.1 Summary of the research

This thesis presented a case study exploring the facilitation, outcomes and challenges of a YPAR project to understand better how EPs can facilitate YPAR in schools. The key findings from the case study relating to the research questions are outlined below.

Findings from the case study showed that the epistemological principles of YPAR were generally adhered to, but difficulties arose during certain phases. For example, promoting robust participation among youth researchers became easier as the project developed. However, youth researchers were not as involved in the decision making during Phase 2 than other Phases. A safe space was created at the start of the YPAR, which was important in allowing youth researchers to feel comfortable participating and offering their perspectives. The use of technology supported this, as it provided a platform for youth researchers to offer their views anonymously. Furthermore, I found a potential contradiction in the epistemological principles of YPAR, where allowing youth researchers to lead in creating an action plan has the potential to mean the action plan is not 'critical in nature'.

The case study findings indicated a range of positive outcomes for the youth researchers involved in the project. Findings suggest that several youth researchers felt empowered by the YPAR, had a high level of motivation, and continued to perceive themselves as agents of change after the project had finished. While other youth researchers discussed the research skills they had developed during the project and how the experience had prepared them for university. Many of the outcomes were discussed in relation to the epistemological principles of YPAR, which differ from typical schooling, such as the different roles of adults, increased autonomy, the topic of focus, the time available for inquiry, and being able to create an action plan.

Findings also highlighted several challenges for facilitators during the YPAR project. Firstly, remaining flexible and not having a rigid plan or structure caused timing difficulties.

Furthermore, it led to additional work for facilitators that were not foreseen. Recognising the extent of involvement was a constant challenge for facilitators, which also emerged as a finding. The experiences of youth researchers indicate a necessity for facilitators to lead at times, however this poses ethical risks and therefore requires careful consideration. Finally, based on the case study, challenges were identified relating to EPs implementing YPAR on a wider scale. The findings indicate that the time availability and the desire of schools to conduct such work are important factors in determining whether YPAR can be conducted.

7.2 Implications

In line with my epistemological position, the current case study did not provide an objective account of a YPAR project, nor does it attempt to. Instead, the case study represented my interpretation of the findings. YPAR does not have a fixed methodology and is a messy

process. Therefore, the current case study findings do not provide a certain implication around the best practice of YPAR or produce a clear structure. However, several implications have arisen on issues that facilitators need to consider during YPAR projects. Consequentially, I have produced an infographic (Appendix K) for EPs, teachers or any other professionals that want to facilitate YPAR to support them in their decision making. Based on the findings, the infographic raises the importance of facilitators keeping a reflective journal to monitor ethical issues such as power imbalances and the impact of their own views. Furthermore, advice is given to support considerations that should be made by facilitators when planning sessions and at different stages of the research.

More broadly, YPAR can have positive outcomes for youth researchers due to its epistemological principles. This indicates that EPs and school leaders who have a critical perspective should consider how these principles can be applied within schools more widely. The case study also indicates that EPs are likely to have the skills and knowledge required to facilitate YPAR, and that facilitating YPAR can help with the professional development of EPs and/or TEPs. However, YPAR is best facilitated over a long period, which does not align with how EPs are currently working within LAs. However, the time required to facilitate YPAR is likely to be possible for TEPs and potential AEPs, depending on how they are used in LAs. EPs may also play a role in supporting teachers to facilitate YPAR.

7.3 Strengths and contribution

In relation to the literature on YPAR, this case study provided an example of YPAR being used in practice, which could be replicated and adapted by others. The case study also responded to previous calls to review YPAR in a more critical way (Brown & Rodriguez,

2009) by including a specific research question on the challenges of implementing the approach. The use of a case study also allowed for a detailed analysis of the implementation of the approach, eliciting some challenges that have not been discussed in previous literature to my knowledge. The research also attempted to address a previous limitation of YPAR, which was that the outcomes of projects were based on the author's reflections rather than youth researchers. Therefore, this case study attempted to emphasise the experiences of youth researchers when discussing the outcomes.

The research findings have three main contributions to literature. Firstly, although there are accounts of participatory and action research being applied separately by EPs, there are currently no examples of YPAR being conducted by EPs within the academic literature. Therefore, this study is the first to bring YPAR into the field of educational psychology literature. Secondly, the research builds on the proposal of Williams et al. (2017) that EPs use a critical perspective to allow them to reconstruct their role. This research provided another approach that EPs can implement that aligns with a critical perspective. Finally, the research adds to the literature on YPAR and offers guidance for how others can facilitate YPAR. The infographic (Appendix K) provides considerations and guidance for people that want to facilitate YPAR. The aim of this is to make YPAR more accessible for individuals that are interested in conducting this type of work.

7.3 Limitations

The research used a case study design, which inevitably means there are limitations around the generalisability of findings. For example, the case study offered a unique insight into one example of a YPAR project situated within a unique context. However, my initial

involvement in the YPAR project was unusual. The opportunity to be involved in the YPAR project arose through my previous work with States of Mind, who had already coordinated the project with schools and developed the overall topic. Therefore, the case study does not include insight into the challenges and considerations of developing topics in YPAR.

Furthermore, the YPAR project of focus in the case study was entirely facilitated online, which had not occurred before, and is unlikely to happen in the future. The characteristics of the youth researchers, schools and facilitators in the YPAR would have also impacted highly upon the findings. As previously stated, for these reasons, I aimed to identify patterns and compare them with previous research so that one could examine the transferability of the case findings, rather than generalisability in a statistical sense by claiming that doing X will cause Y.

There were also limitations regarding the data analysis of the case study. The first stage of analysis included the last session of the year and follow up interviews, which only included ten and seven youth researchers, respectively. This meant that all youth researchers' reflections were not gathered at both stages, which may have impacted the themes that emerged. The data analysis also involved reducing very large amounts of data. While this was necessary, it meant that lots of data was excluded from the analysis, meaning some key findings and implications could have been missed.

Finally, while there was an in-depth analysis of findings regarding the facilitation of the YPAR project, the discussions of conducting YPAR more widely were only based on the views of the two school teachers involved in the YPAR and the facilitator of the YPAR. This meant

that these discussions were based on a very small sample and were not representative of other teachers and EPs.

7.3 Future research

It would be valuable for research to explore the views of more teaching staff and EPs on YPAR in order to better understand the possible routes and avenues in which it can be facilitated. Another option would be for an EP to evaluate the process of supervising a teacher to facilitate YPAR. Both of these studies would allow the profession to have more clarity regarding its role with YPAR and have more insight into the opportunities and challenges of YPAR.

Within broader YPAR research, no research to my knowledge has explored the experiences of youth researchers who have engaged in compulsory YPAR projects. This would add to the literature around what 'robust participation' means in YPAR and would be useful to explore how YPAR could be embedded more into the current education system, as it may be possible in classroom teaching.

7.4 Concluding comments

This research originated with my own desire to empower CYP and create space for marginalised voices. I hope this research can inspire those within educational psychology to recognise the potential of YPAR and how it aligns with the skills and values of many within the profession.

I believe YPAR has the potential to challenge and reimagine systems of oppression inside and outside of schools and be emancipatory for those involved. There is no best practice or right way to facilitate YPAR, but I believe it is important to keep exploring how YPAR can be delivered ethically and practically.

As Mirra et al. (2016) stated, “If we really do believe in the full humanity of young people, that their voices are valid and should be heard in spaces that make decisions about their schooling experiences, then YPAR is not an extracurricular endeavour but an imperative mandate” (p.153). And I would extend this statement to EPs to say that if we truly believe in empowering the voices of CYP and want to be ‘agents of change’, we must continue exploring the potential of YPAR.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Phase 2. Researching the Ofsted Handbook

Session	Summary	Role of adult researchers	Role of youth researchers
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in • Youth researchers watched video of Mathew Purves explaining the purpose of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and were asked for their thoughts. • Youth researchers split into two groups. Group one was asked to read pages 5-23 and group 2 asked to read pages 23-36 of the EIF. • The groups then discussed the key point with each other in breakout rooms before feeding back to the other group. • The process was then repeated with group 1 reading pages 41-52 and group 2 reading pages 52-64. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris and I discussed the session the day before. • Chris planned and facilitated the session. • Chris and I joined breakout rooms to listen to discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakout room discussions. • Answer questions on Mentimeter. • Take notes of key findings from readings. • Feedback key findings to the other group.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in. • Youth researchers split into two groups. Group 1 asked to read, discuss and made notes on Ofsted sections on how they measure 'the overall effectiveness' and 'quality of education'. • Group 2 asked to read, discuss and made notes on Ofsted sections on how they measure 'behaviour and attitudes' and 'personal development'. • Youth researchers asked more questions about documentary involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris and I discussed the session the day before. • Chris planned and facilitated the session. • Chris and I joined breakout rooms to listen to discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakout room discussions. • Answer questions on Mentimeter. • Take notes of key findings from readings. • Feedback key findings to the other group.

8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in • Quiz on the details of the Ofsted EIF. • Youth researchers asked to independently write their reflections about the Ofsted EIF. • Asked youth researchers about their understanding of research questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris and I discussed the session the day before. • Chris planned and facilitated most of the session. • I facilitated the final part on research questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer quiz questions. • Write personal reflections on the Ofsted EIF. • Respond to Mentimeter questions with thoughts.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth researchers split into groups of 4. • Asked to discuss and then present on Ofsted: what they do, strengths of the approach and problems with their approach. • Youth researchers were asked to create a list of some potential research questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris and I discussed the session the day before. • We gave the youth researchers a task to work on most of the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in groups to produce presentations. • Present to the rest of the group. • Write down a list of potential research questions

Appendix B: Research questions in the YPAR project

RQ1. What are different group's perspectives on whether Ofsted does more harm than good?

RQ 2. How do Ofsted inspections impact student and teacher mental health?

RQ3. What do Students, teachers and Ofsted inspectors think about the current Education Inspection Framework?

RQ4. How should students shape the evaluation of their education system?

RQ 5. In what way do students, teachers and Ofsted inspectors think education should be evaluated?

Appendix C: Phase 3. Devising a methodology

Session	Summary	Role of adult researchers	Role of youth researchers
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers asked to refine research questions. We discussed the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods. We asked the youth researchers to list all the forms of data collection they could think of. The youth researchers were split into three groups and asked to discuss the strengths and limitations of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris and I discussed the session the day before. Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine Research questions Engage in discussions Group work and present thoughts to group.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers asked for views on refined research questions. Recap on research methods. We discussed expectations and limitations of our research project. Youth researchers asked to work individually and then in groups to think about research methods that could be used to answer research questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I refined the research questions listed by the students in the previous session. Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give final opinions on research questions. Contribute to Mentimeter. Work individually and in groups. Decide which research methods to use Decide research sample
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers gave final thoughts on research questions. We discussed sampling and what we want our sample to be for the research. Youth researchers were asked think about some specific details for their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I discussed the research questions with my academic supervisor and slightly refined them. Chris planned and facilitated most of the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to Mentimeter. Work in groups. Decide which research methods to use

	methodology (e.g. how long/many questions should a questionnaire for students have?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris and I joined break out rooms 	
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching on open and closed questions. Youth researchers asked to develop list of questionnaire, interview and focus group questions linking to different research questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris planned and facilitated most of the session. I attended the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write thoughts on Mentimeter. Engage in discussions. Individual work. Develop research methodology
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We discussed what a pilot study is. Youth researchers completed the student questionnaire and gave feedback. Youth researchers were put into groups to discuss and give feedback on the rest of the draft methodology. Youth researchers asked if they think more work is needed on methodology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over half term I refined the youth researchers lists of questions for questionnaires, interview and focus groups. Chris and I discussed the session the day before. Chris and I co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete pilot study. Individual work. Group work.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four youth researchers worked with me to refine the methodology. The rest of the youth researchers read YouGov surveys of teacher and parent perceptions of Ofsted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I found recent surveys on teacher and parents perspectives on Ofsted. Chris and I discussed the session the day before. I worked closely with four youth researchers. Chris facilitated the session with the other youth researchers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four youth researchers worked with me to make changes on questions for our methodology. Other youth researchers read reports, made notes and fed back thoughts.

Appendix D: Phase 6. Designing a new framework

Session	Summary	Role of adult researchers	Role of youth researchers
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leila feedback her experience and main taking points from the interview she conducted. Youth researchers analysed the student questionnaire findings. Youth researchers were put into groups to discuss 'what are the most important factors to consider when designing education evaluation?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I re-watched the headteacher interview and made some notes on key points to feedback. I made a document with graphs, tables and a selection of quotes from the student questionnaire. Chris planned the session and we both facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leila feedback from the interview she conducted. Individual analysis of questionnaire findings. Discussed the aspects of education that are important to evaluate
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mia and Zita fed back the main taking points from the student focus group. Bilal and Emma feedback the main taking points from the ex-Ofsted inspector interview Youth researchers were split into two groups. One group discussed the pros and cons of external evaluation and the other discussed the pros and cons of self-evaluation. The students then had a debate on which approach should be used. Discussed how different aspects of education could be evaluated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I made a list of the aspects of education that are important to evaluate based on youth researchers discussion last week Chris planned the session and we both facilitated the session. I feedback other key taking points from the focus groups and interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from those who conducted interviews and focus groups. Group discussions. Decide what should be evaluated and email me the notes.
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only four youth researchers were able to attend due to mock exams in School A Instead of original plan, Chris presented some different ways self-evaluation has been used in different parts of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris facilitated the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion

24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers feedback key taking points from the last few interviews and focus groups. Youth researchers analysed the teacher questionnaire findings Youth researchers were split into 3 groups. Each group was asked to develop a method to evaluate different aspects of education chosen to evaluate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I re-watched interviews and focus groups and feedback additional taking points after youth researchers. I made a document with graphs, tables and a selection of quotes from the teacher questionnaire. Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from those who conducted interviews and focus groups. Analyse teacher questionnaire. Group work Decide how to evaluate and email me the notes.
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers worked on questionnaires and focus group questions that could be used for self-evaluation. Vote on how often student and teacher focus groups should occur. Youth researchers discussed how schools could evaluate each other. Youth researchers discussed what aspects could be externally evaluated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop questionnaire and focus group questions for evaluation framework. Make decisions on methods that could be used for evaluation.
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers feedback key taking points from the most recent few interviews and focus groups. Discussion on external evaluation methods. Unanswered questions from previous sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I re-watched interviews and focus groups and feedback additional taking points after youth researchers. I themed the previous discussions and presented students with unanswered questions. Chris and I planned the session and co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussions and decision making

27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers voted the specifics of evaluation methods. Youth researchers split into two groups. Group 1 worked with me to refine questionnaire and focus group questions. Group 2 worked with Chris on how to present the evaluation in a document form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine Questionnaire and focus group evaluation questions. Start to put evaluation into a document form and send me ideas.
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only Caleb and Mia were able to attend due to end of year activities at both schools They worked independently to write some more sections for the final evaluation document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I put different sections that were sent to me by youth researchers into one document. We discussed with the youth researchers what they wanted to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decided what would be the best use of the session. Wrote sections for the final document.
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth researchers decided on a name for their evaluation framework. Youth researchers refined and added to the final document Reflections on the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris planned the session and we co-facilitated the session. I sent them the final document to refine. After the session I compiled their different sections and put it into the document and emailed them with the final document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on name. Refine and add to the final document. Send sections to me Offer reflections on the whole project.

Appendix E: Conceptual Protocol

Research question	Deductive Codes	Inductive Codes
<p>1. How can the epistemological principles of Youth Participatory Action Research be implemented by Educational Psychologists in schools?</p>	<p>Critical in nature</p> <p>Situated in the lived experiences of youth</p> <p>Inquiry stance</p> <p>Robust youth participation in every aspect of the process</p> <p>Draws on unique knowledge of youth</p> <p>Action as necessary part of research process for social change</p>	<p>Safe space</p> <p>Use of technology</p> <p>Positive support from school staff</p> <p>Direct communication with youth researchers</p> <p>Length of project</p>
<p>2. What insights can be gained about outcomes for youth researchers engaging in Youth Participatory Action Research?</p>	<p>Social justice awareness and knowledge</p> <p>Engagement and motivation</p> <p>Youth researchers taking responsibility and leadership roles</p>	<p>Research skills</p> <p>Relationships</p>

	<p>Enhanced relationships between adults and CYP</p> <p>A strengthened connectedness between youth researchers and their community</p>	
<p>3. To what extent are there challenges for Educational Psychologists facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research in schools?</p>	<p>Content to teach/lack of curricular space</p> <p>Time</p> <p>Power relationships</p> <p>Leadership of facilitators</p> <p>Engagement of youth researchers</p> <p>Skills of youth researchers</p>	<p>Flexibility</p> <p>Expectations/clarity</p> <p>Scope of research</p> <p>Negotiating YPAR in more schools</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Uncertainty/doubt from facilitators</p>

Appendix F: Information sheet and consent form

An investigation into students' views on the impact of school inspections, conducted by Ofsted, on the mental health and wellbeing of students, teachers and other stakeholders

Information sheet for student researchers

My name is Jaspar Khawaja and I am inviting you to take part in my research project: 'An investigation of students views on the impact of school inspections, conducted by Ofsted, on the mental health and wellbeing of students, teachers and other stakeholders'. I am currently training to become an educational psychologist, completing a Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology at UCL's Institute of Education. This research is conducted in collaboration with the social enterprise 'States of Mind', who work on projects alongside young people to understand and address the social causes of young people's distress. Read more about States of Mind [here](#).

The aim is to enable a group of student researchers, working throughout the year, to research the current Ofsted inspection framework and explore the impact it has on the education provision they receive. The time frame of the work is below:

January- February 2021: Research planning

- Supported by myself, and Chris Bagley (Director of Research at States of Mind) and Bea Herbert (Founder and Director of States of Mind), student researchers will be supported to devise research questions and a methodology to explore these research questions.

February-April 2021: Conducting research

- Student researchers will be supported to conduct surveys, focus groups or any other data collection methods with chosen participants once they have consented.

April-July 2021: Data analysis and evaluation

- Students will be supported to analyse the data emerging from their study and reflect upon their findings. They will then co-develop an education inspection framework based on their findings. Students may also have the opportunity to seek views on the framework they have devised.

Using a Participatory Action Research approach, the aim is to reimagine an education inspection framework that places young people at the centre. Participatory Action Research aims to actively involve participants in all aspects of the research, from design to dissemination. It seeks to understand the world and try to change it, collaboratively and following reflection.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try to answer any questions you might have about the project, but you can contact me by email to ask any further questions. Do not sign the consent form unless you are happy that your questions have been answered.

Why are we doing this research?

Young people have never been asked if they feel Ofsted's measures of schooling are valid, or if they perceive their chosen success criteria of education meets their needs. We want to find out what young people think of these measures and what they would change in the education system to better meet their needs. This should have significant implications for national policy and school practices locally. The research is in line with human rights legislation and psychological evidence that states that student views should be central to the policies that affect them.

Why am I being invited to take part?

We believe that it is important to understand the views of young people on the issues that impact upon their lives. By empowering the voice of young people we can better understand and address issues they face.

Your school has agreed to allow you to have the time to be part of this research project. You have already consented to States of Mind to be part of this project and now I would like to give you the opportunity to consent to be part of my doctoral research project.

We thought you would be suitable student researchers as you are at an age where you are still in the education system, but have been through the majority of it, allowing you to reflect on the issues that young people currently face.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If you choose to take part you will be involved in 13 weekly 1 hour 30 minute online workshops on Thursdays during school term time. The online workshops will take run from 14:00-15:30, during January-July. There will not be any extra work outside of these sessions. In these sessions you will be supported by myself, as well as Chris Bagley (Director of Research at States of Mind) and Bea Herbert (Founder and Director of States of Mind), to:

- Identify research questions and hypotheses through exploring the current Ofsted inspection and the research that currently exists.
- Decide on research methods that can be used by attending online workshops which analyse their strengths and limitations.
- Conduct data collection, for example conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups or other data collection methods on participant groups that you consider relevant.
- Co-analyse the data from the research with myself and co-develop an alternative education inspection framework from the findings.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

It is your choice whether other people know you are involved. I would like to attach your names to the research report as co-researchers of the project, which would mean other people would be aware that you were in the research. However, you will be able to take part in the research project but opt-out to having your name attached to the research. All records, both recorded and written, will be held and analysed by myself and will be appropriately destroyed when the course is completed. I will keep records of your names and use a key to link you to your data so it can be withdrawn if you make the request.

Other people can know that you have been involved in the research if you choose to discuss it with them.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

It is likely that we will discuss topics such as mental health and wellbeing in the sessions held. It is possible that you may experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of talking about these sensitive topics. During all sessions you will be reminded that you do not need to answer questions that you do not wish to and will be able to leave the sessions at any point. You will also be able to email me at any time about any issues you have with the research, or you can talk to a lead staff member at your school. Additionally, there will be time in the online workshops to reflect on the research and any issues that have arisen.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of the research will be written up into a research report and this will be submitted as part of the course requirements for my doctoral studies. A summary of the findings will also be made available to participants and the schools that participate. Findings will also be published online by States of Mind and will be disseminated on their social media.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved and if chosen, you will find it a valuable experience.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at:

Email: jaspar.khawaja.19@ucl.ac.uk

Or contact my research supervisors Becky Taylor and Chris Bagley at:

Email: becky.taylor@ucl.ac.uk

Data Protection Privacy Notice: The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click [here](#)

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data are: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research purposes' for special category data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

I have read and understood the information sheet about the research YES/NO

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before the data is transcribed, without giving any reason YES/NO

I know that I can refuse to answer any questions during research sessions and that I can withdraw from the sessions at any point YES/NO

I agree for the interview to be recorded, and that recordings will be kept secure and destroyed at the end of the project. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) YES/NO

I agree that small direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised) YES/NO

I understand that I can contact Jaspar Khawaja at any time and request for my data to be removed from the project database YES/NO

Appendix G: Information sheet and Consent form for teacher focus group

Creating An Alternative School Evaluation Framework

My name is Jaspar Khawaja and I am inviting your school to take part in my research project: **'Creating An Alternative School Evaluation Framework'**.

I am currently training to become an educational psychologist, completing a Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology at UCL's Institute of Education. This research is conducted in collaboration with the social enterprise 'States of Mind', who work on projects alongside young people to understand and address the social causes of young people's distress. Read more about States of Mind [here](#).

This is Phase 3 of the student led project 'Breaking the Silence'. Phase one resulted in a challenging [letter](#), written to the Office of Standards in Education, Children's services and Skills (Ofsted). This letter critiques the focus on high stakes exams that inspections incentivise, as well as offering solutions. Phase two, led by a different group of young people and presented by myself, incorporated questionnaire and focus group data around the impact of schooling on the shaping of identity and mental health. It also examined the extent to which the education system supports personal development and readiness for life post education. Read more about the findings [here](#).

Phase 3 of the project builds on the previous work. The aim is to enable a group of student researchers, working throughout the year, to research the current Ofsted inspection framework and explore the impact it has on the education provision they receive. Using a Participatory Action Research approach, the aim is to reimagine an education inspection framework that places young people at the centre. Participatory Action Research aims to actively involve participants in all aspects of the research, from design to dissemination. It seeks to understand the world and try to change it, collaboratively and following reflection.

I very much hope that you would like to take part. This information sheet will try to answer any questions you might have about the project, but please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why are we doing this research?

We believe that it is important to understand the views of young people on the issues that impact upon their lives. By empowering the voice of young people we can better understand and address issues they face.

Young people have never been asked if they feel Ofsted's measures of schooling are valid, or if they perceive their chosen success criteria of education meets their needs. We want to find out what young people think of these measures and what they would change in the education system to better meet their needs. This should have significant implications for national policy and school practices locally. The research is in line with human rights

legislation and psychological evidence that states that student views should be central to the policies that affect them.

Why am I being invited to take part?

This project uses a Participatory Action approach which aims to actively involve young people in all aspects of research, from design to dissemination. 12 student researchers have decided to use focus groups to investigate different views on Ofsted and views on different ways of evaluating education.

As part of the research, the students would like to conduct focus groups with teachers to get their views on Ofsted inspections and thoughts on how else education could be evaluated.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

Participation in the study will involve being part of an online focus group of teachers. The focus group will last around 40 minutes and will be recorded in order for us to later analyse what has been discussed. You will be asked questions on topics such as: the impact of Ofsted on schools, the impact of Ofsted on students and teachers mental wellbeing and how students can be more involved in evaluating education.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

Only others in the focus group will know of your participation. Others can know if you choose to discuss it with them. All records, both recorded and written, will be held and analysed by myself and will be appropriately destroyed when the course is completed. Only anonymised information will be shared with the student researcher group and my research supervisors. I will keep records of your names and use a key to link you to your data so it can be withdrawn if you make the request.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

The focus group may involve discussing sensitive topics such as mental health which may be uncomfortable for some people. These topics will be handled sensitively and participants are entitled to stop at any point during the research if they wish to. You will also have the right to withdraw your data from the study at any point until the focus group data has been transcribed for analysis, which will be one month after the focus group.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of the research will be written up into a research report and this will be submitted as part of the course requirements for my doctoral studies. A summary of findings will also be made available to participants and the schools that participated. The results will also be fed back to the students researcher group who will use them to create an alternative Ofsted inspection framework. States of Mind will publish the results on their website and on their social media.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. We hope that if you do choose to be involved and are chosen, you will find it a valuable experience.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at:

Email: jaspar.khawaja.19@ucl.ac.uk

Or contact my research supervisors Becky Taylor and Chris Bagley at:

Email: becky.taylor@ucl.ac.uk

Email: chris@statesofmind.org

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The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data are: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research purposes' for special category data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

I have read and understood the information sheet about the research YES/NO

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before the data is transcribed, without giving any reason YES/NO

I know that I can refuse to answer any questions during research sessions and that I can withdraw from the sessions at any point YES/NO

I agree for the interview to be recorded, and that recordings will be kept secure and destroyed at the end of the project. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) YES/NO

I agree that small direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised) YES/NO

I understand that I can contact Jaspar Khawaja at any time and request for my data to be removed from the project database YES/NO

Appendix H: Youth researchers follow up interview schedule

How is Year 13 going so far?

If you were telling a student in the year below what it was like to be a youth researcher in Participatory Action Research, what would you tell them?

From your perspective, what was the purpose of the research project?

To what extent do you feel that student researchers had control over the research project?

What part of the project did you most enjoy?
Why was that?

How did it feel to be researching and creating alternatives to the current education systems?

How involved did you feel in the different stages of the research project?

To what extent do you think you should have been involved throughout the research project?

How did you find the process of learning about research methods and developing the research methods?

How did you find balancing the research project with your other school work?

How did you find the structure of the weekly sessions?

We told you throughout that you did not need to do any additional reading or work outside of the sessions but could if you wanted to. Did you do any additional work?
If so, what did you do?

How would you describe the group dynamic of those involved in the research project, including myself and Chris?

How did it feel to conduct interviews/focus groups during the research?

What do you feel might have improved the experience for you?

It's only a few months since we finished the project, however would you say there has been any impact from the project on you or more generally?
Follow up: Can you tell me about that?

What did you think of the final 'Review for Progress and Development' that was produced?

What do you hope will that the 'Review for Progress and Development' will lead to?

Appendix I: Teacher follow up interview schedule

How would you describe your experience of coordinating the Participatory Action Research with students, and myself and Chris?

How manageable did you find the workload of the project?

How possible do you think it would be to regularly conduct this type of research with students?

What are your thoughts on the engagement of the students involved in the research?

What do you perceive the strengths to be of using participatory action research as it was done in this project?

What do you think are the challenges of facilitating participatory action research in schools?

Appendix J: Co-facilitator follow up interview schedule

How would you describe your experience of co-facilitating the yearlong PAR project with another Educational Psychologist?

What do you feel were the strengths of the research?

What do you think were the main challenges of the research?

How manageable did you find the workload of the project?

Why did you plan sessions in the manner you did?

What skills supported you to facilitate YPAR?

Would you say those skills are linked to your role of being an EP?

What are your thoughts on the quality of the research that was produced?

What are your thoughts on the engagement of the students involved in the research?

What did you think of the final Review for Progress and Development that was produced?

How possible do you think it would be for Educational Psychologists to regularly conduct this type of research with students?

What would be your advice to any trainee educational psychologists who want to do YPAR with young people for their doctoral research?

What would be your advice to any qualified educational psychologists who want to use YPAR in their practice?

GUIDANCE FOR FACILITATORS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (YPAR)

Appendix K: Guidance for facilitators of YPAR

WHY CONDUCT YPAR?

- YPAR is an emancipatory approach based on the belief that children and young people (CYP) can and should participate as researchers in an inquiry-based process design aimed to analyse and take action against oppression.
- It provides an approach which allows children and young people to have robust participation at every stage, in order to ensure that their voices are not left out of issues that affect their lives.
- Unlike traditional research approaches that prioritise 'objectivity' in research, YPAR aims to conduct research for the explicit political purpose of taking action to create change (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).



WHAT IS YPAR?

YPAR is made up of a set of epistemological principles (methods of generating new knowledge). The six agreed principles are that YPAR is:

1. Critical in nature
2. Takes an inquiry stance
3. Is situated in the lives of young people
4. Draws on the unique knowledge and expertise they have as youth
5. Features robust youth participation in every aspect of the process
6. Designed to raise awareness about issues of injustice and create social change through action.

HOW DOES YPAR WORK?

- YPAR is an approach that allows for a fluid, flexible and non-prescriptive methodology that will vary based on the needs of participants and their contexts (Cammarota & Fine, 2009; Buttimer, 2018)
- Broadly speaking, YPAR involves four stages: (1) problem identification, (2) data collection, (3) data analysis, and (4) action.
- The action is then followed by reflections/evaluation to then a new project to begin as part of the cyclical nature of YPAR.



THE NEED FOR A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

- A reflective journal is the reflection of one's personal assumptions, belief systems, subjectivities, decision making, and thoughts and feelings during the research (Ortlipp, 2008).
- This is particularly important given the ethical issues of adults working alongside children and young people. The more the adult researcher is involved in the research, the higher the risk of them exercising power over CYP's opinions and misinterpreting their voices (James, 2007)
- A reflective journal means that ethical considerations around meaningful participation are considered continuously throughout the process.



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Some guidance on what to keep brief notes on:

- Group dynamics of session
- Engagement of youth researchers
- Participation of youth researchers and whether they been asked about next steps
- Are the epistemological principles being adhered to
- Any ethical issues/challenges arising
- Next steps arising
- Reflect on personal assumptions, beliefs and feelings

SESSION PLANNING

General prompts and considerations for **before** each session:

- Refer back to the epistemological principles of YPAR when planning
- Consider who will have more of a leading role during the session: adult or youth researchers? Consider how this decision can be made with researchers and how their can be transparency about the different roles.
- Allow time to check-in with youth researchers at start and end of sessions
- Important to allow space for fun
- Can sessions be interactive: a combination of discussion, reading, quizzes, writing etc.
- Allow plenty of time for dialogue and discussions.
- Online platforms can be useful in gathering all youth researchers views in an anonymous format
- Try to be responsive to youth researchers during sessions rather than sticking to a rigid structure
- Can a rough plan of the session be provided to youth researchers the day before?



GUIDANCE FOR DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE PROCCS

RECRUITMENT

Consider whether participation in the YPAR is voluntary or compulsory for youth researchers.

- Hart (1992) argues that participation needs to be voluntary in order to be truly participatory. Others argue that it is okay for YPAR projects to be compulsory, as long as youth researchers then contribute towards the topic and agree to decision making during the research.



TOPIC

• Choice to consider:

Do youth researchers have complete choice over the research topic (aligns well with the principle of robust participation)

or

Do adult facilitators guide the initial research agenda in the early stages (to ensure that projects are 'critical in nature')

- Also consider the scope of the topic as this will impact upon the time required for the YPAR. For example, consider the amount of critical reading that youth researchers might have to engage in around the topic.

FIRST FEW SESSIONS



- Try to create an open safe space for youth researchers: space for fun and informal conversations to build relationships
- Use an online platform to allow them to share opinions anonymously as well as through discussions
- Discuss the process of YPAR
- Allow youth researchers to discuss their aims for the project- manage expectations about what might be possible with the time/resources

CO-CONSTRUCTING THE METHODOLOGY

- Consider the tools/knowledge to youth researchers need in order to co-construct a methodology. Be open about the purpose for adult researchers to teach some research methods.
- Use online tools to allow youth researchers to vote on decision making and for them to suggest questions to ask.
- When developing the methodology it may be necessary to refine youth researchers questions so that they are not leading etc. However, make sure that youth researchers always have the final say on decion making.



DATA COLLECTION

- Consider the time it will take to recruit participants for the research
- Ask youth researchers whether they are happy to conduct interviews/focus groups themselves.
- It might be useful for them to conduct in pairs.
- Consider how the data of participants can be stored. It might be best for facilitators to do this to ensure the confidentiality of participants.



DATA ANALYSIS

- Analysing quantitative data may take less time than qualitative data
- Neill et al. (2021) and Liebenburg et al. (2020) discuss how to use participatory methods for thematic analysis



ACTION PLAN

- Ensure that plenty of time is left for this stage
- Consider whether the action plan is 'critical'. If it is not, consider whether to guide participants or not towards being 'critical'.
- Consider the feasibility of implementing the action plan and discuss this with youth researchers



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