
A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

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PhD University of Manchester, Faculty of Humanities, March 2016

Title: The New Labour discourse of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) across schools in England and Wales as a universal intervention: a critical discourse analysis.

This thesis reports on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the SEL policy makers’ conversations taking place in England and Wales during the New Labour period. The research sets out to offer a critical explanation of Welsh and English SEL policy thinking and doing and how the SEL policy discourse worked to privilege certain ideas and topics and speakers and exclude others. Thinking with theory and building on the work of Apple (2007) and Ball (2012) I draw on the contemporary tenets of critical theory to examine the (dominant) English and (often subjugated) Welsh discourse(s) to historically locate and contextualise the mainstream SEL literature within the ideological discourse of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). This neoliberalism is one which unequivocally drives policy in the direction of markets and propounds a thorough marketization of educational provisions and practices (Lynch, 2006).

Drawing on data from a series of eight semi structured interviews with key national level policymakers, alongside documentary analysis, I argue that New Labour in England, particularly in its second term, through a particular policy network and the SEAL programme, adopted SEL as a tool of managerialism designed to shape and govern a self-managing, entrepreneurial, placid subject in the service of the neoliberal economic model. Alternatively I contend that the Welsh assembly adopted SEL as a practical and progressive tool for developing a more equal society and a more egalitarian and democratic modus operandi of social justice (rooted in normative precepts of the collective and of community cohesion). This “Welsh” approach was powerfully intertwined with the devolution programme and notions of the child as a democratic citizen with agency and rights. In both
England and Wales this understanding and application of SEL was intimately connected with national identity and notions of nationhood.

This work was undertaken using a CDA approach. It employed Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model (1992) of Critical Discourse Analysis and engaged with the subject and data through the three lenses of text (the written and spoken word), discursive practice (the production, distribution and consumption of the text) and social practice (the wider social, political and economic forces shaping the discourse).

By illuminating through CDA the ideologically infused discursive claims to truth and value, which underpinned the rhetoric and substance of the UK (Anglo-centric) Government’s version of SEL in schools and that of the devolved Welsh Government, my findings reveal the broader scale ideas and political-ontological truth claims which drove the development of SEL across England and Wales during the New Labour period; the research therein unveils the implicit but reified notions of childhood and children’s wellbeing which were central to SEL development at both the national and devolved levels; it identifies the unspoken and latent ideological projects which were core to the production of divergent SEL discourses in each of the countries; and finally, it reveals the influence which national tradition, domestic power structures, cross-societal inequities and the subjugation of certain identities have had on the conceptualisation and practical delivery of SEL in England and Wales.

The study concludes that the relationship between language and political ideology in England and Wales during the New Labour years powerfully shaped the SEL policy discourse. In England the result of this was a thin version of SEL co-opted into the service of the neoliberal marketplace. In Wales a similar outcome occurred but only after a very different contextualised and transformative version of SEL was relinquished due to the invasive neoliberal forces attacking Welsh education.
Declaration of Original Contribution

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Abbreviations

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

DCSF / DfES - The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) became the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in July 2007. References to the DfES and DCSF are used synonymously throughout this report. From 2010 this department is now referred to as the Department of Education (DOE).

EI – Emotional Intelligence

EL – Emotional Literacy

OFSTED - Office for Standards in Education

QCA – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

SEAL – Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

SEL – Social and Emotional Learning

WAG – Welsh Assembly Government
Dedications and thanks

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Helen who has been a constant source of support, questioning, understanding, comradeship and strong coffee. I am also forever grateful for the support of my children Hannah, Lois, Josie and Yvonne and my mother, Jean and brother Mark. Many friends have also helped carry me along on this journey and I thank you all in particular Laurence, PD, Robert, Rob and Jo and Anthony.

On a professional level this thesis would have been a much diminished piece of work without the support of and conversations I had with Hilary Bichovsky, Prof Neil Humphrey, Dr Michael Wigelsworth, Dr Ann Lendrum, Prof Dave Hall, Prof Erica Burman, Prof Ruth Lupton and the Manchester CEPALS group. Outside of the University of Manchester I wish to particularly acknowledge the guidance and inspiration I drew from Liz W and Palas Print bookshop Caernarfon (Diolch), Dr Debbie Watson and Prof Mike Apple.

Finally grateful acknowledgement is made to the policy makers interviewed for this thesis who, although they remain anonymous, deserve thanks for their time and effort. There would have been no thesis without you.
Publications of Author


1 Introduction

1.1 Title


1.2 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with critically exploring the New Labour (1997-2010) discourse of Social and Emotional Learning or SEL (Greenberg et al., 2003) in schools, and how it was understood and enacted by policy makers in England and in Wales within the context of (limited) devolved government. By SEL I mean universal school-based programmes, conceptually located against a backdrop of theories pertaining to children’s emotional wellbeing (Watson et al., 2012), and operationally concerned with developing children’s ability to understand, express and manage their emotions (Weare and Gray, 2003).

This work is a qualitative study focused on exploring the voices of a sample of SEL policy makers (government ministers, lobbyists and programme directors) who have been interviewed in order to facilitate an identification of how the SEL policy discourse worked to ‘privilege certain ideas and topics and speakers and exclude others’ (Ball, 2008, p. 5). By exploring voices both hegemonic and subjugated, and by deploying an approach epistemologically orientated around critical discourse analysis (CDA), I demonstrate how the SEL discourse tacitly but profoundly reflected exclusory notions of national identity, particularly those focused around normative issues of social justice (Fraser, 1997), the socio-conceptualisation of children (Watson et al., 2012) and the discursive dominance of neo-liberalisation in educational policy and practice (Goodwin, 2011).
As I am interested in the discourse connected to universal activity, the emphasis will be placed on the development of the *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) programme (DFES, 2007a); this programme has attracted a high degree of public and professional interest and has dominated, in particular, the Westminster/Whitehall and as such the Anglo-centred discourse on SEL. To properly understand and to critically dissect and deconstruct the policy discourse operating across and within England and Wales, the study draws from the body of ideas and analytical modes best described as critical theory (Apple, 2009); the fundamental ideational tenets of critical theory are here used to examine the (dominant) English and (often subjugated) Welsh discourse(s), to historically contextualise the mainstream SEL literature within the ideological discourse of neoliberalism. This neoliberalism is one which unequivocally drives policy in the direction of markets and propounds a thorough marketization of educational provisions and practices (Lynch, 2006).

Grounded in a critical theory, this thesis is thus a discourse of resistance and a piece of imminent critical analysis which embodies the notion of *praxis* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I will argue on the basis of my analysis that power and the production of discursive instruments of hegemony, working through what Foucault (1995) terms *governmentality*, in the New Labour era in Westminster, were combined so as to reify a seemingly objective and deceptively ideological model of SEL which was designed to reflect and promote distinctly English and fundamentally neoliberal cultural values. New Labour in England, particularly in its second term, adopted SEL as a tool of managerialism designed to rhetorically advertise the government’s dedication to social justice (this being ultimately a plaster to the wounds incurred by an excessive freeing up of markets in social domains). Even this rhetoric of social justice was, inevitably, enmeshed in a neoliberal administration. In Wales the assembly adopted SEL as a practical and progressive tool for developing a more equal society and a more egalitarian and democratic *modus operandi* of social justice (rooted in normative
precepts of the collective and of community cohesion). This “Welsh” approach was intertwined with the devolution programme, and, as with the “English” model, was intimately connected with national identity and notions of nationhood.

By fleshing out the ideologically infused discursive claims to truth and value which underpinned the rhetoric and substance of the UK (Anglo-centric) Government’s version of SEL in schools and that of the devolved Welsh Government, my research reveals the broader scale ideas and political-ontological truth claims which drove the development of SEL across England and Wales during the New Labour period; the research therein unveils the implicit but reified notions of childhood and children’s wellbeing which were central to SEL development at both the national and devolved levels; it explores the unspoken and latent ideological projects which were core to the production of divergent SEL discourses in each of the countries; and finally, it highlights the influence which national tradition, domestic power structures, cross-societal inequities and the subjugation of certain identities have had on the conceptualisation and practical delivery of SEL in England and Wales.

**Timeline of the emergence of SEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organisations/People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1970s</strong></td>
<td>The concept of Self Esteem captures the US public imagination</td>
<td>California Self Esteem Task Force Baumeister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1980s</strong></td>
<td>Range of single issue social skills programmes introduced in US schools for at risk children</td>
<td>Durlak Conger and Keane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1990</strong></td>
<td>Academic paper presents the concept of Emotional</td>
<td>Salovey and Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) established</td>
<td>EI Consortium (Daniel Goleman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Local Education Authorities and Education Psychology services across England delivering localised social skills/emotional skills programmes to at risk pupils</td>
<td>Cumbria, Birmingham, Manchester, Inner London, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Term Emotional Literacy created and adopted across much English practice. Southampton Emotional Literacy Interest Group (SELIB) established</td>
<td>Peter Sharp, Adrian Faupel, SELIG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Emotionally Literate Schools - Conference</td>
<td>Antidote, James Park, Southampton University, NELIG/SELIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>SEAL Steering Group established drawing in key figures from the</td>
<td>National Strategies, Debs Michel, Katherine Weare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>The concept of therapy culture is presented and linked to the rise of social and emotional learning in schools – early critical paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Primary schools SEAL programme rolled out across England - taken on by 90% of primary schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The Potential Dangers of a Systematic, Explicit Approach to Teaching Social and Emotional Skills (SEAL) – Critical Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Secondary SEAL programme roll out in English schools - 70% of secondary schools take part.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>English Education Minister announces that SEAL is a tool for teachers to make sure good behaviour and an atmosphere of respect are the norm in all schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Popular mainstream American magazine carries the front page headline - How Biased Science led to Emotional Intelligence Curriculum in all UK Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Secondary SEAL evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
finds the programme has failed to have an impact. Humphrey et al 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>New Labour lose election and replaced by Coalition government. SEAL phased out.</td>
<td>Gordon Brown steps down as Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Timeline of the emergence of SEL

1.3 The structure of the thesis

Following this introduction my thesis shall, in Chapter 2, present my theoretical approach to the study of SEL and how Critical Discourse Analysis is a central tenet of this. I will, in this chapter, also be reflecting upon how my role as both an SEL practitioner and policy maker shaped the thinking and doing of this thesis. Chapter 3 is the literature review. This is a substantial part of the thesis and critically reflects on the growth of SEL within the education field from the 1960s onwards. This section of the thesis pays close attention to the development of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme alongside the activity and thinking of the New Labour government between the years 1997 – 2010. In Chapter 4 I present my methodology and methods. It is here that I set out the nuts and bolts of the research activity I undertook. I explore why semi-structured interviews were utilised, the nature and location of my interviewees and the forces shaping the interview process. This section concludes with a description of my analytical procedure and guides the reader through the CDA process. Chapter 5 is a brief section detailing how the findings will be presented and my reasons for this.
Chapters 6 (RQ1), 7 (RQ2) and 8 (RQ3) are my findings and discussion – each connected to a specific research question. As this is a qualitative thesis interested in the SEL conversation, I have combined the findings and discussion in order that I can critically illuminate the findings and draw on my literature in order to analyse and create a new version of the SEL story in England and Wales. My thesis closes with the conclusion in Chapter 9. In this final chapter I shall be looking across the whole thesis and drawing out the key findings in order to identify who the SEL story privileged and who it excluded. As this is a discourse of resistance, I shall be making recommendations in the conclusion, based on my findings, for further study and presenting a mandate for an understanding of SEL that acknowledges the power and production of discursive practice and the shaping of this through nationally and internationally located social practices.

1.4 Research questions

The research questions guiding this thesis are:

- How was the development of SEL policy in England and Wales framed by New Labour?
- What were the accounts of experience of policymakers who sought to develop and deliver SEL policy in England and Wales?
- How did national tradition, history and identity (including versions of childhood wellbeing) influence the discourse and policy of Welsh and English SEL under New Labour?

1.5 Key subjects of this thesis
1.5.1 Social and emotional learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an umbrella term for a wide range of concepts, skills, dispositions and attitudes within UK education policy and practice; the conceptual and theoretical apparatus has been operationalised through policy programmes such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Second Step, Creating Confident Kids, and the UK Resilience Programme (Challen et al., 2011; Challen et al., 2009). The term SEL refers to both those programmes focused on positive models (emphasising social and emotional wellbeing) and those premised on deficit or negative models that seek to repair or develop responses to socially problematic issues such as depression, anxiety and anti-social behaviour. SEL as an ideational interlocutor is often used as a synonym for childhood wellbeing (Coleman, 2009) and it frequently occurs in policy discussions and public statements in the media, featuring as a key facet of the growing public and state interest in the conceptually confusing and incoherent wellbeing agenda (Ereaut & Whiting, 2008).

As SEL has developed in the UK into substantive policy, the terminology surrounding it has morphed. Many early SEL programmes (from 1999 onwards) were launched under the academically credible headline concepts of ‘Emotional Intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995) or ‘Emotional Literacy’ (Sharp, 2000). By the mid-2000s this had been transposed into ‘Social and Emotional Learning’ and in praxis the ‘Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning’ (SEAL), the DCSF’s schools-based programme. Alongside this, the phrase ‘teaching happiness’ (Layard, 2005; Layard, 2007) moved into public discourse orientated around SEL. Professor Neil Humphrey, an expert commentator on SEL, reflects that SEL is:

An umbrella term that’s used to describe a whole range of things that may well be qualitatively different. It’s used in reference to mental health, as a kind of synonym for mental health, but it’s also used to refer to children’s competence, social skills, something that is slightly separate from mental health. It’s also used interchangeably with social and emotional
learning, social and emotional literacy and social and emotional intelligence. It is a fuzzy and intangible concept.\(^1\)

The increasingly wide range of terms\(^2\) used in reference to what are broadly speaking SEL-orientated ideas and activities points to the need within education to ‘talk’ a meaningful and coherent notion of SEL irrespective of the theoretical terminology of idiosyncratic authors and thinkers. In this thesis I have settled on the term SEL, because of the term’s practical value – it refers clearly to those programmes that focus on all children in schools across England and Wales.

\(^1\) Professor Neil Humphrey interviewed by the author for this PHD, 2011.

\(^2\) (Emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, emotional health and wellbeing, skills for work and life, emotional resilience, employability skills, social and emotional learning, soft skills, non-academic achievements, social and emotional competency, mental well-being)
1.5.2 Policy

Policy generally is a slippery and complicated term and what is meant by it differs vastly, with a huge range of scholarly interpretations having been put forth (Ball, 2008; Taysum 2011). Developing public policy can be an unstable, fluid and messy process as it is...
about driving change, making progress and doing things differently. What is most pertinent to this thesis is that policy, however defined as an isolated activity, is always contextually bounded to a politico-ideological environment. Stasz and Wright in Raffe and Spours (2007) argue that policy is always developed and delivered in a wider power-saturated environment shaped and driven by ideology, interest groups and highly powerful economic modes of organisation. Similarly Ball and Exley (2010) argue that policy is developed through multiple agencies and via multiple sites of discourse generation within a firm paradigm of economic competitiveness and with competitive advantage as its primary objective. Fairclough (2000) states that in current times policy is done in and through ‘discourse driven’ ideas of social change, or what Edwards and Nicoll (2001) refer to as spin doctoring. A further important point to note is that of Ball (2008) where, in his seminal work The Education Debate, Ball contends that policy is a human process as much as it is an objective outcome, concomitant with all the predictable irrationality and bias which is typical of human action. Policy is therefore a distinctly socially situated and politically contextualised process:

where language, text and discourse become the principal modes of social relations, civic and political life, economic behaviour and activity, where means of production and modes of information become intertwined in analytically complex ways


This thesis explores the policy discourses and policy design process associated with SEL in England and Wales following the election of a New Labour Government in 1997. It addresses the questions which pertain to ‘how’ and ‘why’ SEL education policy developed as it did in England and Wales.

This thesis with its focus on education policy draws from the thinking and writing of Stephen Ball (1993, 1994, 2000, 2008, 2012, 2015) particularly in regard to the New Labour policy networks and issues of educational governance and privatisation. In approaching the education policy field I wish to acknowledge the complexities of how we understand policy
and how it should be researched and to pursue, as Ball (2015) would state, a process of thinking better about how the confrontation between policy actor and subject is played out. Policy is complex, compromised, messy, contested and mediated. It rarely follows a clear, directed, route but rather is shaped and often cannibalised by those who tasked with enacting it at a range of different levels (Ball, 1994). There are no heroes and villains but rather multiple actors with multiple perspectives and different understandings presented at different times in different contexts. With this in mind I direct the reader to the early writing of Ball and specifically his seminal 1994 publication *Educational reform: a critical and post-structural approach*.

Looking back on his early work Ball has recently noted that (2015) ‘we do not do policy, but rather policy does us’ (p.307) as a reminder of the brittle, shaping, contested and confused nature of the space where policy activity meets the researcher. I trust that this thesis and the accounts of the policy maker’s experiences alongside my own demonstrate both the discomforts, misalignments and enacted morality of policy enactment as well as the successes and transformations: the complementarity and conflict of policy. Furthermore in interviewing the powerful in education (Kogan, 1994), or elite interviewing, I have attempted to build on Ball’s (1994) thinking and think beyond the content of the interviews to develop a deeper thicker analysis that acknowledges the differences, confrontations, influence, styles and the ‘game like’ nature of the interviews (Ball, 1994, p. 228). Finally, drawing on the thinking of Foucault (1974), Ball (2015) considers that discourse is designating in that it sanctions and gives the permission or creates the conditions that enable the policy to appear, the unsaid to be said. It is understanding policy beyond the language and text, the designating or unsaid force, that this thesis attempts to engage with.
Although there are many figurative representations of the policy process, that of Bates et al. (2011) offers a simple model which nonetheless duly observes the incorporation of power, institutions and key actors into the policy development process.

1.5.3 New Labour and policy activity

Westminster-based New Labour policy activity (1997-2010), dominated by the twin forces of competition and standardisation (Apple, 2007), resulted in an incredible rise in the raw number of education interventions enacted. Ball cites Levin (1998) as describing a policy “epidemic” in education during this era (OFSTED, 2010). In 2006, Coffield remarked that the ‘depth, breadth and pace of change’ and the ‘level of government activity’ in education was historically unprecedented in the UK (Coffield et al., 2008: p.2). The New Labour marketisation of education, propped up and bolstered by a discourse of rapid neoliberal modernisation, has been criticised by many commentators such as Davies who have argued
that a policy model premised on the overarching value of market-like choice is ‘a triumph for class politics, for the power of the British middle-class to corner what is best for its children, much of it disguised as the exercise of parental choice’ (The Guardian Unlimited, 12th July, 2000).

1.5.3.1 English and Welsh policy making

Prior to 2001, Welsh education policy was dictated in Westminster by the UK government, refined in the corridors of Whitehall and then enacted in Wales (see Appendix 1 for schematic timeline of UK and Welsh education policies) through the Secretary of State for Wales. After 2001, following formal devolution and the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales, a huge degree of new found freedom was given to the Welsh elected representatives to shape and deliver education policy away from Westminster. As the emphasis of this thesis is on the New Labour administration (1997 - 2010), it is worth noting at this point the following observation on educational policy in England and Wales:

(New) Labour in England, dominated by the discourse of modernisation, is prepared to utilise the market, selection and specialisation to achieve its aims, its colleagues in Wales use more conventional reference points in labour tradition such as community, locality and universality.

(Phillips and Harper-Jones 2002, p. 303)

It is precisely this discursive tension between Welsh policy’s focus on community and English policy’s focus on market-led processes and marketable values which this study explores.
1.5.4 England (see Appendix 2 for a map of England and Wales)

The English eye sees everything but is not so good at recognising that it is itself actually looking at something.

(Hall, 1997, in McClintock et al., 1997, p. 174)

The population of England was around 52.2 million in 2010, with children aged 0 - 15 numbered at 9.8 million (ONS, 2011). England’s territory is 50,356 square miles. Its housing profile was at the time as follows: social sector 17.5%, private sector 17.5%, owner occupied 65% (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). In 2010 there were 3,127 maintained secondary schools, with 3,055,460 pupils. In January 2010 there were around 8 million pupils in the schools in England (public and private). The average class size per teacher in state maintained primary schools was 26.6. The average class size taught by one teacher in English state-funded secondary schools was 20.5 (DOE, 2010).

1.5.5 Wales

Look at the Welsh landscape, look closely; new voices must rise, for Wales cannot endlessly remain chasing sheep into the twilight.

(Finch, 1987, p.15)

The population of Wales was around 3 million in 2010; its territory is 8,023 square miles, its housing profile was as follows: social sector 16 %, private sector 14%, owner occupied 70% (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). In 2010 there were 372 secondary schools in Wales and the average pupil/teacher ratio was 16.4. In 2008/09 there were 1,478 primary schools in Wales with 258,314 pupils and 12,343 full-time
equivalent (FTE) teachers. The average class size was 24.4 pupils (Welsh Government, 2009).

1.5.6 England and Wales – tensions

This study explores the divergences and convergences across and between England and Wales pertaining to children’s SEL during the New Labour era. This is as much a story of convergence as it is divergence and in particular it is a macro-level story of crucial ideological debates and discursive schisms within the UK Labour Party (Paterson, 2003, in Adams & Schmueker, 2005). A key factor in the two countries’ relationship during this period is the role of devolution as commissioned by New Labour and the way this has impacted on both countries’ understanding of, and application of, SEL policy. However, devolution is only one factor in this story as both countries came to the devolution process with rich and varied histories which denote clear differences and clear similarities. It is these “soft” socio-cultural areas such as identity and political and economic discourses, and their intersection with the history of devolution, which this study will also address.

1.5.7 Devolution

In 1997 the Welsh people voted for devolution. The figures were incredibly close with 50.3% of voters voting for devolution and 49.7% voting against. According to Brian Gibbons, former Assembly Member for Aberavon, the referendum was yes because people voted against Thatcher and Redwood, ‘Never again wanting to find themselves ‘completely
exposed to hostile government. According to Evans and Trystan (1999) other factors that influenced this electoral result included a weak and underfunded no campaign, New Labour still being in its honeymoon period, and the steady but pronounced politicisation of Welsh identity (Norquay and Smyth, 2002).

![Figure 4 How the vote divided Wales](The map above is taken from the Open University)

In 2011 the Welsh people were asked to vote on extending the legislative powers of the Welsh National Assembly. The results of this ballot, in contrast to the original vote, were resoundingly clear, with 63.5% voting yes (Welsh Government, 2011).

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3 Welsh Assembly Government Minister, interviewed by the author for this PHD, January 2012

1.6 Rationale and professional experience

A review of the SEL literature suggests that two core schools of thought predominate in the field of SEL research, with a new, third field slowly emerging. The first of these emanates from the US and in particular the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which seeks to provide an evidence base for the development of SEL programmes and to conceptually and empirically link SEL with academic achievement in order to ‘make social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school’ (CASEL, 2014). Built around the notion that SEL is vital in preventing children from engaging in anti-social behaviour (CASEL, 2013) these papers are generally meta-reviews or programme reviews of SEL as implemented in schools and this school of thought dominates the academic SEL discourse (Elias et al., 1997; Durlak et al., 2008, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2004; CASEL, 2005, 2009).

In the UK, much of the literature has followed the US/CASEL route with the focus (DCSF, 2008) being on empirical evidence, rigid reference to practical implementation and proven effectiveness (Weare & Wolfgang, 2005; Weare & Gray, 2003; Wells et al., 2003) and analyses of the SEAL programme as delivered in schools (Hallam et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2007; Banerjee, 2010; Humphrey et al., 2010). Since the demise of SEAL, attention has remained firmly set on the importance of empirical evidence and implementation (Lendrum, 2010; Humphrey et al., 2010, DCSF, 2008; Weare, 2013).

These papers have common themes of resemblance. SEL is seen here as a measureable, coherent and objective thing; the notion that SEL programmes are necessary for all children, thus being premised on a deficit model of the child, is rarely problematised (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009). SEL is framed within an objective list theory (OLT) framework,
as a prescribed model; and evaluative judgement is enacted by the parents, the school or the school system (a majoritarian perspective). I share Hoffman’s thoughts on this approach:

[SEL] becomes another way to focus attention on measurement and [the] remediation of individual deficits rather than a way to redirect educators’ focus toward the relational contexts of classrooms and schools.

(Hoffman, 2009, p. 533)

1.6.1 SEL – critiques and critical thinking

The second perspective apparent in the SEL literature, albeit focused in and around the UK, embodies the voices of those who oppose the introduction of SEL into the educational sphere. This perspective is premised on the notion that SEL promotes the language, thinking and practices of psychotherapy (Ecclestone, 2004) and is part of a wider therapeutic culture perpetuating a diminished view of the self and challenging concepts of human agency. This deficit model of the child, critics argue, has fuelled a culture whereby emotional self-disclosure has driven the private into the public and contributed towards the commodification and management of emotions (Furedi, 2003). The first and for many years the only UK critic to voice this perspective in direct relation to SEL was Carol Craig (2007, 2009) a commentator who has written two strikingly forthright papers attacking SEAL. In terms of academic research, Ecclestone (2007) both singularly and in partnership with Hayes (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009) pioneered much of the academic thinking in this field which has since been built on by writers such as Burman (2008).

This study, as a piece of critical theory, explicitly contends that SEL as practised may well be a power-saturated and market-driven set of concepts and ideological activities, but it seeks to identify whether an alternative version of SEL can (or does) operate within education. The study thus asks important questions which seek to unpick the discursive
hegemony of neoliberalism and its intimate relation with SEL in practice, whilst remaining imminently hopeful that the tenets of SEL can, in theory and practice, be a force of radical opposition to neoliberalism.

The vast majority of SEL research has focused on post-hoc operational issues. This study is different because it places the focus on exploring and unpicking the pre-hoc discourses driving the operationalised SEL in current practices. My research indicates that England has invested heavily (DCSF, 2007) in a universal, standardised SEL programme (SEAL) which was delivered using an objective list model and which was focused on rationalised models of behaviour, neoliberal concepts of individual responsibility and the “teachability” of emotional habits and skills (Watson et al., 2012). In contrast my research (Watson & Emery, 2009; Watson et al., 2012) also suggests that SEL practice in Wales has been driven by a stringent desire to develop a model which reflects the local context of Wales and the social-democratic principles of the Welsh citizenry.

A slightly different OLT voice is present in England and Wales, with devolution playing a critical part in these differences. Localised traditions and identities play a key role and one can identify two discourses - somewhat simplified as no one UK country sits entirely within one category as they are ‘ideal types’ (Weber, 1990) - which characterise the English and Welsh respective approaches to SEL. Individualism and behaviourism predominate in England, while social justice and children’s rights are more important discursive tools in Wales. This discrepant approach to SEL policy design and delivery has not been explored or reported on previously. This thesis is therefore a home international study in that it is occupied with exploring the convergence and divergence of SEL policy across two home countries of the UK. It will be the first home international study to explore SEL policy discourses operating in England and Wales and as such will build on previous home
international studies (including Phillips 2003; Raffe & Byrne 2005; and Oerton & Pilgrim, 2014).

My work is also interested in pursuing an alternative route for talking about and understanding SEL. The need for clarity and coherence in talking about SEL has featured in scholarly works recently (e.g. Gillies, 2011; Evans, 2011; McLaughlin, 2008; Dahlstedt et al., 2011; Hoffman, 2009; and Bailey, 2009) as well as my own writings in collaboration with Dr Debbie Watson (Watson et al., 2012). In essence this “alternative way” is interested in defining understandings of SEL that remove it from the constraints of the neoliberal model and the limitations of the OLT model and place it within a framework of progressive transformation and social justice (Ball, 2008; Apple 2009).

1.6.2 Professional background (see Appendix 3 for a timeline)

I engage here with a critique of SEL policy in English and Welsh schools from the vantage point of an insider (Burns et al., 2012); I have a long professional history within this field. From 1995 to 2010, I was an education consultant closely connected to the New Labour agenda (Fairclough, 2000). A clear rationale for this study is therefore to give voice to individuals whose job it was to concretise policy ideas and Ministerial proposals.

In my capacity as a SEL practitioner I worked on the formation of policy for both local and national Governments, including work on the creation of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) (DFES, 2005) as a policymaker and implementation consultant (Braun et al., 2010). I specialised in SEL and conflict resolution and wrote one of England’s first SEL qualifications: the Personal Employability, Achievement and Reflection for Learning (PEARL) framework (Emery and MANCAT, 2007). Alongside these activities between 2007 and 2010 I worked as a policy advisor to the Welsh Assembly Government,
developing a national SEL framework as part of the *Demonstrating Success* policy programme (WAG, 2007). Engaging in these activities, building a large network of influential colleagues, and having access to senior policymakers in both England and Wales, has given me a unique opportunity to witness policy and ideas in practice (Apple, 2013).

My professional experience in the field of SEL policy led to my having a personal and poignant epiphany, fully detailed in Gunter et al. (2014) which over time resulted in my making a transition from being an ally and agent of the New Labour SEL discourse in England to being a critic, challenging the commodification of children’s social and emotional states (Timimi, 2011) and questioning the processes by which the market place and ‘common sense’ have dominated SEL discourse.

In this capacity as a critic, working towards an alternative understanding of SEL, and as a PhD student at Manchester University, I have contributed extensively to academic debate on SEL. This has resulted in the publication of my paper on childhood wellbeing published in the *British Educational Research Journal* (Watson & Emery, 2009) as well as my co-authoring the *Children’s social and emotional learning in schools; a critical perspective* (Watson et al., 2012). I have appeared on national radio, questioning and exploring the concept of SEL (BBC Radio 5 – 5 Live Investigates; *emotional intelligence*, BBC Radio 4 – *Analysis; Testing the Emotions*) and I have presented several papers at national conferences (Emery, 2011). In 2013 I published a paper critiquing current SEL understanding (Emery, 2013). I have been and continue to be part of the public deliberation over SEL (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012).

As a practitioner witness and active participant I believe it is important from the start of this thesis for my position as a critical voice to be clarified. I advocate strongly for SEL to have a place within the English and Welsh education systems. It is the current, one size fits all, *objective list model* and the hidden (neoliberal and marketisation) discourses resting
behind SEL policy that I object to. My work and this thesis are focused on developing four key propositions about SEL (Watson et al., 2012) currently little voiced in the public discussion on SEL: that SEL is subjectively experienced, contextual, embedded and relational. These propositions have not been presented or advanced in much of the SEL literature so far other than in the writings of Konu & Rimpela (2002) and Watson et al (2012).
2 My approach and perspective

2.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies the factors which have shaped my decision to undertake critical policy research. It is a comprehensive account of the ideational journeys and practical activities that drove the research; it captures the personal and intellectual rationale resting behind the study. These are more than merely methodological considerations, for this is also a personal transformational story of my transition from being a reflexive practitioner to being a critical scholar and activist (Gunter et al., 2014); this story highlights the thinking and theorising that I have used to support my methodological position. My journey was, and still is, aspirational, value-laden and life changing, and it has been one intrinsically committed to working for a socially just public education system in our current ‘dark times’ (Arendt, 1968).

This Chapter has three sections. The first one presents my theoretical position as a critical scholar using critical discourse analysis to unpick hegemonic discourses and their reified and politically powerful transposition into policy and practice. The second section explores the presuppositions and conceptualisations which I have explicitly and implicitly applied to my work, thinking these through with the wider theoretical literature. The last section investigates and critiques the way in which SEL is currently understood. It draws on my own knowledge, learning and experiences in this field and how these have influenced the research rational.
2.2 Critical theory and policy

I have engaged with this study with my assumptions, as Kincheloe & McLaren (2005) would say, on the table. These assumptions and precepts include: the belief that there is a difference between the SEL discourses in England and Wales respectively; and the contention that this is in part due to the discrepant history, identity and value systems of these two countries. This standpoint underpinning the study thus sees there being quintessentially different political forces, knowledge claims / validity assertions and power dynamics at play in England and Wales; these differences “regulate” the discourses taking place in the interface between ideology, ideas and practical policy. This thesis thus views education as a social institution with an inherently politically active function in society.

… understanding education requires that we situate it in the unequal relations of power in the larger society and in the realities of dominance and subordination - and the conflicts - that are generated by these relations.

(Apple, 2010, p. 152)

Apple’s succinct words comprise a clear rationale for this study’s methodological predisposition and supports the introduction of a critical discourse analysis of SEL discourse. My work exists to reveal and expose fundamental discursive differences (and correlate practical injustices), as well as to challenge the “epistemological empire” operating over and above the devolved power countries; this is, namely, the UK, Anglo-centric neoliberal political discourse, a discourse which purports truth claims which are logically possible because of their intimate relation to capitalist modes of production (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005); this discourse is highly and aggressively active in disallowing public space for alternative forms of organisation and/or challenger discourses (Apple, 2007 - TINA, There Is No Alternative). Dobrin et al. (2011) see neoliberal ideology as being intent on constraining
the feasible paradigm of possible politico-economic discourses. As Giroux (2002) astutely notes, neoliberalism ‘limits the vocabulary and imagery available to recognize … anti-democratic forms of power, and narrow models of individual agency’ (Giroux, 2002, p. 429).

This study is therefore a political act and counter-neoliberal statement in that it not only seeks to reveal injustice, therefore wrongdoing, in practice, but it also seeks to serve as an interruptive act (Apple, 2009) – it aims to question, critique and confront the dominant neoliberal discourse which presides over public policy and political debate in England and which increasingly has an impact on Wales. (See Planet, Issue 211 for my paper on this process (Emery, 2013)).

This study is a qualitative inquiry designed to reveal latent but grave issues of stark inequality, power inequities and hidden but politically infused meanings contained within New Labour SEL policy and the wider strategic context of the Every Child Matters programme and The Children’s Plan. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note, in current times the text does not mirror the world but rather it creates the world. I am thus particularly focused on how these policy discourses have worked ‘to privilege certain ideas and topics and [crucially] speakers and exclude others’ (Ball, 2008, p. 5). I am therefore also focused on manifest and hidden meanings and ‘assumptive worlds’ which are essential and ever-present parts of the policy process (Raab, 1994, quoted in Gale, 2010, p. 382). I accord with Raab (1994) and go beyond the “raw” empirical pronouncements of policy makers, instead talking to them about their experiences ‘for meanings and assumptive worlds are essential parts of the policy process and require to be understood if action itself is to be understood’ (Raab, 1994). As Troyna (in Ball et al., 2007) states ‘things, especially policy discourse, must be pulled apart’ (Ball et al., 2007: p.153) to determine whose interests they serve. Troyna identifies two profane but vital questions critical to this process, ‘What is really going on?’ and ‘How come?’ These are driving queries that are central to my study of SEL policy.
2.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis as an approach

This work has been undertaken using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. I specifically state approach here as I see CDA, as do Fairclough (1992) and Wodak (1999), as an approach rather than a methodological “package” or “framework”. CDA enables researchers to deepen their understanding of the world we live in, the notions of knowledge and truth which make this understanding, or other understandings, palatable and coherent, and how these truth/knowledge claims can be deconstructed and/or reconstructed. CDA is thus ‘an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced by text and talk’ (Fairclough, 1989, p.20). Thus, CDA is not ethically neutral nor is it intended to be. Rather it aims to uncover power relations, highlight inequalities in society and uncover injustice via analyses of texts and subtexts (Corson, 2000). Injustice here refers to discrimination and the abuse of power in systems of social and political hierarchy. (for an exhaustive critical reflection of CDA and its myriad approaches see Parker, 2013).

The concepts of ideology, power and hierarchy are key within CDA for successfully interpreting and explaining discourse and narrative. Wodak (1999) states that these concepts have led to political discourse and identity-orientated research assuming a prominent role in the application of CDA. Key European practitioners of CDA include Fairclough (Fairclough; 1989; 1992; 1995;1999; 2000; 2003), Van Dijk (1997), Wodak (1999) and Kress & van Leeuwen (1995). In the US the most lauded scholar of CDA in education has been James Gee, publisher of An Introduction to Discourse Analysis (Gee 1999; 2005; 1996). Other US practitioners include Silverstein & Urban (1996), Collins & Blot (2003) and Rogers (1994;
2000; 2003; 2004). Although there is no one set formula for conducting CDA, proponents are generally interested in

1. A critical theory of the social world
2. The relationship of both language and discourse to each other and to the construction and representation of the world
3. A methodology that allows them to describe, interpret and explain such relationships

CDA is capable of describing, interpreting and explaining the relationships between language, the use of linguistic tools and politically charged educational issues. It is therefore highly useful for exploring the contradictions, power structures and ideological tensions that exist within educational systems and policy development (Rogers et al., 2005). The data collected and analysed herein flags up precisely these kinds of tension and power relations. CDA enables me to theorise SEL discourse and its relationship to the wider educational policy framework and political system. It enables me to identify contradictions in macro and micro power dynamics, expose stark inequalities and assess the impact of cultural and historical forces on the creation and application of SEL policies in England and Wales.

2.2.2 Fairclough

Building on the thinking of Fairclough and in particular Discourse and Social Change Fairclough (1992) and New Labour New Language (2000), my thesis views discourse as the ideological use of language, both verbal and non-verbal, written and spoken; including texts, conversations, media releases, symbols, gestures and so on. It considers language as a core
form of social practice and it sees language as intrinsically historical and sociologically contextual. Language is socially shaped but it is also socially shaping, and it pro-actively creates the meaning and practices of institutions such as “Free” Schools (Fairclough, 1994). Language is constitutive of i) social identities ii) social relations and iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs (for example what I have referred to previously as the common sense or ‘there is no alternative’ discourse). Fairclough captures this dialectical relationship between language and social practice by acknowledging that

The discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people’s heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures.

(Fairclough, 1992, p. 66)

These three constitutive factors are shaped and driven by societal power dynamics and processes of subjugation. The job of the Critical Discourse Analyst is to illuminate and explore discursive practices and texts alongside macro- and micro-level institutional, social and cultural structures in order to identify precisely how a specific discourse is ideologically driven by power relations, to reveal the latent but damaging facets of this inter-relationship and to highlight how power distortions and inequities are continued via use of the discursive practice or text. All discursive practices, because they intimately entwine language, knowledge and power, serve to exclude some and include some. They are, by formal definition, boundary- and identity-forming phenomena.

This study employs Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model (1992, p. 73) of Critical Discourse Analysis. This model was specifically developed by Fairclough in order that analysts would have a standardised framework through which to undertake empirical research. According to this model every discourse has three elements; a text (writing, talking, images, symbols), a discursive practice (the production, distribution and consumption of the
text for example the SEAL policy paper) and the *social practice*, the social events and activities taking place in the society which the discourse represents, creates, mirrors and shapes.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 5:** Fairclough's three dimensional model

There are many critics of the CDA approach (Widdowson, 1998; Jones, 2007). Notable critics often point to the fact that by undertaking CDA the analyst is stating that they have a more adequate or better informed description of reality than the people they are studying (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). With this objection, they argue that political and social ideologies are readily projected *onto* the data rather than “revealed” (Rogers, 2004). Another common criticism is that there is an imbalance between social theory and linguistic theory.

In relation to the methods employed, critics often focus on the absence of a systematic approach (Martin, 2000) and the lack of objective rigour in the analysis. Both of these criticisms are, I believe, located in traditional structuralist modes of thought, which fails to acknowledge the multi-faceted fluidity and complex nature of social phenomena. These criticisms essentially assume traditional values and thought processes within educational
research in order to dismiss the validity of an approach that is specifically designed to reveal, challenge and illuminate precisely that kind of metaphysical and cognitive conservatism. Parker (2013) argues that CDA ‘has succeeded in showing itself to be useful to the discipline, and critical psychologists now need to trace how the approach has been recuperated by the institutions it thought it could subvert’ (Parker, 2013: p. 235). For a more extensive overview of the criticisms of CDA, I draw the reader to Jorgenson and Phillips’ (2002) Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.

2.3 Theoretical propositions supporting this thesis - thinking with theory

Gunter, Hall and Mills (2014) argue that it is vital and timely to develop and amplify voices which challenge the current hegemonic “common sense” discourse via critical research based on working people and their lives, committed to social justice as a core research output. This study is designed to honour these principles.

2.3.1 Insider/outsider and New Managerialism

As stated in the introduction this thesis is also partly the story of my personal, transformational journey from being a SEL policy actor and practitioner to being a critical educational researcher. Through critical reading (Gunter at al., 2014) and reflective thinking one can identify three features of my personal journey which have influenced the present study.

The first of these was the interplay between my private life, working life and the SEL projects I had worked on (Watson et al, 2012); the second was the people I met and learnt from; the third was the dilemmas and tensions I experienced in my practice. The story of my insider/outsider status transformation is revealed in Gunter et al. (2014), but it is important
here to be clear that the high profile SEL policy actors in England and Wales and my interaction with them were vital factors in my becoming a critical researcher.

My privileged access to executive policy leads and decision makers meant that I was at the heart of SEL policy development. I was at the “productive site” of SEL policy development in both countries (England and Wales). Yet the practical implementation of the policy development skills I had acquired was in need of theoretical illumination. By engaging in the Manchester University Critical Education Policy and Leadership Studies (CEPALS) group, I found a safe space, supportive colleagues and relevant theories through which I could reflect on and explore the thinking, conversations and activity I had somewhat blindly been witness to in policy circles. This allowed me to understand that what we (policy actors) talked about and what we did was part of a much deeper and far more powerful discourse, the New Labour neoliberal agenda and in particular New Managerialism (Apple, 2007) in education.

New Managerialism has been described as an ideological approach to the management of public services whereby the free market practices of the business world are bought to bear (by the state) on public service organisations, management tiers and delivery agencies (Beckmann & Cooper, 2004). In essence only that which is measurable has value, and hierarchy becomes the organisational “norm”. Much has been written about this process (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Reed, 2002; Apple, 2007; Taylor, 2012) and the increased use of business language and tools such as accountability, measurement, efficiency, performance and auditing has become a well-known feature of contemporaneous public governance. According to Apple (2007) this process is not simply a natural effect of globalisation and the knowledge economy but is in fact driven by a large range of agents including neo conservatives, neoliberals, the religious right and the managerial middle class. New managerialism is as much the product of purposive and contrived agency on the part of
immensely powerful people and organisations as it is a result of organic and “blind” forces of globalisation.

I entered the world of SEL through the public sector, working as a school improvement officer (middle manager) within the Manchester LEA. My background was in conflict management and working with disengaged and disadvantaged young people in order to support them in building stronger relationships and fully participating in formal schooling. In this role I developed, with the young people, a performance-based, emotional intelligence training programme which very quickly gained major attention in the education sector. This story is fully told in Gunter et al. (2014).

In order for the education sector to operate as a market it must have a product to sell and must have participants with the technical expertise necessary to deliver the product to the market. My activities fitted these criteria perfectly and I very quickly found myself working as a highly paid education consultant rather than a public sector employee. My work was accepted because it created a financial profit and a new marketable product for the organisations I was working with. Furthermore, it provided a tool that, although not designed for such a purpose, could be used for the micro-management of children’s and adults’ emotional states (Gunter et al., 2014). For a number of years thereafter I was a compliant insider within English SEL policy circles, operating as a new managerial SEL consultant with all the accompanying benefits (finance, status, voice, access to elites) so long as I followed the rules. I worked with all the main English SEL actors, including giving briefings to English government ministers and sitting on national education committees (QCA, Future Curriculum Group; DFES, Diploma Development Group). My insider status gave me a voice and immediate access to the privileged network of English New Labour policy actors.

The process of the commodification of education, over time, resulted in myself and my work being squeezed into the new managerial language and the rules of the market place
came to dominate my ideas. I increasingly felt alienated from my work and I questioned my profession. I found myself ‘selling’ my work to multinational corporations, building audit and performance tools and undertaking ‘marketing exercises’ rather than working with and supporting disadvantaged young people. Once I refused to accept the sales-focused rules, I was carefully removed from this insider position through the imposition of greater surveillance, performance management criteria and a financial ‘sweetener’.

After this I found a new work place in Wales where my original principles and thinking regarding SEL were welcomed and were introduced as part of a different ideological approach, one that sequestered new managerialism, used different tools and strategies of organisational design and policy development, and was on the whole less subsumed by neoliberalism. Essentially my SEL work in Wales was grounded in and linked to the policy pillars of children’s rights and social justice. Chaney & Fevre (2001) state that in Wales issues of inequality and human rights are embedded in education policies, and Oerton & Pilgrim (2014) acknowledge that the Welsh Assembly Government has a strong commitment to citizenship values and social justice. The education ‘market’ in Wales was not in place in the same manner as it was in England. My colleagues and associates in the Welsh SEL policy networks spoke and thought in what could be termed a traditional ‘old Labour’ fashion and this was fused with national discourses which emerged following devolution. Egan (2001) argues that New Labour in Wales placed collaboration, community and the citizenry at the heart of its policies.

My access to high profile policy leads and decision makers which I had enjoyed in England was matched in Wales. Over time I became an insider to the Welsh New Labour SEL policy making community and I took part in and developed strong relationships with a wide range of colleagues working in SE policy. In Gunter et al. (2014) I reflect that:
My discomfort with a marketised version of SEL, particularly the English version, gave me the status of an insider in Wales, though, geographically and linguistically I was an outsider. Conversely, in England the critiques I had made publically of SEL could identify me as an outsider whilst geographically and linguistically I was an insider.

(Gunter et al., 2014, p. 103)

Mercer (2007) notes that insider-ness and outsider-ness are better understood in terms of a continuum than a dichotomy. I certainly occupy both positions, and in my study herein I have been both within and outside the subject of research, often at the same time, a position Perryman (2011) refers to as the returning native.

2.3.2 The critical secretary and collective memory

I act in this study as a critical secretary. This is a term used by Apple (2007) to describe he/she who sheds light on the ways in which education policy is connected to issues of power, subjugation and ideational domination. The critical secretary’s role is to give voice to those who challenge existing dynamics of unequal power (Apple, 2010; Au, 2012). It is a study of neoliberal power and identity. This however is not a simple binary dynamic of England-versus-Wales, for Wales itself is, as with anywhere, a loci of ideological conflict as well as a broadly radical opposition to English neoliberal discourse.

The English policy approach comprised a dogmatic pursuance of SEL as a tool of neoliberal governance. Indeed in the cases of many English SEL policy makers, what is revealed here is a complex story of sometimes dashed hopes that illuminate how the policy discourse and the wider ideological-political machinery subsumed the good intentions of SEL. (One instance of this is the insertion of learning outcomes to the SEAL programme.) By interviewing policy makers I intended to:

- learn more about the inner workings of the political process, the machinations between influential actors and how a sequence of events was viewed and responded to within the political machine.
This work builds on a bigger body of ‘interruptive’ writing developed by the Manchester University CEPALS group. My own voice is present and manifest in this study; I act as an ‘organic intellectual’ working to reconstruct elite knowledge systems (Gramsci, 1971) in such a manner that SEL can be thought about in a different and more progressive way. By interrupting the common sense discourse and its neoliberal predisposition in favour of markets, I draw on the concept of collective memory (how the world we live in is collectively remembered and understood) (Halbwachs, 1985; Apple et al., 2011) and I seek to add to the restoration of a collective memory in England and Wales which resounds with the social justice and principles of equality and fairness which are also features of the UK consciousness, albeit suppressed ones. This is a memory that I will argue has been radically revised and contained to serve the interests of neoliberal elites and the economic powers (Apple, 1993).

Building on the work of Rowley (in Gunter et al., 2014) I do not poise myself as standing aside as a neutral, indifferent, observer or one who ‘lives on the balcony’ (Bakhtin, 1968) looking at the education policy parade, but rather as a committed, politicised participant who has stood alongside Trade Union colleagues, teachers, community groups and children in opposing the rampant neo-liberalisation of public education.

2.4 Social and emotional learning

SEL is a much contested concept (Humphrey, in conversation with the author, 2010; Watson et al., 2012) and this contestation relates to definitional problems pertaining to
childhood wellbeing (Coleman, 2009). With very few exceptions (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Craig, 2007, 2009) the importance of SEL as a part of childhood wellbeing remains a relatively unchallenged truism in educational contexts. Challenges to date have focused on whether improving the emotional wellbeing of children should be an educational goal in itself, and have questioned the implications of allowing the emotional imperative to lead the academic in education (Furedi, 2009). While Craig’s and Ecclestone’s arguments are persuasive and will be drawn on in my work I wish to critically expand the ways in which wellbeing, through SEL, can be conceptualised.

Parfit (1984) was one of the first theorists to attempt to classify ideas about wellbeing and proposed three broad categorisations which have since been applied to philosophy and economics. I argue that it is the third category - Objective List Theories (OLTs) – that now dominates the UK in describing and operationalising children’s wellbeing as a feature of policy design and delivery. OLTs list ‘items constituting wellbeing that consist neither merely in pleasurable experience nor in desire satisfaction (such as) knowledge or friendship’ (Crisp, 2013, online). Examples of OLT approaches include capabilities approaches (Sen, 1985; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993).

Subjective theories of human wellbeing are sometimes taken to be those that ‘make welfare depend at least in part on some mental state’ (Sumner, 1996, p. 82). The intended contrast is with objective theories of wellbeing which ‘make the wellbeing of an agent depend entirely on states of the world apart from the state of mind of the agent whose well-being is under review’ (Arneson, 1999, p. 121). Both subject and object considerations in OLT approaches negate the child as an agent. OLT approaches to children’s wellbeing presume adults know what children need to be well beings.
I make three propositions about children’s SEL elsewhere in my work. First, SEL exists only in human bodies and cognitive agency. Drawing from medical anthropology (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987), I argue that bodies are:

1. viewed as phenomenally experienced, lived individual body (ies)/self(ves);
2. may be seen as social body(ies), what anthropologists term a natural symbol for thinking about relationships among nature, society and culture; and,
3. seen as body(ies) politic, artifacts, inscriptions of social and political control

(Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 6)

These levels of bodily experience conform to a ‘juncture’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994), i.e. the lived body cannot be understood in isolation from the social and political bodies that surround and are within it. Hence my first proposition: SEL is subjectively experienced.

I am concerned with the subjectivity of SEL, as well as the locus of the ‘social body’, i.e. how SEL is used in schools; and indeed the ‘body politic’, the macrosystemic use of the concept, which allocates resources and determines policy directions (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). My second proposition is therefore: SEL is contextual and embedded.

Finally, if individual practitioners (professionals) are concerned with enacting an embodied concept of SEL, they do not act in isolation from each other or from large scale ‘regimes of truth’ (Graham, 2005; Foucauld, 1995) which legitimise action on objects (in the case of schools, children). Thus my final proposition that in a school, family or other context SEL is relational.

2.5 Summary

This study draws from a personal journey of transformation as well as a firm grounding in critical theoretical tenets in order to expose, discuss, explore and dissect the latent but hugely powerful neoliberal discourse which underpinned SEL policy and practice
in the New Labour era in England, as well as acting as a reference point in a more radicalised and socially orientated Wales. It uses critical discourse analytical approaches to ascertain the quintessential power inequities and epistemic structures of knowledge production which underlay the seemingly common sense objectives of New Labour, new managerial policy makers in England. I have been clear that my professional background and the concomitant insider/outsider positioning I occupy have been instrumental in my choice of study topic and my critical approach to data collection and analysis. This study constitutes a politically engaged, imminently critical and purposively challenging interruption to the mainstream, neoliberal narrative of SEL as self-governance in the service of marketization and corporatisation.
3 Literature review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes, analyses and creates, with a critical eye, the context for the study through a review of the relevant literature around the concepts central to the thesis: SEL, New Labour and neoliberalism. It starts with a discussion and reflection on how I set up and undertook the literature review as a process. Integral to this opening section is the declaration that it is not and makes no attempt to be an objective, neutral review. Rather it is a process and product of myself and my research and as such positionality is acknowledged. Following this introduction the literature is then critically reviewed in the form of three distinct but connected chapters each focusing upon one of the central concepts.

Part One explores the origins of SEL, where it came from and how it has been understood, presented and practised with particular reference to the discourse associated with its development in education and the rise of the self-esteem movement. Part Two sets out the thinking and policy initiatives undertaken by the New Labour administration with particular emphasis on the discovery and discourse of SEL and its appropriation as a tool of neoliberalism both locally and globally. This chapter will also introduce and explore how the introduction of devolution led to a different policy discourse and activity in relation to SEL across England and Wales; essentially it will be presenting the rhetoric and the reality with a focus on the clear red water (Morgan, 2002) that divided policy in Cardiff and Westminster. The final section, Part Three, will hone down and place the focus on the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and the discourse that developed, drove and delivered this universal SEL initiative across England and to a much lesser extent Wales. Integral to the final section will be a critical analysis of the messages and thinking connected
to SEAL and how these were a mirror of the policy discourse and strategies, administration systems and social relations in play across England and Wales at the time.

3.1.1 What kind of literature review?

A literature review is both a process and a product (Hart, 1998). It is a process in the sense of developing knowledge, identifying aims and objectives, justifying the research itself and recognising the ways in which this process can be undertaken. Yet it is also a product; the foundation of the thesis, putting the research into context, providing a rationale through understanding and critical appraisal, and building the bridge between what is known and the research questions. (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012) capture this position nicely when stating that a literature review is the author joining the conversation, listening to what has been said and then extending the conversation through their own contribution.

Having read many thesis guides and immersed myself in days of scrutinising others’ literature reviews, it has become clear to me that there are a number of frameworks or models for conducting and writing a literature review, Hart (1998), Cooper (1988) writing on the Taxonomy of Literature Reviews, and Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) all contain invaluable guidance for the author to take. Yet there is a danger in following a too prescribed process that leads one to having to judge which of the many alternative frameworks promoted is ‘the right one’. This is difficult as one can see merit in elements of suggested frameworks, yet often it is elements only that seem suitable, rather than adopting the whole. How can one wrap the non-linear nature of the qualitative research undertaken in this study, along with the original voice and perspective of this thesis, into a prescribed format? Each PhD presents the structure that is appropriate to the voice, perspective and body of work being presented.
This literature review makes use of academic guidelines and reflections on purpose and structure but does not align itself with one particular model or structure. Utilising Cooper’s taxonomy, it is a literature review approached through CDA and focused on SEL educational practice and policy with a goal of critically analysing previous research and practice in order to reveal hidden or unknown issues of social justice, power and identity. It is clearly not a neutral review. It uses a loose chronological model, stepping aside at times to explore themes and ultimately drawing the reader down, through a broad panorama, to a particular localised time and place. My writing is grounded in the hierarchical conceptualisation of learning objectives as presented by (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001; Gunter et al., 2014), see diagram, for I believe that in following this taxonomy my writing will naturally fulfil the obligations associated with a successful PhD thesis.

![Hierarchy of learning objectives](image)

Figure 6: Hierarchy of learning objectives (From Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001)

### 3.1.2 Expert advisors

My own knowledge and experiences have been supported by a number of senior academics and commentators in the field. These colleagues have been instrumental in shaping my writing, and acting as expert advisors whilst this thesis has been developed. In no
particular order I need to acknowledge the support of Professor Neil Humphrey, Professor Helen Gunter, Doctor Ann Lendrum, Suzanne Chisholm, Adrian Faupel, Doctor Debbie Watson, Professor Mick Waters, Professor Erica Burman, Debs Michel, Elizabeth Williams, Doctor Andy Howes and Doctor Michael Wigelsworth.

Following the demise of New Labour and firstly the election of the Coalition government, followed by the current Conservative government, SEAL as a government supported initiative has publically vanished (Watson et al, 2012) with the materials being removed from the Department for Educations website and the programme closed down. However I deliberately use the term ‘publically’ for the reality is that with over 90% of English primary schools doing SEAL during the New Labour period many of these schools are still delivering SEAL activities and using the SEAL materials almost a decade later (Bannerjee et al, 2014).

At the policy level with the current governments interest in traditional subjects and the introduction of the EBAC, social and emotional learning has been far less visible with no specific programme or approach validated or endorsed and very little guidance forthcoming from the Department for Education. As Bonell (2014) notes

Education policy in England increasingly encourages schools to maximise students’ academic attainment and ignore their broader wellbeing, personal development, and health. (p.1)

Over the past few years we have seen a shift from social and emotional learning to the re-emergence of character education (Ecclestone, 2015) and connected to this, a growing interest in the teaching of ‘resilience’ factors (Burman, 2014). Yet overriding these developments, a new and dominant discourse has emerged once again returning to grave concerns regarding children’s mental health and broader wellbeing, but locating these concerns within the frame of a children’s mental health crisis (Humphrey and Wigelsworth
2016, Ecclestone, 2016). This discourse, similar to SEAL, is again grounded in a diminished view of the child and, according to Ecclestone, maintains the perspective that a wide range of vulnerable and troubled people require support, in education establishments, through social and emotional interventions. Whether this will play out in policy terms in a similar manner to SEAL, with a nationally prescribed programme solution, is unlikely due in part to the autonomous and fractured nature of the current English education system (Ball, 2013) and the reluctance of government to prescribe programme solutions.

Returning to SEL practice the present realities are a ‘free market’ with a wide range of diverse private and not for profit social and emotional learning programmes. These are often targeted, presented as prevention interventions, and are delivered across schools in England and Wales with little or no Local Authority or central government coordination. The most popular of these are Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Second Step, the UK Resilience Programme, Caring School Community (CSC) and the many mindfulness schemes currently operating in English schools (Humphrey, 2014; Humphrey and Lendrum, 2015; Weare, 2015). These programmes, like their SEAL predecessor, are in the main built on a deficit view of the child (one atomised and devoid of cultural, class and race factors (Burman, 2014)), pursue an objective list model of SEL skills and abilities, and maintain the school as a site for social and emotional intervention.

3.1.3 Bibliographic databases accessed

In developing this literature review a wide range of databases were accessed. At the academic level these included the Applied Social Sciences Index and abstracts, Australian Education Index, Education Resources Information Centre, British Education Index and PsychInfo. At the general level I accessed, among others, the BBC Archives, the National
Archives, Guardian News and Media Archive and Archives Network Wales. I also used reference lists from my own published works and previously published SEL reviews including Weare and Gray, 2003; Wells et al., 2003; and Durlak et al., 2008, 2011. Further to this, a wide selection of journals were explored including the Oxford Review of Education, British Educational Research Journal, Child Development, Policy and Politics and the Review of Educational Research.

3.1.4 Search terms

One challenge was of keeping the clarity of my research in a subject field briskly evolving both in terms of what it constitutes and the labels being applied to it. For example, at the start of my PhD ‘mindfulness’ would have not have been encountered within publications. However this term is now popular within SEL (Weare, 2013). Conversely, emotional literacy appears to have slowly drifted off the subject radar, with very few papers utilising the term. This means that the search terms I employed for this literature review needed to be credible, rigorous and appropriate. Following guidance from my supervisor and colleagues, the search terms I used were: children’s wellbeing in schools, social and emotional learning, SEL, educational wellbeing, social and emotional learning in schools, social and emotional wellbeing, SEAL, social and emotional aspects of learning, social and emotional behavioural skills, SEBS, children’s emotional health and wellbeing, EHWB, children’s wellbeing, emotional literacy (in schools), emotional intelligence (in schools), emotional resilience (in schools), teaching happiness (in schools), positive psychology (in schools).

3.1.5 Parameters of the literature

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The amount of material published in relation to SEL in schools is enormous and it was necessary to set clear boundaries. All publications had to be reported in English or Welsh (translated to English) and published between 1990 and 2012 (with an emphasis on the years 1995 to 2010, the period spanning the publication of Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) to the end of the New Labour era) and concerned with universal social and emotional learning in schools (programmes and/or interventions delivered only to the general school population with no specific criteria entry other than being a pupil at the school). This criterion discounted targeted SEL programmes and/or interventions. It should be noted that for the section exploring the origins of SEL the date parameters do not apply.

3.1.6 **Criteria for inclusion of literature**

With such a large field of literature it was important to ensure that the publications I looked at were of a high quality standard. All publications had to be one or more of the following: referenced by key commentators; (Weare, Craig, CASEL, Humphrey, Elias, Ecclestone, Watson and Emery, Durlak, Weisberg) official government reports or papers; official non-governmental agency reports or papers; books or articles written by the originator of a SEL theory or model; articles published in a peer reviewed journal; articles or books published by critical voices acknowledged in the field and in particular by my academic experts. All publications needed to be capable of being referenced and appropriately sourced.

3.2 **Literature review part one: Origins of social and emotional learning (SEL)**

3.2.1 **Introduction**
This section will cast a glance back at the key movements and personalities, in particular the 1960s psychotherapy debates, 1970s and 1980s self-esteem movement, and the 1980s social skills programmes in American schools for, as Dixon (2012) states, it is mistakenly assumed that the idea of educating the emotions is something new.

3.2.2 Where does the story of SEL start?

Where one starts in tracing the roots of SEL is open for discussion. One could turn to the writings of Aristotle (1847) and explore concepts of the good life, eudemonia and emotional cultivation. However these would need much more time and space. I would therefore direct the reader to the excellent work undertaken by Kristjannsen (2007) on *Aristotle, Emotions and Education* or, alternatively, to Humphrey (2013) or Watson et al (2012) for a summative account of early ideas of the emotions and wellbeing in education. For an alternative voice on the emotions in education see Boler (1999).

I think the best starting point is to look at the writing of authors operating within an education system and understanding of education that is understandable to present times. This is the stance taken by Dixon (2012) and Humphrey (2013) who, although noting early debates and thinking, generally highlight the Victorian period and, in particular, the writing of John Stuart Mill (Mill, 1869) and Herbert Spencer (Spencer, 1911), two early advocates of developing the emotional aspect of the child within education. Both Mills and Spencer propagated the cultivation of aesthetic feelings and emotional development. Spencer in particular advocated for an education that would ‘awaken the emotions’ (Spencer, 1911, p. 352). For both Mills and Spencer this form of emotional education was in the context of creating character as part of the education process, a goal we are currently returning to in the
form of the UK resilience programme, a version of the PENN Resilience programme (Challen et al., 2009).

What is meant by character, though, is located in the socio-historical context in which the text is produced (Fairclough, 1989). Moving the discussion forward to a time and place where the educational and political discourse (rather than simply the physical establishment) is more recognisable to our present thinking, the 1960s saw various developments that have, I would argue, directly influenced SEL as we know it today.

### 3.2.3 The rise of self-esteem

Two key SEL commentators, Carol Craig and Neil Humphrey, specifically acknowledge the role of the US self-esteem movement in the development of SEL. Humphrey claims that the rise of self-esteem during the 1970s and 1980s ‘bears some striking parallels to that of the SEL field in the last two decades’ (Humphrey, 2013, p. 40), while Craig reflected that ‘Across education in the U.K. many teachers are consciously aiming to improve pupils’ self-esteem, either through increased praise and awards, or through specific programmes [SEAL]’ (Craig, 2006, online, my insertion). From these two statements we can detect that self-esteem has impacted on SEL and that the history of self-esteem can help us understand the history of SEL.

The first level at which the self-esteem movement and SEL draw parallels is in the understanding and definition of the term. What is meant by self-esteem is often contested. It is a slippery concept and difficult to find a shared meaning, just like SEL. If one takes self-esteem to mean the individual’s overall sense of self-worth, how we feel about ourselves and our confidence and abilities (Branden, 2001) and treat this somewhat umbrella definition as the self-esteem component, then one can see that self-esteem is evident in the structure, goals
and content of most SEL programmes - whether it be Primary SEAL; the *Good to be Me* theme (Humphrey, 2013); Secondary SEAL and the *Self Awareness* domain; the American *PATHS* programme’s *Our Feelings* Chart for Grade 2 pupils or the *Triceratops Unit 3* (*understanding and detecting feelings*) in the *Incredible Years* programme (Webster-Stratton, 2011 [updated from 2001]) - one can see the components of self-esteem are engrained within SEL.

Although the term self-esteem can be traced back to the 1890s and William James, *Principles of Psychology* (James, 1869) self-esteem, as we know it, is generally considered to be located in the work of psychotherapists such as Rand (1964), Coopersmith (1967) and Branden (2001) who in a series of high profile research papers and books presented a theory of the child as fragile.

[there are] indications that in children domination, rejection, and severe punishment result in lowered self-esteem. Under such conditions they have fewer experiences of love and success and tend to become generally more submissive and withdrawn (though occasionally veering to the opposite extreme of aggression and domination).

(Coopersmith, 1967, p. 45)

### 3.2.4 Self-esteem and the deficit model

Self-esteem, similar to much SEL thinking, was therefore equated with a deficit model of the child (Watson et al., 2012). Furthermore, again like SEL, the concept was based on the individual taking personal responsibility for their development through participation in self-esteem programmes. This perspective as Lubeck and Garrett note promotes a perspective that ‘the problem of poor school performance resides not in social, political, economic, and educational institutions, but rather in the child, and by extension, the family’ (Lubeck & Garrett, 1990, p.327). It is worth taking a minute, again reflecting on the development of SEL, to look at what these programmes were and where they were delivered. The purpose of
self-esteem programmes was to present opportunities for achievement and confidence building, essentially to inoculate the child against the pressures and problems of society (Beane, 1991). This inoculation took the form of subject lessons enhanced through self-esteem activities, direct instructional teaching (positive thinking and self-reflection) and non-academic activities (the California based Challenge Program). All of these events were grounded in making children feel worthy and able, competition was often discouraged and instead replaced by the notion of no-one fails they only learn.

The school, just as it did for SEL, became the location for the delivery of this self-esteem dose. The school as centre for delivery was driven in part, just like SEL, by the belief that in raising pupils’ self-esteem one could also reduce discipline problems and raise academic ability, a mantra one can see in an often repeated quote from Goleman (1995) who when talking about emotional intelligence stated that ‘Students who are angry, anxious or depressed don’t learn’ (Goleman, 1995, p. 78). Self-esteem and SEL were both presented as an important alternative to academic competence and yet also as a means of increasing academic competence (Byrne 1984).

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s the concept of ensuring children were given a self-esteem dose grew in stature leading to three powerful beliefs taking hold within American education and child development circles. Firstly self-esteem was vital to creating a well-adjusted child. Secondly, self-esteem was directly impacted by what parents and adults did to children and finally, as noted above, self-esteem played a crucial role in whether a child was successful in school or not. A further belief, not particularly noted by commentators but one which I think needs drawing out in relation to SEL is that the self-esteem movement was one of the first in school activities focused upon taking the private inner self of the child and making it public, emotions in the post-modern arena as signifiers or images rather than human interaction, essentially emotions as spectacle (Debord 1968).
With the above assumed truths in place, self-esteem worked its way into the American education system. Perhaps the best example of this occurring is in California in 1986 where a series of self-esteem task forces were established, designed to drive the movement through the education system (Craig, 2006). This resulted in self-esteem taking a central role in teaching and learning activities across the state. According to commentators (Krauthammer 1990; Twenge, 2006) examples of this activity included teachers being given guidance to reduce competition and rigour in the classroom, to not criticise pupils and to ensure all pupils felt they had achieved regardless of actual grades. The message was positive reinforcement and for constant caution in hurting children’s feelings: a rather heady mixture that as we will see had some unexpected outcomes.

### 3.3 1980s US social skills programmes

As the American education system took on board the principles and practices of the self-esteem movement a new space emerged within education that utilised the concept of *inoculation* but rather than working with a universal audience focused its attention on at-risk groups of young people. It built on the inoculation concept so popular with self-esteem practitioners but increased the dose so it encompassed a whole range of skills, attitudes and values. One could call this the social skills deficit, the inability to give and receive positive social reinforcement (Strain et al., 1977). Throughout the late 1970s a series of studies (Gottman et al., 1976; Asher et al., 1977; Cartledge & Milburn, 1978; Strain et al., 1976) had supposedly demonstrated that poor social skills led to low academic achievement, poor school attendance, early drop out, poor peer relationships, increased mental health problems and social isolation. Studies at the time indicate between 15% and 30% of problem children were deemed to have deficient social skills (Gresham & Elliott, 1989).
The result of this perceived social skills deficit was the introduction of a range of taught behavioural based programmes delivered to children who were at risk of dropping out of school, demonstrated high delinquency rates, exhibited alcohol or drug problems etc. Examples of these programmes were written up as various papers including *Teaching cognitive and social skills to high school students with high dropout and delinquency rates* (Sarason & Sarason, 1981), *Social skills intervention in the treatment of isolated or withdrawn children* (Conger & Keane, 1981) and *Prevention of alcohol misuse through the development of personal and social competence* (Botvin et al., 1984). Two academics particularly involved in the development of these programmes were Durlak (1983) and Elias (Weissberg & Elias, 1993) both of whom we will hear more about when exploring the rise of SEL in America post 1995.

Similar to what we will see happened with the self-esteem movement, these programmes were based on assumptions that had not been tested and were without valid evidence: a position at the time defended by the response that these were pioneering initiatives too new to elicit solid data. A problem and response that is, as noted by Humphrey (2013) and Watson et al. (2012), repeated much later in the UK, SEAL discourse.

From Schneider & Byrne's 1985 meta-analysis of these social skills programmes it is worth highlighting the following

> It has not been clearly established, however, that interventions aimed at increasing childhood competence can improve the outcome for the children involved. Nevertheless, the number and variety of social skills training programs emerging in both the professional literature and commercial market attest to the appeal of this form of therapy.

(Schneider & Byrne, 1985, p. 175)

Two points are worth noting here. Firstly, the use of the term ‘therapy’ to describe the programmes, a term that redefines the relationship between pupil and teacher and one that
has, particularly in regard to SEL proved controversial (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Furedi, 2009). Secondly, these ‘therapy’ programmes were for all intents and purposes the first contemporary SEL programmes. It is unlikely they would have existed if not for the new thinking of the child-driven by the self-esteem movement. Although targeted they had the same principles, similar content and delivery methods to the wide range of SEL programmes that emerged in the mid-1990s, post Goleman. They were built upon a series of important notions that resonate throughout the history of SEL:

- our children are damaged
- we can teach and assess the skills they are lacking
- the individual is responsible for his/her own destiny
- the school is an agent for social change

3.4 The self-esteem discourse - unravelling?

‘Unravelling’ is perhaps the best header to use here as I hope it captures the ongoing nature, far from, if ever, to be finalised, of the discourse surrounding self-esteem and its effectiveness within education as a remedy for society’s ills (Kwana et al., 2009). Although, as I will now explore, the self-esteem movement has in academic circles been critically examined and left wanting at the level of public consciousness in school practice it is still a powerful and popular movement. I intend to draw upon three key factors here: firstly the findings of the California Self-esteem task force report (Mecca et al., 1989), secondly the work of Roy Baumeister and others (2003), and finally the recent writings of Jean Twenge (2006).
3.4.1 California self-esteem task force

Having driven and developed self-esteem across the state of California throughout the late 1980s the final report of the task force was somewhat shocking to those keen to progress the movement. Having commissioned a team of academics to undertake a three-year study of the literature, research and evidence supporting the concept and its alleged outcomes sociologist Neil Smelser concluded that

the associations between self-esteem and its expected consequences are mixed, insignificant, or absent.

(Smelser, in Mecca et al., 1989, p. 17)

This was a wholly unexpected and damning statement and immediately put into question the principles supporting the movement. Generally it was noted that the report demonstrated no empirical findings between self-esteem and either its expected outcomes or associations. Yet the taskforce, in responding to this criticism, chose to question the understanding of the academics rather than the findings, referring to the academics as intellectuals unable to understand that self-esteem, like love, cannot be measured. The message was intuition and anecdotes are better than logic. The task force was shut down shortly after the report was published.

3.4.2 Baumeister

Roy Baumeister (2003), a prominent American psychologist, was an early advocate of self-esteem and much involved in building the movement. His position changed dramatically, influenced firstly by the findings of the California task force which he stated ‘was quite a
black eye for the self-esteem movement’ (Baumeister, 2005) and secondly by the fact that the promises and data associated with the movement were just not appearing. With these issues in mind, along with colleagues, he conducted research into the phenomenon. The results shocked him and led him to state that the outcome of this research was one of the biggest disappointments of his career (Craig, 2006). In 1996 Baumeister concluded that

The enthusiastic claims of the self-esteem movement mostly range from fantasy to hogwash ... yes, a few people here and there end up worse off because their self-esteem was too low. Then, again, other people end up worse off because their self-esteem was too high.

(Baumeister, 1996, p. 14)

Furthermore his research demonstrated clearly that the link between self-esteem and academic achievement was weak or non-existent (Craig, 2006).

Since his ground-breaking report Baumeister has conducted numerous studies into self-esteem and the consistent message is quite simply that ‘there is no longer any justification for simply relying on anecdotes, impressions, and untested assumptions about the value of self-esteem’ (Baumeister et al., 2003, online). Indeed the only two positives Baumeister has been able to conclude in relation to self-esteem are that it can make you feel good and helps initiative, nothing more.

### 3.4.3 Twenge

If the findings of the California task force and Baumeister’s work could be considered neutral, in that self-esteem was found to have no positive impact, the work of Twenge (2006) took this a step further and stated that in fact the self-esteem inoculation had a negative impact on children. Twenge introduces *Generation Me* as individuals wrapped into a cultural
assumption dominated by the twin pillars of choice and individuality. She links this rise of
the individual to the rise of the self-esteem movement and as noted by Craig (2006) Twenge
states that obsession with self-esteem has fuelled the rise of depression, encouraged
narcissism and undermined the skills of young people across America. Twenge believes this
created a generation who believe ‘feeling good about yourself is more important than good
performance’ (p. 57) and individuals who are ‘overly focused on themselves and lack
empathy for others’ (p. 68).

Alongside the domination of choice sits what is, perhaps, for this piece of work the
most interesting face of Generation Me, the need for Generation Me to share their inner
experiences and feelings with all who will listen. This has, according to Twenge, resulted in
obsession with appearance, the proliferation of body piercings, extending adolescence, and
materialism (p. 94). One could link this to the commodification of the emotions (Burman,
2008; Hochschild, 2003; Furedi, 2003). We are in essence all trading or bartering our
emotions within the marketplace whether it be as air hostesses with fixed sincere smiles
(Hochschild) or expressing our inner most fears on a national radio phone in. Such emotional
expression comes at a cost, for Twenge is clear that

Our growing tendency to put the self-first leads to unparalleled freedom, but it also creates an
enormous amount of pressure on us to stand alone. ..All too often the result is crippling
anxiety and crushing depression.

(Twenge, 2006, p. 109)

For a criticism of Twenge and in particular her notion of Generation Me one should
read the work of Arnett (2013) who thinks that

if she is wrong, then her errors are deeply unfair and damaging to young people, reinforcing
the worst negative stereotypes that adults have about them and encouraging adults to vilify
them rather than supporting them.
(Arnett, 2013, p. 17)

3.5 Origins of SEL – reflections on the discourse and language

It is worth pausing here to draw some points together regarding the discourse and language of the self-esteem movement and social skills programmes. As this thesis is concerned with CDA (see Chapter Two) it acknowledges that language is a form of social practice, the practice of producing meaning, and a vehicle of ideology. Discourse is a key tool for the transmission of dominant ideology particularly when delivered through social institutions such as education, religion, the media, the family etc. (Fairclough, 1989) Essentially people internalise what is socially produced and made available to them, and use their internalised ‘Members’ Resources’ (the individual’s knowledge of language, how they see the world, their values, beliefs, prejudices etc.) to engage in their social practice, including discourse’ (p. 24.) Dominant discourse begets dominant ideology, dominant ideology begets dominant discourse!

The discourse of the self-esteem movement from the outset influenced and limited what SEL could do or be. For as Stuart Hall noted

When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed …

(Chen and Morley, 2006, p. 291)

The discourse of self-esteem was built on a series of statements that created particular assumed truths, the dominant ones being that the child is a fragile often damaged individual that requires intervention into their inner world in order to manage modern society. Secondly the child is responsible for managing themselves through participating in personal
development programmes, and so long as the child/individual is willing to work on his/her inner self then he/she can only develop positively, and if no positive changes take place, it isn’t the programme’s fault but rather the individuals for not believing or trying hard enough. One could argue that these views presuppose that the child is detached from the cultural context, and is in a society which is a meritocracy.

If one relates these assumed truths to Hall’s quote above then one could consider that the topic (the child) has been constructed and represented in a certain (limiting) way, a process referred to by Lubeck and Garrett (1990) as the social construction of the ‘at risk’ child.

A further discourse worth highlighting is the manner in which the lack of evidence for the effectiveness of both self-esteem and social skills programmes was ignored. As noted earlier even when the California self-esteem programme was demonstrated to have no impact, the practice itself continued to be applied. The same occurred with the social skills programmes. A 1985, US government report, *Prevention Research; Deterring Drug Abuse Among Children and Adolescent* (Bell & Battjes, 1984) ‘designed to review these promising approaches’ (p. vii) noted that ‘several of the studies indicate little or no effects for selected prevention approaches’ (p. 6). In their paper (Birkeland et al., 2005) on the American *Drug Abuse Resistance Education* (D.A.R.E.) programme noted the minimal impact negative evaluations had on the popularity of the programme. Whilst in 2001, Emler reflected that in regard to the self-esteem movement ‘Ignorance (to evidence) in these respects has clearly been no impediment to confidence in the possibility of raising self-esteem’ (p. 49).

### 3.5.1 Self-esteem driven by evidence, or neoliberal necessity?
The discourse attached to self-esteem emphasised what felt right rather than the evidence. I would argue the concept of self-esteem, just as we will see with SEL, needed to exist irrespective of evidence (I discuss this further when exploring the work of Daniel Goleman and emotional intelligence). This desire to put ‘common sense’ first places self-esteem not as a psychological construct but rather as one small but crucial element in a much larger philosophical and political shift; the rise of neoliberalism.

Finally, taking this reflection on self-esteem to the level of language it is interesting to look at how the movement employed ‘I’ as the foundation pronoun for positive self-praise and positive self-affirmations; ‘I am able and confident’, ‘I can achieve every day’, ‘I can be whatever I choose to be’. For an example of this see the Summer Prep program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, evaluated by Logsdon & Ewert (1973). Twenge argued that this use of ‘I’ presupposes that the individual is the most important object, above and beyond the collective. The power of the ‘I’ statement through turning one’s reflection inwards could, I would argue, actually isolate the individual from the very sources (family, community, friends, groups, organisations) that may in fact support their personal development. A reflection expressed by many commentators including Lilian Katz, previous president of the American National Association for the Education of Young Children, who questions ‘excessive preoccupation with oneself’ (quoted in Twenge, 1990, p. 70).

3.6 Summary

This section has explored the early foundations of what we now know as SEL. The social skills programmes I referred to have been key to developing this story for if self-esteem provided one element of an ideological shift then the social skills programmes presented a near fully formulated school-based implementation model for practitioners to
build on. Furthermore both of these initiatives (located in American society) played a key role in shaping an understanding of the child as fragile, needing intervention and for this intervention to be led by and located in schools. In the 1990s radical changes in society, combined with these influences, gave rise to the model of SEL we currently see across Westernised states.

3.7 Literature review part two: Neoliberalism

3.7.1 Introduction – the rise of neoliberalism

If you can occupy people’s heads, their hearts and hands will follow.

(George, 1999)

I now contextualise the shift in the development of SEL from the self-esteem movement and targeted social skills programmes of the 1980s to present day universal SEL interventions (Coleman, 2009). By introducing a political theoretical framework here, I do not mean to dismiss political forces that operated previously, but to emphasise the powerful shift that took place in the 1980s through the restructuring of world capitalism. According to Harvey

Future historians may well look upon the years 1978-1980 as a revolutionary turning point in the world’s social and economic history.

(Harvey, 2005, p. 1)
There is a danger when dealing with political theory of trotting out generalisations, if only to convey the opaque in a manner accessible to those who don’t subscribe to the *Journal of International Political Theory*. I wish to avoid unnecessary complexity and agree with Michael Apple that

> Given the fact that the Right is so powerful today, it is important that progressive texts not require that you read seven other books in order to understand them. Theory is absolutely crucial. But I am worried about over-theorization.

(Apple, 2004, p. 181)

This thesis must find a balance between the complex theory I wish to give voice to, and its relationship with the mind of the reader, particularly in relation to achieving social transformation. I will argue that power and discourse, working through what is known as neoliberalism, constructed a specific model of education that in turn created the current model of SEL.

### 3.7.2 Neoliberal governance – what do I mean?

The 1980s, particularly in the UK and certain European states, saw a new form of politics constructed around the individual, with freedom of choice, competition, a free market and minimal government intervention at the heart of it. This was in contrast to the previously consensual model of society that presupposed a welfare state, government intervention in social conditions, public services, state control over the economy and state protection for its citizens. Commentators agree on the philosophical nature of the change as much as they disagree on its outcomes (Bauman, 2000; Giroux, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Clarke, 2013).

There is acknowledgement that we have entered a time of neoliberalism governance (Chomsky, 1999). There is no one definition for neoliberalism, indeed it is a complex
phenomenon (Larner, 2000) as much invoked as it is ill-defined and interpreted. Yet for all its complexity, one can identify across commentators and theorists that the heart of neoliberalism is a market view of citizenship that categorises the citizen as an economic maximiser (Lynch, 2010) governed by self-interest, as homo economicus (Thaler, 2000).

There is a glorification of the consumer citizen construed as willing, resourced and capable of making market-led choices. In this new market, the individual, not the state, is held accountable for her or his own well-being. The state’s role is one of facilitator and enabler of the consumer and market-led citizen. (Lynch, Grummell, and Devine, 2012, p. 14)

Campbell and Pedersen see neoliberalism as

[a heterogeneous set of institutions consisting of various ideas, social and economic policies, and ways of organizing political and economic activity … Ideally, it includes formal institutions, such as minimalist welfare-state, taxation, and business regulation programs; flexible labor markets and decentralized capital.

(Campbell and Pedersen, 2001, p. 5)

Many commentators (Apple, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Chen and Morley, 2006; Duménil and Lévy, 2011) believe that neoliberalism has gone beyond being simply a political vision (if it ever was such a thing) and has become what Gramsci (1995) would refer to as a ‘cultural hegemony’, that is a dominant consciousness that presents one way of thinking, doing and understanding. This is a position matching that of Dumenil and Levy who reflect that ‘The leadership (of neoliberalism) is ensured by the United States and its grasp over the periphery is combined with a form of inter-imperialist domination’ (Dumenil and Levy, 2007, p. 6). That is, the model of neoliberalism operating across the UK and many other societies is anchored and serviced in the social, economic, cultural and political interests and values of the US conservative modernisers - neoliberals, neoconservatives, authoritarian populist
religious conservatives and members of an upwardly mobile fraction of the professional and managerial new middle classes (Apple, 2007, p. 105). To this end I would argue, as others have, that neoliberalism is a configuration of power (Storey, 2000). This view is reiterated by Clarke cited in (Storey, 2004) as positing that neoliberalism is in fact a political-cultural project which different geographical places are invited, seduced, and compelled to join.

Viewing neoliberalism through a hegemonic lens Wendy Brown stated in 2005 that it is not just an economic policy but rather

… neo-liberalism carries a social analysis which, when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policy to practices of empire.

(Brown, 2005, p. 230)

3.7.3 The concept of governmentality

Governmentality is an important framework here for understanding the development of neoliberalism and its relationship to power. The term was used by (Foucault, 1995) as a tool for analysing the link between forms of government and forms of thought. In relation to neoliberalism it articulates a new process of governing involving the shaping and control of the individual subject’s inner and outer worlds, resulting in a self-disciplining individual. This is achieved by perceived benevolent, objective institutions which are either physical (school, hospitals and the workplace) and/or nonphysical (normative values). Essentially our minds are shaped to create and support a social reality (neoliberalism) that the dominant hegemony suggests exists. We create it through the self-governance/discipline of our inner and outer activities. On the one hand we are increasingly governed, yet on the other increasingly de-governed as the state retreats from public service and responsibility. Brown
calls this process of governmentality ‘techniques of governing that exceed express state action and orchestrate the subject's conduct toward him or herself’ (Brown, 2005, p. 43).

Reflecting on the development of the self-esteem movement, and replacing ‘self-esteem’ with ‘self-assessment’ one can see a real life example of governmentality. The concept of governmentality is a powerful lens through which to explore the power dynamics and processes in play when New Labour, along with other actors, drove SEL across England and Wales.

The view of neoliberalism I paint above has its critics and for an alternative voice one should certainly read Norberg (2005) In Defence of Global Capitalism, as well as reviewing the writings of early neoliberal thinkers such as Friedman (2003), and Hayek (1960). The latter philosophised that

(it is more) important to release the creative energy of individuals than to devise further machinery for ‘guiding’ and ‘directing’ them – to create conditions favourable to progress rather than ‘to plan progress’.

(Hayek, 2005, p. 246)

To develop a broader view of the neoliberal debate I would recommend one turn to Harvey’s (2005) excellent A Brief History of Neoliberalism as well as the more recent and very thorough Masters of the Universe (Jones, 2012).

3.7.4 Where are the supporters of neoliberalism?

Interestingly, what I have found lacking in the literature relating to neoliberalism is a body of contemporary academic writing either defending or advocating the neoliberal approach to economic adjustment. There are very few academics or commentators writing in
support of neoliberalism. Fundamentally the academic writings regarding neoliberalism are focused upon either critiques, works exploring its complexity or articles reflecting on the direction it is taking. Of course one could infer a multitude of reasons for this absence but I do consider that one cause of this is related to Apple’s (2004) assertion that one of the great successes of the Right has been in capturing and controlling the ‘common sense’ political discourse. By common sense I mean, as Harvey (2005) articulates, that neoliberal ideas are deeply engrained into ‘the common-sense way we interpret, live in and understand the world’ (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). Essentially the pro neoliberal discourse is embedded within the vast majority of mass media messages we are swamped by. The neoliberal right has no need to write academic books and papers for its messages are repeated daily in the news media and entertainment industry, through marketing and political campaigns and, at the most effective level, within the conversations we have with each other about our lives.

To paint a picture of the shift that took place in the 1980s I now turn to the transnational organisations that drove and applied neoliberal principles and as such were key to creating the society that incubated and gave birth to what we know as SEL.

3.7.5 The General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS)

The General Agreement on Trade and Services entered into force in 1995. It is a transnational system of international trade rules that according to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is intended to be non-discriminatory, stimulate economic activity through guaranteed policy bindings and promote trade and development through progressive liberalisation (World Trade Organisation 2014). Proponents of GATS believe that the agreement through liberalisation will ‘result in lower consumer prices, better quality, wider choice, faster innovation and more efficient processes’ (Hilger, 2005, p. 8). Yet critics of
GATS are clear that it is a part of ‘an increasing attempt to privatise public services, including education, so that citizens will have to buy them at market value rather than have them provided by the State’ (Lynch, 2006, p. 1).

Essentially the agreement means that member countries commit (under certain terms and conditions) to opening up public sector services (health, education, transport etc.) to free market cross border, privatised, delivery. This (neo)liberalising position, according to the US, ‘increases the variety and amount of education services available to WTO members’ (World Trade Organisation, 1998, p. 1).

_The General Agreement on Trade in Services_ is a complex and challenging agreement that perhaps, due to its complexity, has provoked a polarised debate, for or against. Although for the purposes and nature of this thesis I place my own writings in the ‘against’ camp I am actually concerned with the manner in which GATS has created a dominant discourse rather than the technical ambiguities as to whether it does actually compel states to privatise public services (for a thorough discussion of this issue see Hilger, 2005).

What concerns this thesis is that, at the level of discourse, the WTO, in building the GATS agreement, drove through a way of seeing and engaging in the world that offered no political understanding of the state and its role but rather focused solely on economic adjustment (Storey, 2000). In other words the state is simply a neutral, apolitical mechanism for brokering private services to the consumer. The GATS agreement presupposes (and through its discourse creates) a serious of assumed truths. First, that economic success is the most important goal for the actors engaged. Second, that free market economics is the only ideology in town and finally that historically public sector, state-managed services are simply another market commodity, one whose value is solely measured through economic activity. This position is particularly well articulated by Kelsey (1999), cited in Ziguras (2003) who states that through the WTO and GATS, education is viewed
... as a commercial, tradable commodity. There is no recognition of its role as a means of
nation-building; a local storehouse of knowledge; the vehicle to transmit culture and language;
the prerequisite for a vibrant democracy and a contest of ideas; a source of innovation and
change; or a desirable activity per se.

(Ziguras, 2003, p. 90)

Two points need to be drawn from my consideration of GATS. First, the powerful
neoliberal discourse of education as a market - a service to be traded, bought and sold for
economic gain - is one that I wish the reader to elicit from the GATS agreement. Whether this
liberalisation is legally mandatory or not may be irrelevant for when we are told there is only
one way of thinking and doing - TINA – ‘There Is No Alternative’ – (Apple, 2007) it is likely
this route will be pursued by the majority and what we end up seeing and enacting, in the
case of how SEL developed in the 1990s, is a mirror of the discourse. Second, it is vital to
note the neutralising of the role of the state. Economic adjustments stand above and beyond
the state and any form of political analysis. The individual is a consumer in the education
marketplace and therefore the mind must be shaped and managed in order to ensure they
consume in the right manner. As Lynch notes one of the key purposes of education becomes
‘the conceptualisation of the person to be educated as a highly individualised, self-regarding
and consuming economic actor’ (2006, p. 6).

3.7.6 The World Bank

If GATs provided an international discourse to support the development of SEL then
the World Bank, through its promotion and funding of education initiatives, could be seen as
a powerful institutional mechanism through which the discourse was made practical. To
unpick the implications of this practice one must first recognise that the World Bank has
redefined itself over the past twenty years as a knowledge bank (Wolfensohn, 1996; Jones, 2004) moving from a traditional lender and economic advisor to an institution focused on social and political development through the process of economic adjustment. Accordingly this position means that ‘knowledge has effectively replaced lending capital as the greatest asset that the Bank has to offer the developing world’ (Enns, 2014, p. 2).

Crucial to understanding the implications of this reinvention is determining what is meant by knowledge and what is appropriate knowledge? Literature in this area suggests that the model of knowledge pursued by the bank has been grounded in what (Wade, 2001) terms paradigm maintenance: that is a socially constructed acceptable (to the bank) version of knowledge, one which promotes and privileges the dominant economic discourse of neoliberalism. Knowledge is therefore understood in a majoritarian, universal and objective manner with no space for alternative, indigenous, localised versions. As Mehta asserts this narrative of knowledge is ‘constructed monolithically and in absolute terms, rather than as something that is contested and context-based’ (Mehta, 2001, p. 192).

The World Bank’s version of knowledge is ultimately utilised in order to ‘promote and preserve’ programmatic ideas about the role of the state, which [emphasize] the need for thoroughgoing liberalization and privatization’ (Wade, 1996, p. 4). Placing this in the context of education Gita Steiner-Khamsi believes this has resulted in a situation where ‘The World Bank now determines what works and what does not work in terms of educational development’ (Klees et al., 2012, p. 4).

This prescribed vision of knowledge is I believe crucial to understanding the development of SEL in the 1990s. To better understand the implications of this vision and how it has influenced the development of SEL one need only turn to the 2011 World Bank report Strengthening Skills and Employability in Peru. The key finding of the report stated that
The first, and most binding factor, is the lack of a core set of generic (cognitive and socio-emotional) skills, which are demanded by employers and highly valued by the labor market.

(World Bank, 2011, p. 8)

From the above statement one can make the following observations: social and emotional skills are generic; there is a defined core set of these generic SEL skills; SEL is first and foremost affiliated with employment; the value of SEL is judged and rewarded by the labour market. This is a version of SEL that reflects Wade’s concept of knowledge as paradigm maintenance. If one takes a step deeper into the report this paradigm maintenance becomes remarkably clear in statements such as

socio-emotional skills are central to the policy debate of many OECD countries. They determine a person’s readiness to learn over the life cycle by shaping the capacity and motivation to absorb new knowledge, adapt and solve new problems.

(World Bank, 2011, p. 25)

We can see that SEL is not only defined and determined by the labour market but that it is the OECD labour market (not a market indigenous to Peru) that defines it. This is the key point to be drawn from the influence of the World Bank on the development of SEL for by moving into knowledge development the Bank has over the past twenty years been integral to shaping and forming what is SEL, how we understand it and its purpose, a purpose that this thesis believes is grounded in governmentality: power utilised to discipline and control the inner self in order to ensure paradigm maintenance.

3.7.7 The World Health Organisation (WHO)
The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialist division of the United Nations concerned with the global governance of health and disease. It is a complex and multi-faceted organisation, hard to talk about as if it were a unitary voice. For my purposes, however, there are clear messages and practices that I wish to draw out.

The WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity (WHO, 1946).

This holistic, aspirational, understanding of health (Johnson, 2007) has proved to be controversial, with some critics arguing that it is wholly unrealistic and unobtainable (Cueto, 2004) while others have challenged the absence of a spiritual or emotional dimension (Ewles and Simnett, 1999). One can certainly state that it is a positive and holistic version of health and one that is somewhat at odds with the dominant medicalised discourse of health that operates across the Western world. It is important to note this distinction as in terms of the organisation’s activity, as we will see it is both a central tenet and a compelling contradiction.

Similar in manner to the World Bank, the WHO has since the mid-1980s (WHO, 1986) redefined its role, moving from a focus of addressing global individual illness (albeit from a holistic perspective), to placing the organisation’s emphasis on health promotion as a part of development policy. This emphasis has led to a new version of public health and health promotion that many consider has moved beyond health care and into social reform and equity (Kickbusch, 2003). This link with development was made explicit as the organisation defined its goal as ‘providing all people with the opportunity to lead a socially and economically productive life’ (Kickbusch, 2003, online).

As one can see, the social is linked with the economic and it is here that the contradiction referred to earlier sits. The WHO promotes a version of health consistent in many respects with a social theory model (Whitehead, 1998) rather than the dominant medicalised model, yet through this agenda and its health promotion activity, particularly the
focus on the inner social/emotional self, the WHO has pursued a discourse linking a social
version of health with productivity, essentially a neoliberal version of employment. The
linking of social and emotional health with employment is a key message in the neoliberal
discourse and one could argue inconsistent with a social model of health, particularly the
notion that ill health is connected to poverty, inequality and discrimination - issues I would
argue are directly created by the neoliberal employment model. One could say that the
neoliberal machinery has cleverly co-opted (Apple, 2007; Harvey, 2005) the useful elements
of the WHO social model of health (social skills, personal development, relationships etc.),
partly for the purpose of creating new markets, and appropriated these into the individualised
concept of personal health and development as employability, a process that I argue later in
this thesis occurred with the UK SEAL programme.

3.7.7.1 European Health for All programme

To understand the impact of the WHO’s health promotion agenda and how it directly
influenced the development of SEL it is worth looking at the European Health for All
programme (WHO, 1984).

Designed to promote and support healthy lifestyles the programme chose a model of
lifestyles as collective behaviours rooted in context and environment as opposed to the US
version which focused on lifestyles as individual behaviour change. One could argue that at
the time this reflected some elements of the European social democratic tradition and the
American free market individual liberties concept (Kickbusch, 2011). The final version of
Health for All reflected these complexities and political pressures inherent to the WHO, as it
ultimately combined the two, one could argue, opposing models. This vying of the individual
rubbing against the collective will, to the sharp eyed reader, surely rings some bells in the world of SEL as it developed in the UK.

Key to the Health for All programme was the Health Promoting Schools agenda through which the major elements of the policy were enacted. According to WHO literature Health Promoting Schools included: caring for oneself and others; making healthy decisions; taking control over life's circumstances; influencing health-related behaviours such as knowledge, beliefs, skills, attitudes, values, support (WHO, 2010).

3.7.7.2 The European Network of Health Promoting Schools

In the UK, according to Katherine Weare, one of the key English SEL actors and a key contributor to SEAL, The European Network of Health Promoting Schools ‘provided a valuable seedbed for trying out some of the ideas that shape this book [Promoting Mental, Emotional, and Social Health: A Whole School Approach]’ (Weare, 2000).

I would wholly concur with Weare’s assertion. However from my perspective the role of the WHO and particularly Health Promoting Schools, was far more influential than Weare gives it credit for. The development of the WHO health promotion model was, I believe, key in four ways for shaping how SEL could be imagined.

1. The WHO developed a model of health that moved from intervention to prevention, thus opening the door to universal programmes.

2. The WHO developed an understanding of health that included social and emotional learning.
3. It linked SEL to employability and labelled it as a resource, thereby connecting it to productivity and individualism - social and emotional health as a resource to sell on the market.

4. Its understanding of SEL came from a health promotion framework that blended US individualism with European collectivism to create a version of SEL in which it was for each of our children to take individual responsibility for their own WB.

3.7.8 The 1990s - intelligence, risk and management

Having set in the reader’s mind the international socio-political context for the development of what came to be known as SEL, I now intend to capture the contemporary American origins and forces of SEL practice that shaped the creation and awareness of SEL as we know it in England and Wales.

In order to achieve this I will explore three elements of American thinking connected to the SEL discourse between 1990 and 1997: 1) moral panics (Cohen, 1972) and risk management; 2) audit culture and the rise of the neoliberal democrats (Peters, 1983); and 3) debates and developments as to how intelligence is perceived and understood, including the birth of ‘Emotional Intelligence’. After drawing together these complex strands I conclude by exploring the creation of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an American SEL organisation built on and dedicated to promoting the forces and thinking identified above. The issues explored here are crucial to this thesis: I will argue that
they directly informed how the UK, in particular New Labour, understood and enacted *Social and Emotional Learning* in the late 1990s.

3.7.8.1 **Moral panics and risk management**

The early 1990s saw the beginnings of the socio emotional learning movement as we currently know it. The movement was concerned with the promotion of universal social and emotional skills rather than the targeted, single issue, prevention programmes of the 1980s. The socio emotional movement was interested in programmes that could work on the whole child and ultimately improve their personality, encourage a healthy lifestyle and create caring, respectful and responsible young people. This change in thinking was captured by (Elias et al., 1997), one of the leading proponents, who, reflecting on the change of direction from prevention to promotion, noted that single issue programmes had not been successful because educators had been putting the wrong fuel in the students’ tanks. The missing ingredients were emotions, for he believed young people could not begin to learn new ways until their emotions were recognised and understood. The socio emotional movement was one of the first voices to openly elucidate a direct link between children’s learning, and misunderstood or mismanaged emotions as a barrier to this.

To understand how the socio emotional movement came to this conclusion one must understand how children were being talked about at the time. As Radford (2002) notes, the interest in children’s emotional development stemmed from problems of social disaffection and a perception of social impoverishment in schools. Stepping back to writings of the period (Weissberg & Elias, 1993) one can identify that the SEL movement was built upon a series of clear assumptions about the child and the power of socio emotional skills;
• Children have never been at greater risk from violence, disengagement and anti-social activities
• School should be the location for inoculating children against anti-social activities
• Children’s personality can be modified through teaching specific social and emotional skills
• Schools can, through instruction, create a caring, empathic society
• Socio emotional learning fosters improved academic performance

It is worth noting how similar these assumptions are in terms of the object (the child) and the subject (socioemotional learning), to the thinking that supported the development of the self-esteem movement: children are damaged, at risk and we need to respond with a cure. The following statement taken from a US Government report in 1990 captures the thinking that was taking place in America at this time.

All across the nation, children and youth are smoking, drinking, having sex, committing violence, and becoming involved with gangs at younger and younger ages.

*(National Commission on the Role of the School and the Community in Improving Adolescent Health, 1990, page number unknown.)*

From a similar perspective Takanishi considered that

As members of U.S. society, we stand at the crossroads: We can make a commitment to support the full development of adolescents into productive adults or we can continue to waste the lives of significant numbers in the youth cohort.

*(Takanishi, 1993, p. 87)*
Elias and Weisberg’s influential paper *Enhancing young people's social competence and health behaviour* (Weissberg & Elias, 1993) expresses what one could call the moral panic of the time.

… there is growing national concern about the large number of young people who engage in behaviors that put them at risk for negative social, emotional, and physical health outcomes such as drug abuse, teen pregnancy, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), delinquency, depression, school dropout, and suicide.

(Weissberg & Elias, 1993, p. 179)

In response to this ‘deficit’ and ‘moral panic’ thinking, schools and teaching were identified as the site for repairing children; social and emotional learning programmes would inoculate them against such risks. This drove a move from targeted programmes, aimed at changing specific behaviours, to the concept of universal social competence programmes that incorporated emotional guidance and had a broader ‘improving personality’ and health promotion objective - essentially SEL. According to Elias et al. (1997) this version of SEL generally covered five areas; self-development, respect, caring, responsibility and spiritual values.

### 3.7.8.2 Audit and the Neoliberal Democrats

Incorporated into this early idea of universal SEL were two key forces of American neoliberalism; audit and control. Auditing is an essential component of new managerialism (Apple, 2007), a function demanding constant measurement and accountability of those being managed, particularly across the public funded education sphere. Control is a central concept of the risk management culture, within education frequently played out through the belief that children must be visible and safe at all times. By the early 1990s, Bernstein (2000) notes
American education had adopted a performance model of pedagogic discourse connected to and driven by a neoliberal discourse of accountability, standards and marketisation.

I believe (as argued in Watson et al., 2012) that the impact of the forces of audit in shaping contemporary SEL into a particular form of therapeutic governance (Ecclestone, 2007) cannot be overestimated. The audit element developed SEL into a psychosocial objective list model (for what cannot be measured cannot be audited) and the control element placed adult entrepreneurial skills and qualities onto children as a coat of self-management. Essentially, the diverse single issue 1980s social skills programmes were drawn together through the traction of the social risk management approach, central to neoliberal ideology, as a response to the moral panic. For an interesting discussion of the risk management approach in relation to social and emotional development see Pupavac, (2001).

The early SEL movement, referred to as socio emotional learning, drew from the affective education movement and character education programmes already in place across many American schools. Mayer et al. (2000) note that in the US, character education is generally associated with the conservative right (teaching of morals and patriotism), whilst socio emotional learning was trumpeted by the liberal left. An interesting comparison could be made here with the ‘modernisation’ taking place under Tony Blair’s leadership of New Labour in 1994, whereby a perceived centre left organisation began co-opting ideas traditionally associated with the right.

3.7.8.3 Intelligence and the emotions

In 1990, as the social emotional movement grew across America, two academics, Mayer and Salovey, delivered the first conceptualisation of emotional intelligence (EI). They
had been working for a number of years exploring a scientific, theoretical understanding of emotions as a key contributor to the wider concepts of intelligence. Intelligence (IQ) and how it was understood, expressed and measured, in particular the role of race within intelligence, was a fertile field for debate and investigation in the America of the 1980s and had resulted in a number of somewhat polemic publications and discussion seeping into the public arena, see for instance *Frames of Mind* (Gardner, 1983) and *The IQ Controversy, the Media and Public Policy* (Snyderman & Rothman, 1988). Putting aside the contents of Rothman and Snyderman’s publication, they do capture the crucial essence of public thinking at the time in the following statement

> However intelligence is defined, the suggestion that individual differences in intelligence, like individual capacities for painting or composing, may have a genetic component has become anathema.

(p. 250)

Very little has so far been written exploring the ‘intelligence’ discourse that influenced the contemporary development of SEL. However in reviewing the discourse of the time one can argue that a new space was being created, yet to be populated, by the American public who were looking for a different modernised version of intelligence that matched an ‘egalitarian’ model of society, challenged the limiting concept of intellectual intelligence (thereby legitimising the discourse of the socially incompetent nerd Zeidner & Matthews, 2000), reflected social justice concerns and ultimately giving value to a non-fixed, progressive model of intelligence that legitimised emotional expression (Matthews et al., 2004). I would also contend that the opening up of the intelligence discourse, particularly to non-intellectual abilities, was connected to the neoliberal agenda: by co-opting social and emotional factors into the intelligence arena one could utilise these as an economic commodity, or emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003).
3.7.9 Emotional Intelligence - Mayer and Salovey

Mayer and Salovey’s investigation was a pioneering piece of research that, if not challenging biological determinism, was certainly opening new doors as to what may constitute and contribute towards intelligence at a time when it was generally considered that emotions and intelligence were competing psychological forces (Matthews et al., 2004). In their seminal 1990 paper Mayer and Salovey defined Emotional Intelligence (EI) as

the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.

(Salovey & Mayer 1990, p. 189)

The paper was built around participants recognising emotional content in a range of stimuli (faces, colours and designs) and relating these findings to their ability to demonstrate empathy. By defining EI as an ability Mayer and Salovey grounded EI as a progressive function - one that could be developed and, most crucially for this thesis, taught and learnt as part of one’s personal growth and self-management. Mayer and Salovey’s work was published through an academic peer reviewed journal and received little publicity beyond the academic community it served. This outcome was soon to change.

3.7.9.1 The Bell Curve

Before moving onto perhaps the most crucial publication relevant to this thesis, Daniel Goleman’s, Emotional Intelligence, to contextualise the impact of the intelligence
debate on SEL development, I will first turn to the controversial publication of Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray’s (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) book, *The Bell Curve*.

The book argued that IQ was fixed both individually and within racial groupings, and those with a high IQ were far more likely to be successful in life than those with a lower score, furthermore those born into a family of high intelligence inherited higher intelligence. It stated that interventions aimed at creating a more egalitarian society were in fact pointless and perhaps most controversially that genetically we are destined to stay where we are in society, with the American black community 15% behind whites in IQ. The book proposed that different rates of success between races were due to different levels of intelligence between races.

The Publication of *The Bell Curve* was greeted with controversy across America, with those of a conservative inclination tending to agree with the book’s central messages and those with liberal leanings agreeing less or wholly refuting the findings and categorising them as racist. According to journalist Jim Naureckas

… while many of these discussions included sharp criticisms of the book, media accounts showed a disturbing tendency to accept Murray and Herrnstein's premises and evidence even while debating their conclusions.

(Naureckas 1995, online)

In the UK the *Times Higher Education Supplement* reported that ‘*The Bell Curve* is sending shock waves through America’ (November 11th, 1994). Interestingly the public response was mirrored by the academic community with one group of academics publicly endorsing the findings (*Wall Street Journal*, December 16th, 1994) whilst the American Psychological Association (Neisser et al., 1996) published a response to the work which although accepting some of the publication’s less controversial findings concluded that there
was no evidential support for a genetic interpretation of IQ. According to Fraser in his (1995) publication, *The Bell Curve Wars*, the publication was

The most incendiary piece of social science to appear in the last decade or more ... The Bell Curve irritates every abraded nerve in our public consciousness about race and social class (p.1)

### 3.7.10 The Clinton factor

President Bill Clinton publicly dismissed the findings of *The Bell Curve*. His damning response was not particularly surprising as the pessimistic findings and the concept of static intelligence were anathema to his discourse of hope, change and social justice for America. As a neoliberal democrat (Peters, 1983) Clinton had pursued an agenda of social justice and community values underwritten by free market economic productivity; economic growth as a tool for reducing inequality. The concept of change so central to Clinton’s presidency, particularly in regard to education thinking, was cast in economic terms. America had to be successful in the globalised economic market and to achieve this needed to ensure a highly skilled, transitional and flexible workforce, educated to operate across the free market (Levin, 2010). From this thinking emerged two concepts key to the story of American SEL development: first, school reform was linked to human resources and economic success, second, the school site was a focus for community action.

Community action presented as social justice was, as Fowler (1995) notes, for President Clinton the foundation for sustained economic growth, a message we saw repeated in the New Labour era in Britain. Clinton’s education policy just like New Labour’s was confusing and contradictory. On the one hand he championed social inequality interventions, built on the concept of community regeneration, yet at the same time increased testing and measurement and introduced the standards and excellence agenda (McDonnell et al., 1997).
As the Clinton administration redefined education policy, the appearance of *The Bell Curve* was a huge challenge to the administrations’ agenda for change. This challenge, alongside the public response to *The Bell Curve*, and the moral panic noted earlier did, I believe, create a unique space within the American education discourse, a space waiting to be filled with an ideology built on a non-static version of IQ, wrapped in the belief that a new version of economic success could be taught, learnt and delivered to students across America and packaged in the language of hope, social justice and personal development. That ideology presented itself in 1995 with the publication of Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence*.

### 3.7.11 Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Goleman

This section will place the emphasis on the impact of Daniel Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence* (EI) (1995), in particular to point at EI and the discourse that drove the publication and emanated from it. This discourse element of Goleman’s work is vastly under researched due, I believe, to Goleman’s writing being labelled as journalism rather than science. Also, the concept he presented was located in the public sphere rather than the academic community; he was not considered relevant to the serious academic eye, a point supported by Gillum (2010) who in his doctoral thesis on Emotional Literacy remarks that ‘theoretical approaches, such as Goleman's highly influential popularised account of emotional intelligence ... are not addressed by the review as they contain a mix of elements’ (p. 13). I would draw the reader to the work of Craig (2006, 2007, 2009) cited throughout this thesis, as the best source (albeit not peer reviewed) for a critique of the discourse supporting Goleman’s concept.

To support my approach I will be drawing on some of the key academic texts regarding the concept of EI: however I am more interested here in the how and why
Emotional Intelligence entered into and played out in the mainstream media discourse rather than the academic and scientific content and response (a response noted earlier that related to the definition and measurement of the concept rather than the discourse element). For those seeking a detailed academic exploration of Goleman’s work I recommend the excellent Emotional Intelligence; Science and Myth by Matthews et al. (2003), the scholarly The Handbook of Emotional Intelligence, edited by Bar-On and Parker in 2000, A Critique of Emotional Intelligence (Murphy, 2006) a captivating critical analysis of research on EI; and the authoritative writings of Professor Neil Humphrey, in particular Social and Emotional Learning; A Critical Appraisal (Humphrey, 2013).

3.7.11.1 Emotional Intelligence: the book

1995 saw the first public breakthrough for the term Emotional Intelligence. Daniel Goleman, a New York journalist and science reporter, had been visiting schools for a publication he was planning based on the emotions. It appears that Goleman, while researching his new book, came across the scientific writings of Salovey and Mayer (1990). Goleman quickly and expertly, through combining anecdotal evidence extrapolating the essence of Mayer and Salovey’s findings, changed the direction and title of his book to Emotional Intelligence and suddenly a new phenomenon was born that represented contemporary cultural values (Salovey et al. 2001). This tension in Goleman’s work between the journalist and the scientist is perhaps best captured by Salovey et al. who reflect that in regard to Goleman
The scientist says, ‘Here is what I’ve been working on recently …’ The journalist replies, ‘This is really important’ and then jazzes up the story in a way that seems close to lunacy.

(Salovey et al. 2001, p. xiii)

3.7.11.2 Reviews of the book ‘Emotional Intelligence’

*Emotional Intelligence* became an instant bestseller and dominated the mainstream US news media and public discourse with the New York Times declaring it a ‘masterly overview of recent research in psychology and neuroscience’ (September 17, 1995) whilst *Time* magazine stated that

> From kindergartens to business schools to corporations across the U.S., people are taking seriously the idea that a little more time spent on the "touchy-feely" skills so often derided may in fact pay rich dividends. Nowhere is the discussion of emotional intelligence more pressing than in American schools ...

(Nancy Gibbs in *Time Magazine*, Sunday June 24th, 2001)

In the UK the *Times Educational Supplement* considered that ‘… Goleman creates a powerful case for re-structuring what goes on in the classroom’ (February 9th, 1996).

These reviews, amongst the hundreds worldwide that praised the book, impacted strongly on the public understanding of Emotional Intelligence; the concept was called to public attention. Furthermore as the reviews were located in publications such as *The New York Times*, the agenda setting message (‘this is the new egalitarian IQ’) was directly delivered to those who shaped American society (politicians, business executives, television producers, union leaders) (Lichter et al., 1986). As Carvalho (2007) notes, public perceptions and attitudes, particularly relating to issues of science, are greatly influenced by representations in the press. The US media coverage gave both a sense of legitimacy and consensus to Goleman’s concept. For many people their understanding of EI came directly
from the reviews and as such EI was framed as a simplistic known that could be applied with success to all walks of life. The story sat perfectly as the positive response in the binary either/or structure of news media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), EI became the ‘or’ to IQ’s ‘either’ and as such ensured that no other alternative was offered. The media played a crucial role in the production and transformation of what was meant and understood (Fairclough, 1995) by Emotional Intelligence. A point made by Farron (2005) who in his furious critique of Affirmative Action, The Affirmative Action Hoax, contends that Goleman’s influence spreads through a ripple effect, as his ideas are absorbed by more and more people who do not read his books but are informed, second and third hand, that its ideas have been proved and are what experts think.

(Farron, 1995, online)

3.7.11.3 Emotional Intelligence: the package

The book Emotional Intelligence appeared with a bold text cover and no image, typical of mainstream business management texts of the time. Two strong messages were located at the top and bottom of the cover, with the words ‘Emotional Intelligence’ sandwiched as the filling in between. As Turner reflected in his review for The Times Educational Supplement (February 9th, 1996) it is ‘a text for our times’ both in regard to message and design. The first message at the top of the cover stated that the book ‘redefines what it means to be smart’, a strong statement that captures the imagination and intelligence zeitgeist in a non-hierarchical informal manner. The lower message proclaimed that this new intelligence ‘can matter more than IQ’, thereby immediately offering a response to The Bell Curve debate. In the introduction Goleman posed the question ‘What can we change that will help our children fare better in life?’ thereby cleverly capturing the moral panic and social
justice fears of the American public. Of course Goleman’s answer to the question (fulfilling the self-development and individual responsibility discourse of the neoliberals) was emotional intelligence.

these skills, as we will see, can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them.

(Goleman, 1995, p. xii)

Goleman’s creation was the perfect response to Clinton’s message of change, hope and social justice. It was socially and historically situated (Fairclough, 2000), socially shaped but socially shaping. The idea that IQ was the barometer of future success and status was being challenged, just as the public desired, by a new belief, a non-intellectual, emotional-based philosophy that could be learnt and developed by anyone. This was a philosophy that offered hope and opportunity and perfectly fitted the era of homo economicus. The destiny of the individual was in his/her hands, for these EI skills of self-control, zeal, persistence and the ability to motivate oneself (Goleman, 1995) were perfectly suited to the neoliberal performative model of education (Ball, 2012).

One could argue that Goleman’s greatest success was in utilising Mayer and Salovey’s thinking in order to develop a simple and accessible model of EI built around five core elements of self-awareness, motivation, social skills, empathy and managing feelings. In building this framework he made a series of powerful connections that captured the mood of America. Firstly, poor EI was linked to anti-social behaviour. Secondly, there was a strong correlation between good EI and pro social behaviour. Thirdly, EI was claimed to be more powerful than IQ in predicting future (economic) success. Finally, EI was equated with better behaviour and academic success in schools (Goleman, 1995; Matthews et al., 2004). It was offering an incredibly simple, single psychological entity, as well as an optimistic answer to a range of America’s troubles. It was the perfect egalitarian response to The Bell Curve and it
went viral. According to Waterhouse, (2006) between 2003 and 2005, visits to EI.edu websites increased from 14,700 to 220,000 whilst between June 1, 2005 and December 1, 2005, Google site:edu workshops offering EI increased from 9,180 to 45,100.

3.7.12 Instrumentalising the emotions

In unpicking why Goleman’s EI model had such an impact I would contend that the book instrumentalised emotions in the public consciousness, presenting them as a new field ready to be mined for performative purposes. Emotion could now be known (Fineman, 2004) and measured (Hartley, 2006). One could argue that EI, within a neoliberal framework, met the needs of producers seeking to expand and develop economic markets and consumers desiring to competitively participate in the market. With employability and marketisation at the heart of educational modernisation, as well as the moral panics noted earlier, it is therefore no surprise that Goleman’s model was eagerly adopted across the education community: a model for modifying behaviour based on a presupposed notion of what makes a good, performing, citizen (Boler, 1999; Hartley, 2006). As Gibbs (1995) notes, Goleman’s impact on the field of emotional intelligence assumed epic proportions.

3.7.13 Critiques of Emotional Intelligence

Upon the publication of EI three critiques were immediately evident within the academic community. Firstly, it was unclear what exactly Emotional Intelligence was. It was poorly defined, for if one followed Goleman’s belief then EI was everything apart from IQ. Secondly, Goleman’s model offered no empirical, transparent, hard scientific evidence to
support the claims it made, indeed his sources were mostly unpublished let alone peer reviewed. Those that were cited were found to be uncritical and misused with wide generalisations being made. A position that led to Matthews et al. remarking that

Goleman appears willing to make strong claims with little (or scant) empirical backing

(Matthews et al., 2002, p. 13)

Finally, the accusation was made that Goleman was simply presenting a new name for familiar constructs and knowledge that were already understood across many disciplines; essentially old wine in new bottles. This point was particularly developed by Mayer et al. who concluded that the EI competencies overlapped with a number of psychological concepts including four of the Big Five personality dimensions (conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness) (Schutte et al. 1998). Perhaps most damningly Mayer et al. also highlighted that

If there were truly a single psychological entity that could predict widespread success at such levels, it would exceed any finding in a century of research in applied psychology.

(Mayer et al., 2000, p. 403)

Whilst rather bluntly Waterhouse (2006) stated that ‘No research has yet validated the notion of a unitary EI’ (p. 217), other critical commentary focused upon the presupposition that EI was a shared and understood concept and that it didn’t take into account ethnic and cultural variables as well as issues of implementation, delivery and assessment (Bar-On, 2000; Murphy, 2006; Wigelsworth & Lendrum, 2013).

3.7.14 CASEL - one message, one voice
I will conclude here with a reflection on the organisation called The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2005, 2009, 2013, 2014). My reason for this is quite simply that all the powerful discourses outlined above came together in the form of this one organisation’s voice, an incredibly powerful presence in the field of SEL. CASEL was founded by the EI consortium in 1996. The EI consortium is an umbrella organisation dedicated to developing emotional intelligence in the workplace. The model of emotional intelligence it promotes is built on Goleman’s work and more specifically his 1998 model of Emotional Competence and the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), an instrument to measure EI performance in the workplace.

If the EI consortium is Goleman’s (who is a co-director) and his colleagues’ platform for workplace EI, then CASEL, co-founded by Goleman, is the platform for developing EI across education based upon a version of Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence. By ‘a version’ I mean that the principles and practices inherent in Goleman’s model (essentialism, measurement, performance and growth wrapped around the twin pillars of personality and ability) and the message (SEL activity will improve children’s behaviour and measurable academic achievement) are ingrained throughout the CASEL model of EI. The organisation’s mission is to

help make evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of education from preschool through high school.

(CASEL, 2014, online)

Key members of CASEL include Weissberg, Greenberg, Durlak and Elias, all high profile and prolific SEL commentators (Bar-On and Parker, 2000) who have delivered a regular barrage of papers, presentations and media appearances promoting the benefits of
universal SEL (Weissberg & Greenberg 1998; Weissberg et al. 1989; Greenberg et al. 1995; Weissberg and Elias, 1993; Greenberg et al., 2003; Durlak & Wells 1997; Elias et al. 1991) as well as meta analyses (Durlak et al., 2008, 2011) indicating that SEL is a proven intervention with a clear evidence base. Although Goleman is not currently recorded as being a member of CASEL his presence and message are at the heart of the organisation and he is regularly referred to in CASEL publications and presentations as the co-founder (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2008).

In 2013 I wrote a short piece on CASEL which I think best captures what CASEL is

While it would be disingenuous to say that only one voice has existed in the US regarding the introduction and teaching of social and emotional learning programmes, CASEL is the dominant player in what is close to a monolithic discourse ... Whatever else it is, CASEL is not a non-aligned, independent, open forum for critical debate about SEL. Neither is it a publicly funded university department. CASEL is in effect a publishing house and lobbying organisation with a mission to make SEL a dominant discourse and practice in education.

(Watson et al. 2012, p. 62)

3.7.14.1 CASEL’s mission

This mission of CASEL’s, one could argue, was best accomplished in England, a point made by Daniel Goleman, who has remarked that ‘In Europe the U.K has led the way’ (Goleman 1995, p. x). The ‘way’ that Goleman refers to is the delivery of universal SEL programmes based on his EI model. I would contend that CASEL captured the discourse of EI within education based on the following premises that SEL

1. is evidence-based practice
2. offers a solution to social and moral problems
3. improves children’s behaviour
4. makes better citizens
5. increases academic attainment
6. increases attendance rates
7. develops students’ employability competencies

And all of the above could be achieved within the school location. SEL was being presented as the perfect wholesale inoculation programme for all children. One could argue that CASEL’s stronghold on educational understanding of SEL, positions SEL as a ‘majoritarian discourse’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) whereby ‘dominant social presuppositions take on the mask of necessity’ (Goodchild, 1996, p. 54).

3.7.15 Summary

As Murphy (2006) notes, tests, programmes and interventions designed to build and develop EI post Goleman have grown at an incredible rate. The concept, whether scientifically valid or not, is firmly in the public consciousness and the education arena. The EI discourse has moved way beyond the academic arena. It came from the world of public discourse and has stayed grounded in that world. The forces of neoliberalism utilised (through the Clinton administration) the moral panic and deficit discourse conversations and found, via the intelligence debates, a perfect space emerging that was ultimately populated by Goleman’s EI model. A ‘thin’ (Apple, 2007) version of social and emotional learning became common sense. This was a model built on a series of assumed truths and grounded in the neoliberal concept of self-management for personal economic growth. Furthermore a model that enacted the neoliberal principles of audit and control and applied them to children’s emotions. For the purposes of this study, and particularly the English and Welsh SEL discourse, I would similarly claim that Goleman’s greatest success was in ensuring EI
became a key cultural signifier and source of ideas. It set out what could and couldn’t be included in the SEL conversation as exemplified by the CASEL organisation. It is how this signifier was interpreted and applied in England and Wales (Chen & Morley, 2006) that will form the main body of the final chapter of this literature review.

3.8 Literature review part three: practice of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

3.8.1 New Labour – policy actors and SEAL

In this chapter I consider social and emotional learning (SEL) in England and Wales between 1997 and 2010. I begin by considering the policy context and actors in England and Wales. Building on Gunter and Forrester (2010) I ask which knowledge was used to frame SEL policy, how SEL entered UK discourse and was enacted in England and Wales. This will be followed by a critical (discourse analysis) examination of SEAL. Throughout this chapter I use Fairclough’s (1992) frame of three (policy) stages of discursive practice, each one linking, albeit loosely, to a New Labour term of office: the production (first term 1997-2001), distribution (second term 2001 – 2005) and consumption (third term 2005 – 2010) of SEL.

3.8.1.1 An opening note

I start with a note of caution. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme is a confusing term within the world of education policy, problematic for its cross-departmental policy location and understanding.

At its simplest, SEAL was the programme, managed in England through the National Strategies, which delivered New-Labour-in-England’s universal version of SEL to state-
funded schools. It was government-created initiative that grew to become the dominant vehicle for SEL across England. SEAL was picked up by some Welsh schools but this was piecemeal and nowhere near the saturation in England. By 2010 the programme was operational in 90% of primary and over 70% of secondary schools in England (Humphrey et al., 2010). It was so dominant that for England, when we talk about SEL and New Labour (in England), we mean SEAL. The rise of the term SEAL is arguably an example of fixing in a Bordieuian (1992) sense the meaning of SEL, excluding other meanings from entering the arena.

It must be acknowledged that other versions of SEL were in place during this period. SEAL was not official government policy but rather grey policy taken up in response to a clear message from central government. Policy that, although not mandatory, carried negative consequences for failure to implement it.

3.8.2 Policy Actors

I focus on participants’ influential in the New Labour education SEL discourse, essentially the policy actors. Drawing on Fairclough (1995; 2000) Gunter and Forrester (2010) and (Ball, 2008), I define policy actors as socially situated, complex and fluid (rather than fixed) individuals, organisations and networks - state and non-state, profit and non-profit - ‘whose identities and professional trajectories are often bound up with the policy positions and fixes that they espouse’ (Peck & Theodore, 2010, p. 170). This means government officials, consultants, business representatives, intellectuals, academics, researchers, steering groups, think tanks, voluntary sector representatives, advisors and lobby groups (Ball & Exley, 2010).
As noted in earlier chapters, education policy during the New Labour period was dominated by neoliberal thinking. Education was framed through the lens of economic competitiveness and the free market (Harvey, 2005; Ball, 2008). This entailed opening education up to business values, interests, principles, methods of management, and funding; a process that according to Gunter and Fitzgerald (2011) resulted in the economic sphere getting what it needed by moving into a previously debarred area: public services, in this case education. Education cosied up to the private sector thereby achieving the modernisation badge demanded by New Labour.

### 3.8.3 Production and distribution of the SEL discourse

A key signifier of New Labour’s understanding of education came in Blair’s 1996 speech ‘Education, education, education’ which came a few months after the UK publication of Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence. In this speech, education was placed at the heart of a vision of a neoliberal, knowledge-based economy and learning society (Brine, 2006), driven by the premise that investment in (lifelong) learning brings economic growth and social cohesion (Mulderrig, 2003). The ‘third way’ claimed that social justice and economic competitiveness came together (Giddens, 2002). Novoa, (2002) considers that this vision was in effect the local application of global policy speak whereby the language and thinking of the international neoliberal marketplace are infused within localised systems.

Driving neoliberalism across the education sector was nothing new. Previous Conservative governments had begun this process under the discourse of raising standards (Apple, 2006). By the mid-1990s education discourse was firmly located in the ideology of economic function, with privatisation and all that entails becoming a common sense discourse (Apple, 2006). In the UK, the 1995 change in name from the Department for
Education to the Department for Education and Employment suggests the power of the economic discourse.

David Blunkett came into office as Education Secretary with a clear task to modernise the comprehensive education system. In his conference speech of 2000 he made this comment

I appeal to parents to take their responsibilities seriously and think what is best for their child - what will help them best begin the process of learning and play, and how important it is for them to arrive at primary school with the confidence and social skills needed to make a good start.

(Blunkett, 2000a)

SEL within the education standards and achievement agenda was a clear message.

Elements of SEL activity had been taking place across England and Wales (in the disciplines of health, psychology and education) for a number of years, with many local (education) authorities offering targeted training for ‘at risk’ pupils around social skills, drug prevention and anger management (Hollin & Trower, 1986; Tilford et al., 1997). These locally developed and delivered programmes bore much in common with US single issue, targeted, social skills programmes most often connected to issues of behaviour, youth offending, mental health and learning support, or as Bender & Smith (1990) remark intended for those who were troublesome or troubled. This local activity was described by Weare and Gray (2003).

In England, LEAs and schools are very much ‘doing their own thing’ on programme development. (p. 65)

As New Labour began the (education) administration system across England and Wales (Raffe & Byrne, 2005) was predominantly focused on local education authorities
administering education policy and practice. Devolution was not yet in place and SEL practice, if it existed, varied. One key question is, how did SEL, in the space of one term of a New Labour government, become a key element of a nationalised, market-driven, children’s programme (Kirby, 2006). I would argue that three key elements created this phenomenon.

1. Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence*
2. ‘Our children are unwell’ theme (the deficit and moral panic agenda)
3. Redressing the move towards educational targets

### 3.8.3.1 New Labour and Goleman’s model of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman’s model of EI had attracted attention in the UK public and mainstream media. Reviews were generally very positive: ‘visionary and a vital text for our times’ (*Times Educational Supplement*, February 9th, 1996) although some concluded it was unoriginal and heavily anecdotal. Yet even the more negative reviews revealed a questioning of the role emotions should have in the socialising of children. The UK media kept the *Emotional Intelligence* concept in the public realm. As Weare notes

> It (*Emotional Intelligence*) focused attention on the links between social and emotional intelligence and educational outcomes such as learning, cognitive development, school attendance and job success.

(2004, p. 5)

### 3.8.3.2 ‘Our children are unwell’
The second element contributing to the birth of UK SEL was the perceived problem of poor mental health in children. In 1999 the *Office for National Statistics* reported 10 percent of children between 5 and 16 had a mental health problem (Melzer et al., 2000). This followed a 1997 MIND report which estimated 10-20 percent of young people in the UK would, in their lifetime, experience a mental health problem necessitating professional intervention, and the Acheson (1998) report that made explicit the connection between poor child mental health, poor educational outcomes and social exclusion (Coleman, 2009). These figures fed a discourse of an epidemic of childhood depression: a concern heard by government. Coleman notes that Acheson shaped educational initiatives over the next decade.

In the 1990s the promotion of mental health in schools had developed (DFEE, 1999) to incorporate a version of SEL called emotional health and wellbeing (EHWB). This took formal shape in 1999 when the *Department for Education and Employment*, with the *Department of Health*, launched the UK *Healthy Schools* programme, making the school a site for addressing these social concerns.

### 3.8.3.3 ‘The system is unbalanced’

The final key element in the emergence of SEL is what Humphrey (2013) calls an attempt to redress the technicism of the English education system. The launch of the New Labour school standards and school effectiveness agenda raised opposition to tables, targets and inspection agendas (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). Weare (2000) contends that slower and more challenging pupils were being lost due to the dominant focus on performance, a point elaborated by Ian Sandbrook, Executive Director of *Lifelong Learning and Leisure* for the City of Southampton.
The advent of the national curriculum and, in particular, Ofsted Inspection brought an emphasis on the outcomes of learning rather than its process. We probably needed to be reminded that outcomes are important, but it had the effect for a while of reducing learning to less than what it has to be

(Sharp, 2000)

The third way was supposedly as concerned with economic success as with social justice. It is therefore not surprising that SEL, albeit still embryonic, captured the eye of policymakers as a balm to soothe measurement and testing.

These three key elements gave the message that by drawing social and emotional teaching into schools, children could be inoculated from the social diseases of contemporary society. Furthermore SEL could be delivered through an official platform, the Healthy Schools agenda. To understand how this message was relayed I will now introduce Antidote, and Southampton University.

3.8.4 Antidote

Antidote was a campaigning group devoted to creating an emotionally literate culture and placing emotional literacy at the heart of the education system. Set up in 1997 by James Park (journalist and author) and Susie Orbach (journalist and psychotherapist) it held its first conference on Emotional Literacy in the same year. As Park reflects

Through a series of conferences and reports, the organization has established its profile as a source of expertise, support and advice on the application of Emotional Literacy.

(Park, 2000)

This term ‘emotional literacy’, offered the first universal, UK-based categorisation of Goleman’s EI thinking. It captured the UK-based, standards agenda by linking the term
emotional with literacy thereby tapping into the educational performance discourse (OFSTED, 2002) with the suggestion that emotions could be taught, acted on and progressed like literacy or other academic subjects. The term ‘emotional literacy’ was developed by Peter Sharp, building on the work of Adrian Faupel and the writing of Susie Orbach.

Other founder members of Antidote included Patricia Hewitt and Anthony Giddens (Director of the *London School of Economics* and founder of the Third Way). The advisory board included the MEP, Glenys Kinnock. Other luminaries supporting Antidote included the human rights lawyer, Helena Kennedy, film producer, David Puttnam, media guru Clive Hollick, and the *Demos* think tank. These people, according to the *Observer* (January, 21st, 2001), represented ‘New Labour's leading lights’.

Jager & Maier (2009) suggest certain groups and individuals have greater power over discourse than others, due to privilege and access. Antidote was such a group. Park and Orbach were journalists, with the *Times* and *Guardian*. Orbach during this time had a regular column in *The Guardian*. Antidote’s privileged voice shaped the SEL discourse as EI. Constant repetition of statements that EI was vital to children’s health and wellbeing shaped how SEL was understood at both the political and media level.

*Antidote’s* social and political influence can be seen in the following statements, firstly from Tom Bentley, Director of *Demos*

> Emotional literacy is becoming the political issue of our time, but it's emerging quite gradually as something with a hard-edged political dimension.

(*The Observer*, Sunday 21 January 2001)

And Tony Colman, Labour MP and supporter of *Antidote*
This new thinking is part of New Labour, although it's not overtly Government policy. It's a thread of sanity and a holistic approach that defines New Labour.

(The Observer, Sunday 21 January 2001)

3.8.5 Southampton University

The second key player in the production of SEL in England and Wales was Southampton Emotional Literacy Group (SELG). SELG was a combined group of representatives from Southampton University, the Local Education Authority (schools and advisors), Youth Service staff and Education Psychology Services. This group, driven by the thinking of education psychologists Adrian Faupel and Peter Sharp, created the term ‘emotional literacy’ (EL), defined as

The ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions.

(definition from Southampton’s strategic education plan, cited in Sharp, 2000, p. 8)

According to Weare (2004) this definition of EL was similar to Goleman’s EI but emotional literacy was an easier concept for teachers to utilise. Emotional Intelligence was the driver but ‘emotional literacy’ was adopted by Antidote (Sharp, 2000).

Southampton, through SELG, was the first UK education authority to develop a strategic emotional literacy strategy with equal priority to its numeracy strategy. This later became SELG, Guidelines for Promoting Emotional Literacy (2003). From 1998 onwards SELG delivered the strong message that EL was an essential part of the school improvement process; improving emotional literacy equalled improving standards (SELG, 2003). Through Antidote and via training, consultancy and seminars to other local authorities (Weare and Gray, 2003, p. 100) over 60 local education authorities received EL training from SELG. If
Antidote created the media discourse of EL, SELIG created the professional (soon to be academic) discourse. By 2004 it had developed a wider National Emotional Literacy Interest Group (NELIG).

3.8.5.1 Antidote and SELIG, distributing SEL

In Faircloughian terms, Antidote and SELIG were networks of SEL distribution. With access to media and policy actors, these two organisations presented a model of SEL that, similar to the California self-esteem story, promised almost unlimited benefits to a generation of damaged and at-risk children. Emotional literacy was posited as a predictor for success in school, work and life. Within the New Labour ranks, this thinking, although at that point not explicitly identified as emotional literacy or SEL, was gathering traction. An example of this early discourse can be seen in the following statement:

The Government has made clear its absolute commitment to raise standards of literacy and numeracy. Alongside that, there is an urgent need to address wider aspects of young people's social and personal development so that young people can understand themselves and their actions and take responsible decisions about their lives. Often, too, there is a direct correlation between a young person's personal development and academic achievement.

(Local Government Chronicle, May 14th, 1998)

3.8.6 Devolution – the will and means of production

To produce an effective discourse one must have the will and means. It is not possible to build an effective alternative, positive version of being a teenage parent if the public, media and politicians are not willing to give a space for this to be developed. It is to ‘will’ and ‘means’ that I now turn, within the context of devolution.
During this period of the production of the SEL concept in England and Wales, New Labour began the devolution process. The *Government in Wales* Act (Phillips 2003) devolved a wide range of powers to the *National Assembly for Wales* including the power to construct its own education policies. Yet this was not a simple before and after devolution story, for as Phillips states, England and Wales already had both different and similar systems of education (Phillips, 2003) and secondly, differences in English and Welsh education activity were the product of ideological, cultural and institutional factors (p. 11.)

Devolution was a process rather than a singular event (Davies, 1999). Indeed before devolution Wales was already recontextualising, or on occasion simply ignoring, education policy conceived by Westminster. As Reynolds (2008) notes, prior to and in the early years of devolution, Welsh education policy was-driven by the desire not to do what England did (p. 76).

### 3.8.7 Welsh otherness – Clear Red Water

If New-Labour-in-England’s education policy was a continuity with the New Right (Ball, 2000) Welsh education policy used a fundamentally different discourse (Phillips, 2003). This was the period of First Minister Rhodri Morgan’s *Clear Red Water* speech. Delivered at Swansea University in 2002, Morgan’s speech was a powerful and passionate public declaration of the Welsh otherness. Built on a Welsh identity of progressive social democracy and Welsh socialism (with a small s) Morgan set out a clear progressive consensus for public policy in Wales focused upon a collaborative relationship between the state and its citizens whereby the state should and could intervene to support the collective wellbeing of the nation. This was for Morgan not old or New Labour thinking but rather
Welsh Labour and in setting out such an agenda Morgan established a clear ideological fault line between New Labour in England and (New) Labour in Wales.

The actions of the Welsh Assembly Government clearly owe more to the traditions of Titmus, Tawney, Beveridge and Bevan than those of Hayek and Friedman. The creation of a new set of citizenship rights has been a key theme in the first four years of the Assembly – and a set of rights, which are, as far as possible: free at the point of use; universal; and unconditional.

(Morgan, 2002)

A series of home-international studies (Egan & James, 2001; Phillips, 2003; Reynolds, 2008; Machin et al., 2013) which explored the early years of devolution and education policy, found messages of: community and cooperation; teachers are to be trusted and listened to; the comprehensive ideal is valued; social justice is at the heart of education: education should transform individuals, communities and the nation (contrast the English perspective of the individual and the nation). According to Drakeford (2007) this resulted in a coherent set of Welsh principles emanating from the Assembly;

These include a belief in the usefulness of government, a commitment to progressive universalism, a preference for cooperation rather than competition as a means of improving standards of public services, and the pursuit of equality of outcome, rather than simply opportunity (p.117)

New Labour in Wales rejected the market-based, globalised consumerist model of education;

Two very different paradigms about the nature of school/society/state relationships [are] being explored here in the two societies.

(Reynolds, 2008, p. 76)

This lack of Welsh will to buy into the New-Labour-in-England education discourse meant that a number of fundamental means necessary to the modernising discourse were absent. Crucially, Wales chose not to participate in the National Strategies. For Phillips & Harper-Jones (2002) the absence of National Strategies was one of the most significant
Welsh education policy decisions ever taken. It meant Wales could develop SEL at the local level, through LEA’s and in partnership with teachers, with no centralised and prescribed model.

The concept of ‘socially and emotionally damaged children’ being served by an unfit comprehensive system which required individualistic intervention to teach a prescribed way of behaving, was simply not recognised in the majority of Welsh thinking and doing – neither, at this point, was measuring their performance to support a market-focused system. Welsh discourse was captured in the Learning Country (WAG, 2001; DCELS, 2007), a document that I will explore later.

As the first term of New Labour ended, the production of a particular meaning of EL in the education sphere, the media and in the heads of New-Labour-in-England policy actors, had occurred. Emotional literacy, as defined by Antidote and SELIG, and conflated with Goleman’s version of emotional intelligence, was dominant. This universal model of EL presupposed that children’s social, emotional and personal development was either neglected or lacking; that school was the site where this should be addressed; that the EL intervention should be a whole school approach; and SEL would raise behaviour and academic standards and achievement for all (Sharp, 2000).

3.8.8 SEL as control or support?

Although the contents and structure of EL (as suggested by Sharp’s paper) were constant (in Fairclough’s terms the text had been produced), how it was viewed varied. For the New-Labour-in-England policy actors, EL was seen through a lens of fear (Park, 1999) meaning that EL was in essence a reaction to social exclusion, behavioural issues, absent employment skills and children as globalised competitive products. On the other hand many
educationalists, particularly in Wales (myself included) saw EL as psychological support, an opportunity to balance out the hard regime of testing (Mosley, 1996) and build social justice in education. The media, in England particularly, viewed EL as something that they were hungry to explore but were not quite sure what its intention was. Different elements of society were interacting with the discourse of EL differently (Fairclough, 1992).

Before closing this section it is important to acknowledge James Park, in 1999, claiming that, concerning the future of EL, a cognitive behavioural model (as opposed to humanistic, or psychodynamic) would dominate in education, a model built on the thinking of CASEL, reacting to problems and concerned with social control. Park was proven to be correct.

### 3.9 Distribution of the EL/EI concept

This section will identify, analyse and give meaning to the networks through which texts move and change - in this instance Sharp’s (2000) article on EL and Goleman’s book on EI - the way in which text responds to previous texts, the consistency of the words and ideologies being heard above all others, and the importance of what is not being given voice to. This reveals a marked difference in the pattern of distribution of EL/EI in England and Wales. This task will be undertaken by reviewing three seminal vehicles for EL/EI discourse across England and Wales:

1. *What Works in Developing Children’s Social and Emotional Competencies?*  
   (Weare and Gray, 2003)
3. English *National Strategies* programme
3.9.1 What works in developing children’s social and emotional competencies?

In 2002 Weare and Gray (from Southampton University) were commissioned by the DFES to study ‘how children’s emotional and social competence and wellbeing could most effectively be developed at national and local level’ (Weare and Gray, 2003, p. 5); to illuminate the broad approaches most promising for improving children’s behaviour, attitudes, self-esteem and academic attainment (p. 9). In commissioning this research the DFES was giving a clear message that EL/EI was relevant for challenging pupil behaviour, negative pupil attitudes and poor academic attainment. Self-esteem sits in this list as the token subjective marker in contrast to the objectivity of behaviour, attainment and attitude. Another key message was that New-Labour-in-England needed evidence to go forward with this initiative. What Works in Developing Children’s Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing? states that it ‘will not attempt to give a representative picture of work on this theme across LEAs in England’ (p. 9). This omission sits uncomfortably beside the aim to identify the practice that shows most promise. If you want to identify the best you need to look at it all rather than only those areas you are directed to look in.

The DFES Steering Group supporting this commission included both James Park from Antidote and Peter Sharp from SELIG. Weare and Gray, guided by the steering group, utilised as one of three key sources ‘current experience in the field in England, as represented by key organisations and individuals (referred to throughout this report ‘as experts in the field’ p. 5). This group of 13 experts included no fewer than 6 representatives connected to
Antidote or Southampton University or SELIG\(^5\). According to the report, the expert group were a key source of the report’s interview data.

Regarding distribution of discourse at this early stage of the UK story, both Antidote and SELIG were legitimised by Government as a foundation source for understanding what was meant and understood by EL/EI (or, at this point, social and emotional competencies). The Weare and Gray report was from the outset, through its links to Antidote and Southampton, validating an existing message. Designed to indicate the future of EL/EI across England, it was filtered through the Antidote and SELIG/NELIG lens. In 2000, one of the authors, Katherine Weare, had set out a version of EL/EI similar to that presented by Antidote and SELIG in *Promoting Mental, Emotional and Social Health: A Whole School Approach* (Weare, 2000). Promotional material for this book stated that:

>Schools are now seen as being one of the key agencies which can help redress society's most fundamental problems, create more cohesive communities and promote citizenship and a sense of social conscience in the young. (p. 2)

One can see the process of intertextuality clearly taking place, with a number of the CASEL/EI/EL assumed truths presented as fact and common sense. Taking the above statement with the following one from Weare: ‘There are then a great many reasons why schools should engage with mental, emotional and social health. And the good news is that if they do, it works’ (Weare, 2000, p. 9), it is evident that those who commissioned Weare and Gray, and its authors, were clear at the outset as to what works in developing children’s emotional and social competence and wellbeing.

This intertextuality was captured in a paper from Peter Sharp (2000), who reflected that the Southampton EL model was being utilised across the following school policy strands:

\(^5\) Adrian Faupel (SELIG); Harriet Goodman (Antidote); Edmund Sonuga-Barke (Southampton University); Bob Stratford (Southampton University); Jo Wright (Southampton University); James Park (Antidote).
behaviour and discipline, health promotion (including mental health, drugs, substance abuse), PSHE, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, equal opportunities, citizenship, social inclusion and crime and disorder (Sharp, 2000, p. 9). Whilst The Robert Gordon University Report makes this intertextuality explicit

Emotional literacy (EL) is a concept derived largely from academic psychological work on emotional intelligence, together with educational programmes devised in the USA covering ‘social and emotional learning’ (SEL). The definition above is broadly similar to many definitions of EI.

(Love et al. 2007, p. 19)

At the practice level, this activity generally took the form of conflict resolution and peer support programmes, anger management training and anti-bullying initiatives (Faupel et al., 1998) and was considered by Sharp (2000) as an educational experiment in Emotional Literacy. These experiments were taking place in, but not limited to, Bristol, London, Manchester (where I was involved), Cumbria, Devon and the West Midlands.

3.9.1.1 New Labour and evidence-based policy

The term evidence-based policy was central to New Labour (Clegg, 2005). David Blunkett as Education Minister drawing from the language of business management and the sciences stated:

… we need social scientists to help determine what worked and why, and what types of policy initiatives are likely to be most effective.

(Blunkett, 2000b)

The concept of evidence was key to the implementation of the new managerial agenda of accountability and performativity. In regard to the New-Labour-in-England discourse evidence-based educational research and practice came on the back of a series of critical
government reports that concluded educational research was not supporting policy
development because it was often ‘fragmented, noncumulative, and methodologically flawed;
and that it often was tendentious and politically motivated’ (Biesta, 2007, p. 2).

3.9.1.2 Who decides what evidence is?

The term evidence is subjective and problematic. Evidence-based policy making as
(Du Toit, 2012) recognises, is located in the neoliberal discourse of measurement,
competition and rationalisation. It creates a normative discourse as to what is acceptable in
education and limits all other voices. The call for evidence-based research and practice
implies that previous research and practice is not evidence-based. But who decides what
evidence is? In this positivist process, an immediate problem arises as to which research is
deemed suitable for government funding. If one pursues only research deemed likely to
demonstrate what works, research commissioned may become simply an activity of
reassurance, measurement and approval, rather than critical, robust and curious. As Clegg
notes:

Evidence based practice serves an ideological function that it is disguised through the rhetoric
of independence and the idea that policy is disinterested and objectively informed.

(Clegg, 2005, p. 419)

Evidence was a very important phrase for Weare and Gray who used it 103 times (as
well as having a section ‘Developing the Evidence Base’). To put this in context the term
‘relationships’ is used 38 times, ‘friends’ 9 times, ‘community’ 52 times and ‘different’ 39
times. The report’s executive summary states:
There is sound evidence from the literature, mainly from the US, that work on emotional and social competence and wellbeing has a wide range of educational and social benefits, including greater educational and work success, improved behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, greater social cohesion, increased social capital, and improvements to mental health. (p. 6)

Weare and Gray themselves leaned heavily on Wells et al. (2003) who had studied universal approaches to mental health promotion or disease prevention programmes in schools. Wells et al. started with 8000 publications, reducing this to 423 for further review. Finally, they analysed 17, 12 of which were in North America. None were in Europe. One of Wells et al.’s findings was

There is evidence too that programmes which promote emotional and social competence can contribute substantially to this emotional wellbeing, and directly and indirectly to these positive outcomes

(Wells et al, 2003, p. 36)

Yet Wells et al. were also clear that their results ‘do not of themselves show that these programmes work in a UK school setting’ (p. 218) and that only two studies in their review related to whole school universal interventions and these did not pay attention to promoting emotional development as related to mental health promotion (Wells et al. p. 216). The 17 programmes surveyed by Wells et al. were disparate enough (ranging from suicide prevention to self-esteem, conflict resolution, and transition programmes) to make meaningful cross comparison hard. Most were US elementary school level programmes for socially disadvantaged areas. 10 of them were categorised ‘analysis not adjusted for school/classroom effects’ (Wells et al., 2003, p. 202 and throughout). The mix of influences in play scrambled the signal, making it impossible to trace effects to SEL. The paucity and problematic nature of gathering SEL evidence was reflected on by Coleman (2009) who remarks that in relation to reviews such as Wells et al.: ‘Programmes, as well as evaluation research, can hardly be compared if different definitions and approaches are being used’ (Coleman, p. 287).
Weare and Gray conclude that the DFES should produce guidance on SEL along with supporting materials to build practice (the work of CASEL is praised in this area). This recommendation would ultimately result in SEL being directly linked to the twin educational modernisation pillars of school effectiveness and academic achievement.

3.9.1.3 The EI/EL discourse

Weare and Gray, with its consistent CASEL/SELGi/Antidote text and thinking, further populated and in turn narrowed the EI/EL discourse, creating an ‘evidential’ basis for what was sayable and known about EI/EL in England, namely that

- EI/EL should be seen as a developmental approach including measurement and assessment
- EI/EL is a crucial part of educating for the knowledge economy
- EI/EL is something all children need and are currently lacking
- EI/EL can be taught to children through structured programmes
- EI/EL programmes should be located in schools and delivered through a whole school model

Their report was the basis upon which locally devolved practice would radically change in England.

3.9.2 The Learning Country

Some of the things that will feature in the forthcoming Education Bill will be of special interest to England alone.
In *The Learning Country* Paving Document, (WAG, 2001) New-Labour-in-Wales (not old or new labour but Welsh Labour (Morgan, 2001) affirmed that community, equity and social justice were the foundations of educational thinking, and that SEL would be seen in the context of addressing ‘inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups, and individuals ... in the interests of all’. (WAG, 2001, p. 10).

Bradbury and Andrews (2010) identified this approach as the politics of a civic Welshness (*Clear Red Water*), one built on a politicised Welsh identity historically connected to socialist traditions and the labour movement. As Hawker (2009) states

> So there is a very different flavour in the Welsh educational scene from the English one. This is strengthened by a more marked historical sense of community, where collaboration rather than competition is the watchword for public services, and where co-operative instincts are deeply ingrained in local communities. (p. 2)

It is through this prism of *Clear Red Water* (Morgan, 2002) that one must locate the development of Welsh SEL. If England presupposed that individual children were damaged and lacking the skills to successfully participate in the global market, *The Learning Country* presupposed a range of social welfare and economic issues which caused suffering. But it was not simply a case of binary opposites. *The Learning Country* also utilises the language of the neoliberalism:

> the focus must shift to making these changes work to raise standards; break down barriers to learning; lift our skills-base; and remove obstacles to effective teaching.

(WAG, 2001, p.1)
Yet, this language is mediated by a socially progressive frame that acknowledges partnership with communities, comprehensive schooling, local authorities and locally determined needs for schools. The document is explicit in stating that, in response to the New Labour White Paper *Schools Achieving Success* (DFES, 2001) passing through parliament at the time, ‘in so far as they are measures that do not fit with arrangements that work well, and get good results in Wales, we intend that the Assembly will have the power not to proceed with them’ (WAG, 2001, p. 2).

### 3.9.2.1 Two different models of SEL

Phillips & Harper-Jones (2002) note that *Schools Achieving Success* was for New-Labour-in-England the apotheosis of free market thinking in education whilst *The Learning Country* was symptomatic of the ‘two very different ideological traditions within the current Labour Party’ (p. 303). Both documents accept the need to compete in the knowledge economy but *The Learning Country* is concerned with mitigating the neoliberal agenda through inclusion, community development and equality of opportunity.

Interestingly the terms emotional intelligence and emotional literacy do not feature in *The Learning Country*. There is no produced version of SEL and certainly no reference to English SEL activity. Instead the document captures SEL through the terms Pupil Support and Social Inclusion. Although connected to anti-social behaviour and poor attendance (specifically of a small minority of disruptive pupils) and tempered through the acknowledgement of social disadvantage, the agenda is dominated by the state support for young people, including; *The Youth Access Initiative; Youth Gateway programme*;
establishment of school councils; programmes building pupil voice; and the expansion of music, drama and creative activities. An aim is to:

- ensure that better services for young people develop coherently under the *Extending Entitlement* banner; that they respond to their needs for impartial information and support; and that their shape is increasingly determined by young people themselves

(WAG, 2001, p. 12)


> Over the last ten years [the UNCRC] has helped to establish an internationally accepted framework for the treatment of all children, encouraged a positive and optimistic image of children and young people as active holders of rights and stimulated a greater global commitment to safeguarding those rights. The Assembly believes that the Convention should provide a foundation of principle for dealings with children.’

(WAG, 2002, p. 10)

The relative absence of the SEL vocabulary and particularly Goleman and CASEL’s model perhaps reflected Welsh emphasis on social structural issues and an unwillingness to speak individualising language with regard to school pupils. The absence of a formalised SEL discourse and emergent programme may also have been because the Welsh Assembly was operating in a new sphere where issues of language and culture dominated the national discourse as part of a national project to create Welsh citizens increasingly conscious of their Welsh citizenship (Osmond, 2010).

### 3.9.3 Discourse distributor: National Strategies

The National Strategies (NS) were a large scale education reform initiative, based only in England between 1997 and 2009. The Strategies’ mission was:
To raise standards of achievement and rates of progression for children and young people in all phases and settings through personalised learning with a particular focus on the core subjects and early years.

(DFE, 1998)

NS were key to New-Labour-in-England’s school modernisation programme and received strong political support (Leithwood et al., 2007). National Strategies was designed, initially to improve classroom practices across state primary and later secondary schools in England (Webb and Vulliamy, 2006). The National Strategies was comprised of various strands, later becoming the Primary National Strategy (2003) and the Secondary National Strategy (2001). It included the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, each of which encompassed a range of elements, most importantly for the purposes of this study the Behaviour and Attendance strand.

According to OFSTED (2011) The National Strategies represent(ed) one of the most ambitious change management programmes in education. Based upon centrally prescribed national standards in classroom structure, content and teaching styles, the front line of the programme was a series of education consultants (attached to Local Authorities) acting as the operative technicians cascading and supplying messages, forces that often had contradictory elements (Cameron, 2010); centrally controlled and prescribed practice alongside the project of devolving power to schools.

The time has long gone when isolated unaccountable professionals made curriculum and pedagogical decisions alone without reference to the outside world.


One wonders who the teachers in England were isolated from and unaccountable to yet these powerful adjectives sat at the heart of the modernisation programme that National
Strategies was key to implementing. This was very different from New Labour in Wales, a point Reynolds (2008) elaborates when he concludes that during this period New-Labour-in-Wales worked in partnership with teachers, while New-Labour-in-England worked ‘on’ or ‘to’ the teaching profession. The Welsh partnership perspective was reinforced by the comments of Gethin Lewis, Leader of the **National Union of Teachers** in Wales, who stated that the Welsh Education Minister has ‘become a listening minister, listening to the concerns of teachers and the NUT in particular’\(^6\).

One can see that the National Strategies was symbolic of a particular approach to education that was diverging in England and Wales.

### 3.9.4 Summary

New-Labour-in-England developed a version of SEL located in behaviour and attendance and reflecting the language of the neoliberal modernisation agenda. This deficit based version of SEL (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009) was supported by a series of centralised policy mechanisms through which this ready to be operationalised model could be fed to schools.

New-Labour-in-Wales located SEL in children’s rights and the Assembly’s education, health and community policies. This version was not fully realised and like much Welsh educational activity of the time incorporated some English ideas, but it was fundamentally concerned with inequalities and reflecting the ‘Clear Red Water’ philosophy of the Assembly. The Welsh version of SEL was at this point non-operationalised and locally flavoured.

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\(^6\) Gethin Lewis, secretary of the National Union of Teachers in Wales, quoted in *The Guardian*, October 2\(^{nd}\), 2001.
3.10 Consumption of SEL

3.10.1 SEAL in England and Wales - introduction

This section of the literature review examines how the discourses of SEL developed in England and Wales were consumed and enacted in their respective countries. It will start by introducing the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme. This will be followed by examination of Welsh SEL practice. The process of intertextuality will be drawn out, in this instance in relation not just to the role of historical texts shaping the present, but also the role of the receivers of the discourse in interpretation. There will be a critical exploration of the SEAL evaluations and I will reflect on the thinking of those commentators uncomfortable with the hegemonic position of SEAL. It is intended that this section will paint a picture for the reader that accurately portrays the dominance of the SEAL programme in England, both as a communicator of ideology and a new epistemology of the emotions within the English SEL discourse (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009), whilst also telling the story of Welsh SEL consumption.

3.10.2 SEAL: What was it and where did it come from?

One of the recommendations of the Weare and Gray report was the call for the Department for Education and Skills to prioritise a national, school-based programme to promote social and emotional skills in pupils and staff. The SEAL programme, which in fact started life as Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS), was a direct response to this call (Bywater & Sharples, 2012) and entered into policy through the Primary Attendance and Behaviour Pilot, delivered across 25 Local Authorities, between 2003-2005 (Hallam, Rhamie
& Shaw, 2006). As Hallam et al. note, many of the schools taking part in the SEAL pilot were already engaged in work relating to improving behaviour and wellbeing. Prior to the National Strategies many schools were already delivering localised, often self-developed, SEL programmes.

3.10.3 SEAL, the programme

SEAL was the UK’s first government-created, universal, taught, whole school SEL programme. It used an objective list model (Seligman & Royzman, 2003) whereby a series of skills and abilities defined by experts (the SEAL steering group) became learning outcomes (42 descriptors), competencies that could be measured and assessed. The Department for Education and Skills described SEAL as:

a comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools

(DFES 2007b, p. 4)

SEAL promised a range of hard to resist if somewhat implausible school solutions, including better academic results, more effective learning, better behaviour, higher school attendance, and more responsible pupils ‘who are better citizens and more able to contribute to society’ (DFES, 2007b, p. 8-9).

According to a paper published by the DFES in 2006 titled, The Origins of the Primary SEAL programme (DFES, 2006), the core principles used to guide the development of the SEAL resource were a holistic approach, valuing the school environment, staff development, explicit teaching of SEAL and the involvement of parents and the community. All of these relate directly to the language of CASEL. The programme content was reflective
of the content described in Weare and Gray (2003) - the work by SELIG and *Antidote* and the
drawing together of localised activities developed in Local Authorities. The introduction of
SEAL nationalised and centralised previous work using the five SEL domains from
Goleman’s ‘Emotional Intelligence’; social skills, motivation, self-awareness, managing
feelings and empathy.

3.10.3.1 Primary SEAL

Primary SEAL was launched as a National Strategy in May 2005 (DFES, 2005) to
provide schools ‘with an explicit, structured whole-curriculum framework for developing all
children’s social, emotional and behavioural skills’ (DFES, 2005, p. 5). According to
Humphrey et al. (2010), SEAL was unique in that it envisaged a loose enabling framework
for school improvement (Weare, 2010) rather than a structured ‘package’. Schools were
encouraged to see SEAL as a template to adapt in order to meet their specific needs.
(Banerjee, 2010) rather than a single, consistent programme.

Humphrey (2012a) considers that this bottom up framework was adopted because as
Weare (2010) noted, ‘too much top-down prescription and emphasis on programme fidelity
can lead to a lack of ownership, disempowerment of those involved, and, ultimately, a lack of
sustainability’ (p. 11). This statement from Weare is interesting to view in a historical context
as the Humphrey et al.’s SEAL evaluation of the same year, 2010, found that one of the key
issues for the programme was lack of fidelity.

3.10.3.2 The ‘waves of intervention’ model
Implementation of SEAL followed the ‘waves of intervention’ model promoted by the National Strategies, outlined in Figure 5 below.

![SEAL Waves of intervention model](image)

Figure 7: SEAL Waves of intervention model

### 3.10.3.3 Secondary SEAL pilot

In 2005, as Primary SEAL started its national roll out and primary piloting drew to a close, the pilot secondary *Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills* (SEBS) programme was initiated (Smith et al., 2007). It ran from 2005 to 2007 and was renamed Secondary SEAL. Informed by Primary SEAL, the aim of the Secondary SEAL pilot was to:

Focus on ongoing school development and improvement, encouraging secondary schools to take a whole school approach to developing social, emotional and behavioural skills, integrating work with existing activities in a co-ordinated and coherent way.

(DFES, 2005, p. 10, cited in Smith et al., 2007, p. 3)
The Secondary Pilot Programme ran in fifty four schools across six Local Authorities. It was broken into three phases; professional development and whole school; teaching and learning for all pupils and targeted interventions, particularly small group work (Lendrum, 2010). The pilot programme was delivered by the National Strategies on behalf of the DFES.

Secondary SEAL and Primary SEAL were built on the same five (Goleman) constructs. Links were made between the themed activities undertaken by primary children in Year 6 and Secondary teaching in Year 7. As with the Primary pilot, each Secondary pilot school introduced the programme in its own way, based on the needs of the school, and with a wide range of differing content (Smith et al 2007; Lendrum, 2010).

Each Secondary Pilot school was provided with pilot SEAL materials; support from Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance consultants; access to network meetings; action planning resources and direct funding.

The pilot programme was evaluated twice (Smith et al, 2007; OFSTED, 2007), focussing on implementation rather than outcomes. Interestingly as Humphrey (2010) notes, the guidance materials for secondary SEAL were published before the SEBS pilot was complete, a similar process to primary SEAL.

### 3.10.3.4 Secondary SEAL launched

Secondary SEAL was officially launched in 300 schools in the autumn of 2007 and was designed (Humphrey et al., 2010; DFES, 2007a, 2007b; Lendrum, 2010) to be non-prescriptive, affording schools autonomy to take from it what they wished. Resources were supplied, including a range of activities to develop staff understanding and case studies from the pilot schools. Secondary SEAL took a whole school approach linked to key education policies, in particular; *Every Child Matters* (DCSF/DFES, 2004);
PSHE; the National Healthy Schools Programme (DOH, 2005); anti bullying; and personalised learning. Secondary SEAL was a key element of the Secondary National Strategy, intended to enable children and young people to attend and enjoy school and achieve personal and social development (Humphrey et al., 2010).

Secondary SEAL had fifty outcomes for pupils, no specific assessment criteria, but suggestions as to how pupils’ progress could be monitored. The role of SEAL in Secondary schools is summarised by Banerjee (2010):

SEAL could fruitfully complement existing school based strategies to support pupils’ social and emotional development. The taught element of skills development sits alongside a wide range of related work in schools, including specific curriculum subjects, such as PSHE and Citizenship, various school-based activities focused on social and emotional learning (e.g., Circle Time, nurture groups, anti-bullying, peer mediation, and mentoring/buddying schemes).

(Banerjee, 2010, p. 22)

3.10.3.5 SEAL overview

The success of SEAL can be gauged by the number of schools who took it on. By 2010 SEAL was operational in up to 90% of English primary schools and over 70% of English secondary schools (Humphrey et al., 2010). It would be accurate to say that when people spoke of SEL in English schools during the New Labour era, they were speaking of SEAL.

Casting an eye back on Fairclough’s production, distribution and consumption framework, for England the production stage demanded evidence to validate SEL thinking and policies that had actually already been decided on. This hunt for evidence spurred commissioning of research, for instance Weare and Gray (2003) which then populated the English SEL discourse, distributing a particular model of SEL. The SEAL programme became the SEL product consumed by schools and educationalists across England.
The mechanisms of SEAL reveal little regarding the forces driving and shaping the programme. I will therefore now explore some of the discourses surrounding the roll out of SEAL, the various academic evaluations that SEAL underwent and finally the critical voices that challenged the SEAL hegemony.

3.10.4 SEAL and its networks

Key forces illustrate the covert and overt ideological messages at the heart of the SEAL programme. This section examines some of the social and political conditions associated with SEAL, and the policy networks attached to it.

3.10.4.1 Social and political conditions

Three powerful discourses were influential in bringing the SEAL programme into being following the publication of Weare and Gray. These were concerns regarding social inequality, employability and children’s mental health (Watson et al., 2012; Humphrey, 2013). Social inequality was for New-Labour-in-England complex since the dominant ideology was of competition within a knowledge-driven, free market economy. Inequality and employability were for New Labour in England inseparable. At the heart of this vision sat a self-managing, resilient and flexible consumer, choosing what they needed from the market. Yet the divide between the haves and have nots, the insiders and outsiders will only grow according to Wilkinson & Pickett (2010) as the state removes public services and lessens regulation of the free market. Addressing social inequality for New Labour in England became attempting to dilute growing social divisions (Thrupp & Tomlinson, 2005). Essentially, policies promoted by New-Labour-in-England created social exclusion. As
Lawson (2005, p.31), cited in Thrupp and Tomlinson, remarks ‘Social democracy will not take root in the thin soil of competitive markets’ (Thrupp & Tomlinson, p. 551).

Ideologically, New-Labour-in-England viewed social inclusion as the process of moving the working classes and disaffected into the middle classes (Thrupp and Tomlinson, 2005) and particularly into employment. The issue of employability and children’s lack of ‘soft skills’ or the ‘skills deficit’ was deemed a major barrier to young people accessing the benefits of the knowledge economy. As I have written elsewhere (Watson et al, 2012), this version of employability was closely connected to the skills and abilities defined in the SEAL programme. Employability seemed to include emotional capital (see the work of Thomson, 1998 for a scholarly examination of this). As Hartley (2006) highlights, the business community was keen for education to prioritise team work, communication and social skills.

This ‘employability as inclusion’ model saw the managerialist, performance-driven consumer as the ideal, essentially a common sense perspective that questioned why anyone wouldn’t want to be part of this new middle class, and gave no space for any alternative versions of society. The determination to transform those considered ‘unsuccessful’ by New-Labour-in-England powerfully drove SEAL. By utilising the school as a site for transformation, state school pupils would be participating in a programme that promoted (through the label of social and emotional skills) the rationalisation of the emotions for performative, employability purposes: a curriculum designed, I would contend, to develop compliant consumers and participants in the knowledge economy. SEAL was the ideal vehicle for linking the emotional to the instrumental to the creation of wealth which was New Labour in England’s answer to social inequality.

3.10.4.2 Policy actors
In their 2010 paper, *Making policy with ‘good ideas’* Ball and Exley examine the policy relationships, actors and networks that influenced New-Labour-in-England’s social and education policy. They conclude that there was a clear set of ‘flows and connectedness in relation to policy ideas’ and that this flow operated within ‘a limited exclusivity and closedness’ (both quotes from p. 152). They highlight the think tanks operating across New-Labour-in-England and the university and government connections within these. I wish to make clear my own relationship with these networks. As a practitioner and policy advisor for New-Labour-in-England during the development of SEAL many of the organisations and actors revealed by Ball and Exley were either colleagues or organisations that I worked for during this period (*RSA, Sutton Trust, Futurelab, Institute of Ideas, Manchester University, Bristol University*). My experiences during this time have been published in Gunter et al. 2014. Suffice to say I was at different times both insider and outsider in the SEAL policy network.

It is evident that in England, policy development regarding SEAL was strongly influenced by the flow and connectedness in the relationships between *Antidote*, SELIG, Southampton University, Katherine Weare (based at Southampton University), *Young Minds*, the *School of Emotional Literacy* and a small band of key local authorities (Birmingham, Southampton, Cumbria and Manchester). This network of universities, charities, interest groups and intellectuals reflects Ball and Exley’s assertion that during the New Labour period diffuse policy networks were operating, consisting of multiple agencies who straddled sectors and settings and jointly wrote, spoke, co-authored, appeared on shared platforms and created shared events. One need only look at the content of the *Antidote* newsletters, the Weare and Gray report or the SELIG/ NELIG materials to see this connectedness and flow in operation.

In relation to Ball and Exley’s second point, that this flow operated within a limited exclusivity and closedness, all of the organisations within the network bought into and
promoted the same ideological, Goleman based, performative version of SEL: SEAL. A review of the network partners literature of the time, for example SELIG (2003) literature, shows an explicit endorsement of the CASEL perspective of SEL. So, although not directly or explicitly influencing the SEL policy discourse, CASEL (and its partners) did, through its appropriation by the network, have an impact on the version of SEL presented through SEAL.

Finally, all these actors were strictly on message, had shared assumptions as to what progress would look like (a government-sponsored universal, whole school ‘emotional intelligence’ programme) and no space was made available to those who wished to explore a different version of SEL. This closed and informal network became a formalised network when the DFES populated the SEAL steering group with representatives of this network. The ideological position these individuals had previously established and the discourse they had created most certainly influenced how SEAL was constructed, understood, delivered and consumed.

3.10.5 What was Wales doing whilst England did SEAL?

If you want to see devolution in action, education in Wales is a pretty good starting point (BBC News, December 24, 2002)

Throughout the New Labour period SEAL was the dominant approach to SEL in England (Humphrey, 2013). However as (Oerton & Pilgrim, 2014) noted there is a propensity to regard Wales ‘peculiarly and inaccurately’ as part of the English education system resulting in conversations about England and Wales that are in actuality talking about England. This conflation of Wales with England has resulted in Welsh education policy,
particularly SEL activity, receiving little critical analysis. Earlier in this literature review I talked about the different approaches the English and Welsh SEL discourse took. This section will now consider the actual SEL practice that took place in Wales. Education policy in Wales has, post devolution, reflected both the different socio-political culture, history and traditions of Wales and the closeness and continuity of much that went before (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010).

As SEAL was rolled out across England it was also picked up by some Welsh Local Authorities (Conway for instance) and it is clear that the SEAL programme was delivered in a number of Welsh schools. However it was not distributed and consumed in either the same manner or with anywhere near the same number of participants. One can identify a number of reasons for this including the lack of a National Strategies programme, the absence of a powerful SEL policy network compared to England and a much smaller, localised, media network: the only Welsh based national newspaper is the Western Mail. These factors along with the different political make up of New Labour in Wales and the strong focus on social justice and children’s rights (Chaney & Fevre, 2001) resulted in Welsh SEL activity taking a different route. There was no SEAL equivalent made in Wales, only SEAL imported from England. The importation of SEL models, particularly US programmes, occurred in Wales just as it did in England with some schools and Local Authorities bringing in the PATHS, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies programme (Channing-Bete, 2010) or the Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton 2011) scheme. However my focus is on what Wales did differently, for I believe there is a lack of awareness that Wales tried to do something different with SEL.

New-Labour-in-Wales’ SEL policy and practice can be traced post The Learning Country through four particular initiatives which reflect the evolving discourse, understanding and application of SEL in Welsh education. SEL as a term is not seen in Welsh
practice until the development of *Demonstrating Success* (WAG, 2007). Instead the term emotional health and wellbeing (EHWB) is utilised across much of Welsh policy and practice. One could argue that this fact alone locates Welsh understanding of SEL in a wider holistic, collaborative, understanding of social and emotional learning.

3.10.5.1 Behaviour in Wales

Published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) the Welsh education inspectorate, *Behaviour in Wales* (ESTYN, 2006) was intended to offer schools guidance on how to support challenging behaviour and inform emotional health and wellbeing (EHWB) as part of the *Learning Country* agenda. The guidance, process-driven rather than output-driven, is targeted towards specific ‘challenging’ pupils and therefore not universal. There is no ‘deficit’ discourse of the child or ‘moral panic’ and those exhibiting challenging behaviour are located as socially disadvantaged with poverty featuring heavily. A point illuminated by Drakeford (2010) who states that

When things go wrong in the lives of children and young people, the Welsh focus has been on trying to put right flaws in the system on which they depend, rather than on focusing on the ‘deficits’ in young people themselves. (p. 141)

Finally, the document states that responses need to be coordinated across health, education and Local Authorities and that a whole school approach to behaviour is most useful. Interestingly despite the prominence of SEAL, as part of the *Behaviour and Attendance Strategy*, in England, at this point the Welsh ‘behaviour’ guidance makes no reference to SEAL or the SEL discourse taking place across the border.
3.10.5.2 School effectiveness framework (SEF)

The SEF (WAG, 2008) was developed as guidance for all Welsh schools in order to tackle educational inequalities and raise achievement. The document is built on a vision of Welsh education rich in the language of collaboration, citizenship and children’s rights. The link between poverty and educational opportunities is made explicit in the document:

Research has long shown that social disadvantage is the single biggest obstacle to achievement in education (p. 6).

The SEF ultimately pursued SEL through the concept of wellbeing and a set of shared educational values and beliefs built around a collaborative, inclusive, healthy environment that nurtures and supports learning for all (focused on processes rather than tangible outputs). There is no guidance or explicit mention of school based SEL skills and activities to be delivered or developed in children. Wellbeing was understood through and directly linked to the seven core aims of the UNCRC (UN, 1989). How this vision was to be enacted in the school and classroom is handed down to individual Local Authorities to implement with the closest thing to explicit guidance being that ‘Each (Local Authority) has a key role to play in helping to address the needs of learners, including the wellbeing of individual children and young people’ (p. 17).

3.10.5.3 Demonstrating Success (DS)

This initiative ran from 2007 to 2010 as the Assembly entered its third period. It was known as the Welsh Assembly Government’s ‘Emotional Intelligence’ project (WAG, 2007) and was tasked with developing a comprehensive approach to measuring the outcomes achieved by a range of service providers (Health/Education/Youth services) across Wales,
thereby demonstrating the contribution these organisations made to the success of key children’s policies. The result of this was the first national framework for tracking the development of what the programme called Social and Emotional Dispositions and Skills (SEDS). For the full details of this programme see Watson and Emery (2009). Driving this initiative was the Assembly’s belief that a young person’s ‘soft skills’ would be improved as a result of many of the services provided and that these ‘soft skills’ would directly improve the ability of young people to take up their entitlements and ‘achieve wider academic and vocational success’ (WAG, 2007).

The DS programme mirrored the thinking of the time particularly on the new emphasis on outcomes rather than processes. Although it was built and developed with children and practitioners at the heart of it, thus promoting the collaboration and consensus agenda, it went a step further than any other strategy in setting out clear levels and performance indicators for young people’s SEDS development. The framework was also universal rather than targeted and the supporting materials made reference to the SEAL programme in England. However DS contained no prescribed teaching programme or model and was presented as a voluntary programme.

3.10.5.4 Thinking Positively

Thinking Positively (WAG, 2010) was perhaps the first Welsh policy document that made explicit reference to SEL activity in Welsh schools and how this should both look and be delivered. The guidance was linked directly to the Welsh Assembly Government’s Child Poverty Strategy and was concerned with children developing skills to communicate and develop positive relationships with others to become independent learners and members of their communities. The guidance, focused more on outputs, advocated a taught and caught
whole school approach to EHWB and unlike previous papers made reference to both universal and targeted programmes. This was supported by a range of exemplar SEL programmes operating across Wales including the *Pupil Attitude to Self and School* programme, the PATHS, *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies*, (Channing-Bete, 2010) curriculum, the *FRIENDS* cognitive-behavioural intervention (Anon, 1991), the *Incredible Years* (Webster-Stratton, 2011) programme and the earlier mentioned *Antidote* SEL model. Overall this was a far more prescriptive document.

*Thinking Positively* makes frequent reference to social and emotional competence, social and emotional factors and social and emotional wellbeing as well as the national Demonstrating Success framework. Reference is also made to the English SEAL programme (which at this point was being quietly removed from policy) with the document noting that the Assembly has made a Welsh language version of the SEAL programme available to schools. One can identify two important factors when examining the document. Firstly, there was much SEL activity taking place in Welsh schools but it was still built upon a diffuse, Local Authority driven, range of imported and locally developed models. There was still no Welsh national SEL model. Secondly, EHWB or SEL was for the first time being equated with improvements in teaching and learning as much as it was connected to social justice and children’s rights. Leighton Andrews’ (2015) ‘standards’ agenda was impacting on Welsh SEL practice.

### 3.10.6 Summary

One could summarise the Welsh SEL practice as a tale of two halves reflecting the politics of New Labour in Wales. The first (1999 to 2003), and second (2003 to 2007) terms of New Labour in Wales linked social and emotional learning to social justice and
challenging inequalities. SEL was seen as a targeted response for pupils with challenging behaviour or as a ‘mental health’ early intervention. One could say during this period there was clear red water between England and Wales in terms of SEL practice.

This began to change post 2008 and progressed quickly once Leighton Andrews became the Minister for Education in 2009. Andrews was widely critical of the lack of standards, performance indicators and outputs within Education and set about changing this. The third term of the Assembly made greater reference to what was happening in England and started through *Demonstrating Success* to draw together a national framework and explicit school-based guidance for the development and application of SEL. As Lee (2009) notes in a presentation on children’s wellbeing to the Assembly there is ‘continuing confidence in the capacity of institutions and instruments of Government to shape lives and communities, including those of children and young people’. One could conclude that New Labour in Wales still operated from the perspective that state intervention at the broader level would support children’s social and emotional development.

### 3.11 The evaluation of SEAL

The consumption of SEAL and in particular its association with evidence-based research and New-Labour-in-England education policy dictated that the programme was linked to academic evaluations during its lifetime. These evaluations were, just as the other stages of the programme’s development, moulded by social, political and ideological assumptions.
3.11.1 Hallam, Rhamie, and Shaw, 2006

This study (Hallam et al., 2006) evaluated the impact of the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Pilot, which included Primary SEAL. The aim of the research was to test the effectiveness of behaviour and attendance improvements, teacher skills and confidence and promote whole school approaches. The research used mixed methods including document and data analysis, interviews and questionnaires (p. 4). The findings endorsed Primary SEAL, stating that

The data gathered in relation to the SEAL programme demonstrated positive changes in the children’s behaviour particularly in relation to their social skills and relationships with other children (p. 11).

On close inspection a number of flaws and gaps in the research begin to emerge. Firstly, the study had no control group and acknowledges this vital absence. Secondly, the sample was schools who chose to participate. It is highly likely that these self-selecting (or selected by the Local Authority) schools were already invested in promoting and developing this work. It is unlikely staff will criticise a scheme they are choosing to promote across the school community. Thirdly, only the children received pre and post intervention questionnaires. One must ask why pre intervention questionnaires weren’t delivered to teachers, staff and parents. Even in regard to the children’s questionnaires (the only respondents able to present a full picture) information returned made data difficult to interpret (p. 143).

In summary, the endorsement of SEAL by Hallam et al. relies mostly on subjective reports by teachers, staff and parents. For example, see my italicised words in the quote below

All staff perceived a positive impact on the children’s behaviour and well-being. Classrooms and playgrounds were calmer. Children’s confidence, social, communication, negotiating
skills, and attitudes were perceived to have improved. 50% of teachers believed that listening skills had improved and 44% concentration on work. The interview data revealed positive perceptions of the impact on the children’s work. Overall 90% of teachers indicated that the SEAL Programme had been at least relatively successful.’ (p. 8)

3.11.2 Smith, O’Donnell, Easton and Rudd, 2007

This study (Smith et al., 2007) evaluated implementation of the Secondary SEBS Pilot programme, between October 2005 and May 2007. It sought evidence on how to develop SEAL/SEBS; ‘it aimed to consider the effectiveness of the different modes of implementation (at local authority and school level) and to gather perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation’ (p. iii).

Smith et al., similar to Hallam et al., took a mixed methods approach utilising case studies, phone interviews (with Local Authority representatives), face to face interviews with school staff and pupils as well as a questionnaire to teachers and teaching assistants. The study sample was the six Local Authorities who were running the Secondary SEAL Pilot programme.

As the study focused on implementation, key findings are all connected to this. The report found the pilot was well received by schools and LAs and staff were committed to the principles of the pilot programme (p. 3) and that implementation was ‘a dynamic process’ with schools gradually developing SEBS work (p. 4).

In considering how the programme could best ensure impact in the future, interviewees highlighted maintaining a whole-school approach: changing cultures and attitudes, involving the right people, commissioning resources and linking with the bigger picture (p. 4).
The most overriding issue here is the aim of exploring implementation. This perspective appears to be built on an underlying belief that the SEAL programme was proven effective.

Again the sample is problematic. Clearly an evaluation of the Secondary Pilot had to work with the Secondary Pilot Local Authorities. However, as noted these Authorities and schools already embraced the SEAL perspective so it is no surprise that Smith’s first finding was ‘the SEBS pilot was well received by pilot schools and LA’s’ (p. iii).

If one digs a little deeper into the findings and in particular examines the ‘implementation’ perspective, the authors record that

Whilst many schools and local authorities felt the SEBS pilot had made a difference they also found it difficult to attribute any impact and outcomes directly to the pilot itself. (p. vii)

At the same time

The extent to which materials were used in the pilot schools was inconsistent throughout the course of the pilot. In some schools, some staff had seen and used the materials, whereas others were not aware materials existed. (p. 20)

This pilot was crucial for the development of SEAL, but one could conclude that the findings, in relation to implementation, were vague and inconsistent. Recognising the lack of any consistent outcome data it seems somewhat grandiose that Smith et al. and the DCSF utilised this report as a green light for Secondary SEAL. Ironically the problems of implementation revealed later became sources for the critique of SEAL effectiveness.

3.11.3 OFSTED, 2007

The OFSTED evaluation (OFSTED, 2007) was a five term longitudinal study of the Secondary SEAL Pilot programme. The aim was to investigate the development and impact,
OFSTED finds that the greatest impact of the Pilot programme was on teachers’ attitudes towards the idea of social and emotional skills, further expanded as being a rise in a teacher’s ability to incorporate the SEAL skills into subject lessons and make adjustments to teaching methods.

Where the pilot was most effective, teachers adjusted teaching methods to take account of the pupils’ specific needs. As a result, pupils worked better in teams, were better able to recognise and articulate their feelings, and showed greater respect for each other’s differences and strengths’ (p. 4).

The report noted that, in order to secure teachers’ acceptance of the benefits of the programme, data was needed that illustrated how the programme could have a positive impact on academic achievement’ (p. 4). An interesting proposition as the earlier Smith et al. report had supposedly already provided this. Furthermore the next sentence in the report states that ‘Trainers who added this dimension were able to reassure staff’. This implies there is evidential data.

SEAL’s impact on academic attainment is not mentioned in this OFSTED report. One wonders if OFSTED’s definition of impact did not include academic attainment. It is not possible to answer this question due to the scant information given in the report. The authors made recommendations which included guidance about identifying key social, emotional and behavioural skills needed to enhance learning and provide ideas for appropriate starting points for the work (p. 6), showing how programmes that develop pupils’ social, emotional and behavioural skills can have a positive impact on attainment and achievement. These
findings and recommendations need to be placed in context. The authors make the following observations with regard to gathering and examining the data (my italics).

*All the schools found it difficult to evaluate the impact of the work.* Even where the work was successful, schools often found it difficult to disengage what had been achieved through the programme from other initiatives. (p. 6)

*Although the programme had not had a significant effect on pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills over five terms,* in the schools ... where the programme was most successful it had begun to influence aspects of pupils’ behaviour and attitudes to learning. (p. 15)

*Separating what the pilot had achieved from the range of other initiatives* in which the schools were involved was difficult. (p. 5)

3.11.4 Humphrey, Kalambouka, Bolton, Lendrum, Wigelsworth and Lennie, 2008

This report (Humphrey et al., 2008) evaluated SEAL small group work on children needing extra targeted intervention. A secondary aim was to gather information on successful implementation of small group interventions.

This was a mixed methods study utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches in the form of interviews with Local Authority officers, a series of questionnaires and rating tools for pupils and finally school case studies built on interviews with staff, parents and teachers. A key finding was that schools already engaged in social and emotional learning, including SEAL, were more likely to successfully implement SEAL.

LA staff suggested that successful implementation was influenced strongly by existing work (e.g. SEAL Wave 1 and/or other general approaches to social and emotional learning) within a given school. (p. 6).

Another key finding was that a barrier to implementation was ‘initiative overload’ (p. 6).

There was some statistically significant evidence for the positive impact of SEAL, however this was a small effect size and had a qualification relating to the domain being
measured. In one instance staff rating indicated an adverse effect (p. 19). In general this report is thorough and well grounded. The literature review acknowledges little research in the UK, a small evidence base and methodological difficulties with the international, mainly US based studies (p. 12).

In terms of casting a critical eye on the report the following should be considered. During the research eight schools dropped out. Humphrey et al. acknowledge this and note that ‘it could be argued that schools experiencing success in SEAL small group work were those least likely to drop out of the study’ (p. 18). A varied series of outcomes are reported, including findings related to no evidence and peer problems at intervention phase. For the parents’ element of this stage there is no statistically significant evidence of positive impact (p. 55). One could argue these findings are not given the prominence the positive findings are given. Finally the follow up period for phase two was seven weeks, rather short. However it should be noted that most SEAL evaluations have no follow up period.

3.11.5 Banerjee, 2010

The Banerjee evaluation (Banerjee, 2010) explored the contribution Primary and Secondary SEAL made to improving attainment, behaviour and attendance. The aims were to understand how social and emotional dimensions of school functioning connect with various outcome measures regarding pupils’ attainment, behaviour, and attendance. Evaluate the links between schools’ approaches to the implementation of SEAL and the above indicators of school success. (p. 3)

The sample was data from 63 schools: 32 primary schools, 3 middle schools, 24 secondary schools, 2 special schools, and 2 Pupil Referral Units/learning centres. The programme employed a two-strand approach. The first of these was based on a collation and
qualitative assessment of the documentary evidence collected by National Strategies.

Regional Advisers. The second used school visits, online surveys of pupils and staff and school level data relating to attainment, attendance, exclusions and OFSTED ratings.

We examined multilevel path models of the relationships between Regional Adviser ratings of implementation, pupil and staff perceptions of social and emotional ethos, and various outcome measures: pupils’ own social and emotional experiences, behaviour outcomes, attendance outcomes, and attainment outcomes (p. 16).

The main finding was the importance of adopting a whole school approach to SEAL. If this was done it was likely that schools would be ‘characterised by positive social relationships, attitudes, and behaviour’ (p. 4) and ultimately have an enhanced school ethos. According to Banerjee this led to positive peer interaction, better OFSTED behaviour ratings, lower levels of persistent absence and higher attainment in Key Stage 2 SATs and GCSEs.

As Humphrey, (2012) notes, at first glance the Banerjee evaluation demonstrates that a whole school, universal approach to SEAL works. However, this report more than any other, demands close inspection. The outcomes reported for each school are actually historical, taken prior to the SEAL implementation survey. This means the alleged effects (school ethos raised, increased attainment, attendance etc.) preceded the cause (SEAL). Also, the whole school approach, key to the report’s findings, was built upon a ratings formula of 4 items (scored 1-3). These ratings however were based on a single school visit.

The term ethos (a slippery and contested concept) is used 150 times, for example

Higher levels of negative emotion among pupils were related to having more experiences of bullying and fewer experiences of positive peer interaction, which in turn were associated with reports of a generally poorer school ethos. (p. 5)

Does this mean that pupils who experienced bullying and exclusion within the school felt less positive about the school and their experiences? If so, is it reporting the obvious?
Finally it must be noted that Banerjee was one of the designers of SEAL and contributed extensively to the Primary SEAL pilot programme and materials. One could argue he had a vested interest in presenting a positive evaluation.

3.11.6 Downey and Williams, 2010

This study was a small-scale (21-23 parents) qualitative evaluation of the family component of the primary SEAL programme. This review was built upon parents of SEAL participating children attending a series of seven two-hour workshops connected to the themes associated with the primary programme. The evaluation itself consisted of a short quantitative parental questionnaire (not actually built around the 5 SEAL constructs but rather an earlier model developed by SELIG) and qualitative parental questionnaires. There was no control group and the focus was solely on immediate proximal benefits.

It should be noted that the Family element of SEAL was considered part of the Wave 2 intervention and as such was not a part of the universal Wave 1 interventions this thesis is interested in. My reflections here shall therefore be limited to the fact that the report found null findings in regard to impact on pupil behaviour (Humphrey, 2012) and acknowledged that

The lack of an experimental design in this pilot study makes it impossible to draw causal conclusions on whether the gains in social and emotional literacy reported by parents and the significant gains reported by teachers are due solely to involvement in Family SEAL rather than other interventions employed in the schools

(Downey and Williams, 2010. p.38)

3.11.7 Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2010
This study (Humphrey et al., 2010) assessed Secondary SEAL on a range of outcomes for pupils, staff and schools and examined how schools implemented the whole school approach. It was conducted through a series of qualitative and quantitative approaches including self-report surveys for pupils and longitudinal case studies based on in-school observations, interviews (parents, staff, and pupils), document analysis and focus groups. A total of 22 SEAL schools and 19 comparison schools formed the study sample. Commissioned by New Labour, although an academic report, the evaluation contains recommendations redolent of a policy document, perhaps originally intended to be used as feedback in the evolving rollout of SEAL.

Baseline data was gathered for the pupils through self-report surveys, some on quite complex categories like ‘students’ mental health’. The self-report survey was a version of the Emotional Literacy Assessment Instrument ELAI (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003, p. 18). The ELAI is based upon Goleman’s (1995) emotional intelligence framework. It should be noted that the qualitative data came from only 9 of the 22 schools taking part in the study. The main headline of the report, one that had certainly not featured in any previous evaluations, was the belief that SEAL ‘failed to impact significantly upon pupils’ social and emotional skills, general mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour or behaviour problems’ (p. 2).

This was the first time an academic evaluation explicitly stated SEAL was failing. The report is clear that the statistics show little change between scores for pupils in the control groups and SEAL groups (p. 73). Regarding implementation, the study recorded ‘our analysis of case study schools’ approaches to, and progress in, SEAL implementation revealed a very mixed picture’ (p. 2).

The study explores implementation focusing on two areas: first, the variety in implementing SEAL and second the ‘will and skill’ of staff to put the programme into
practice. Fidelity emerges as a key issue. SEAL at secondary level had little prescribed material. It was made clear by programme leaders that Secondary SEAL was intended to be delivered in a manner suitable to the school.

(Schools can) take from it what they wish, supplement it with other materials and programmes and generally make it their own, according to their needs and circumstances’


Yet Humphrey et al. found ‘As there is no single structured implementation model for SEAL, it was impossible to monitor any kind of fidelity among these schools, meaning that there was likely to be a high degree of heterogeneity in implementation activity’ (p. 16). In regard to impact the study found SEAL ‘failed to impact significantly upon pupils’ social and emotional skills, general mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour or behaviour problems’ (p. 2). The Humphrey evaluation was the first study to offer an alternative version of the SEAL success story and give weight to negative findings rather than shuffle these into the general text. Deep within the evaluation is a somewhat prophetic statement from a teacher interviewed in the study

I’m worried it’s [SEAL] going to be replaced by something else. And then replaced by something else. Like a lot of things are. It would be a shame for all the work to happen for someone to say “oh we’re not doing SEAL anymore here’s something else that we suggest that you do” ... which happens all the time. (p. 66)

3.11.8 Summary

The various SEAL evaluations show key themes. Firstly, the lack of methodological rigour. Many were undertaken without a control group, utilised small samples and had no longitudinal element. Secondly, the early evaluations were over enthusiastic in reporting positive findings and furthermore these findings were in the main based on participants’ perceptions rather than any hard data. Thirdly, there was very little focus placed on
evaluating measurable impact or outcomes. Many of the studies were interested in implementation only. Finally, little attention was paid to the ‘null outcomes’ or negative findings. Aside from the Humphrey study, these were often left unexplored, given little prominence in the text and where highlighted were often bookended with a positive spin or context applied to them. Indeed if one were to summarise only the foregrounded key findings for each of the evaluation studies it would be hard not to conclude that SEAL was achieving:

Better academic results for all pupils and schools; more effective learning … higher motivation; better behaviour; higher school attendance; more responsible pupils, who are better citizens and more able to contribute to society; lower levels of stress and anxiety; higher morale, performance and retention of staff; a more positive school ethos.

(DFES, 2007b, p. 8-9)

3.12 SEAL critical voices

Students who are anxious, angry or depressed don’t learn; people who are in these states do not take in information efficiently or deal with it well...

(Goleman, 1995, p. 79)

The above quote appears in the SEAL guidance literature attesting to the fact that attending to the emotions is a necessary precursor to learning (Ecclestone, 2007). As SEAL became the dominant vehicle for social and emotional learning in schools, particularly in England, this principle drew few critics. The expected benefits of the SEAL programme rapidly became assumed truths (Humphrey et al., 2010). As I have stated elsewhere (Watson et al., 2012; Watson and Emery, 2009), no-one would challenge the assertion that children are more than just academic learners, and that education should facilitate social and emotional development.
However, a small number of critical voices arose, in particular Carol Craig (2007; 2009) Katherine Ecclestone (2004, 2007, 2012, 2013; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009) and Neil Humphrey (Humphrey et al., 2010, 2012; Humphrey, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). I will focus on four key themes from these voices as well as drawing in data and discussion from other, more marginal, sources.

3.12.1 A coherent concept?

The key paper driving the production and later distribution of the SEAL programme was Weare and Gray (2003). It presented a social and emotional learning as a single, defined entity. However, since the heart of SEAL was Daniel Goleman’s ‘emotional intelligence’, this position is somewhat fragile to examination. As early as 2004, Roberts and Zeidner concluded ‘there is no clear, consensual definition of EI, and the multitude of qualities covered by the concept appears at times overwhelming’ (Zeidner, Roberts, and Matthews, 2008, p. 180). This theoretical confusion played out on the ground:

Given how SEAL is designed to reinforce the key learning points throughout a young person’s experience of the education system, to assess its likely impact we cannot look at the evidence for discrete programmes.

(Craig, 2009, p. 10)

This is a rich vein to pursue. When talking about SEAL, what is meant? It could be an ever-moveable feast. Humphrey describes how null findings in relation to secondary SEAL were quickly explained away as implementation failure rather than programme failure by the National Strategies advisors and other SEAL proponents (that is, it was not that SEAL was ineffective because there were no positive findings, it simply was not SEAL) (Addison, 2010, personal communication). What ‘SEL’ means, then, appears to differ depending on which text one consults and who is delivering it (Humphrey, 2012, p. 10).
One consequence of blurred definitions is conceptual incoherence. Early evaluations express this concern. In Smith et al. (2007) a head teacher in one school summarised:

We are doing so many other things that trying to pinpoint it [the effect of the SEBS pilot] is very difficult’ (p. 59) ‘(It was) difficult to attribute any impact and outcomes directly to the pilot itself. Respondents felt, rather, that any change was the result of a combination of factors including other programmes of work and local and national initiatives’ (p. vii).

As Burman (2009) acknowledges, little unites the heterogeneous features of ‘emotional intelligence’ (p. 140). This lack of coherence can be explicitly seen in the DFES assessment strategy promoted to support the programme, built on the premise that no standard instruments would be recommended for assessment of SEAL. The department would not recommend any particular resource. This is challenging to SEAL guidance itself and reflects the muddle of developing a programme around a contested concept. As Bingham (2007) notes, this resulted in a situation where:

although the Primary SEAL Guidance makes it clear that children’s ability and performance should be evaluated on the 42 outlined social, emotional and behavioural skills … formal methods for assessing individual children’ progress are not provided. (unnumbered page)

According to Bingham, teachers were asked to determine acceptable ‘levels of emotion management and expression, in their capacities as managers and evaluators of the SEAL competencies’ (unnumbered page). If so, this is problematic as unless fully trained, (and trained in what?) even the most committed and well-intentioned practitioner could only rely on their subjective experiences.

### 3.12.2 SEAL and the discourse of evidence

The evidence is overwhelming that well-designed programmes to promote social and emotional skills can result in gains that are absolutely central to the goals of all schools. (DFES, 2007b, p. 8)
In regard to SEAL, ‘evidence’ and the language and discourse attached to it was quickly appropriated by one of the programme’s key authors, Katherine Weare. At the start of What Works? (2003) she mentions ‘the importance of evidence-based approaches and … the state of evaluation and the current evidence base in this area, drawing on the literature, the field and the LEA reviews’ (p. 29). But in England ‘the evidence base for this work is still very embryonic’ (p. 30).

The US evidence that Weare and Gray mainly drew from was a review of universal mental health promotion or disease prevention in schools (Wells et al., 2003). Yet the majority of Wells et al studies were located in US elementary schools in socially disadvantaged areas and, of these, 10 were categorised ‘analysis not adjusted for school/classroom effects’ which means that because of the mix of influences once could not definitively trace effects back to SEL interventions. Only four programmes looked at positive mental health - the SEAL model. Alongside this, only two cases studied in Wells et al. were whole school interventions yet the whole school approach is affirmed.

Carol Craig (2009) highlighted discrepancies between the evidence base presented by Weare and Gray and the reality. In Well-being in schools: The curious case of the tail wagging the dog? Craig asserts

Weare acknowledges (2004) that these studies report interventions which are hugely different in design, goals and methodology and that it is very difficult to ascertain their effectiveness’.

(Craig, 2009, p. 8).

Weare and Gray present a confused discourse regarding evidence, promoting the idea of hard evidence emanating from American studies, evidence that is actually not as rigorous or valid as it is presented in the report. As they themselves write
It is clear from the research and from practice in the field that in, some cases, claims are made without clear evidence to support them. There is a responsibility to evaluate, to sift the evidence carefully, and distinguish hopes and values from sound demonstrated effect. (p. 29)

I would argue that this responsibility was not fulfilled by Weare and Gray.

Observing usage of the term evidence to support SEAL, it took less than two years for Weare and Gray’s evidence message to be reinterpreted in SEAL Primary Guidance as ‘A broad range of evidence is now available to support claims for the effectiveness of work to develop children’s social, emotional and behavioural skills document (DFES, 2005, p. 8). No mention is made of the US context or questionable nature of the evidence. By 2007 and the launch of Secondary SEAL this had transformed into ‘The evidence is overwhelming that well-designed programmes to promote social and emotional skills can result in gains that are absolutely central to the goals of all schools’ (DFES, 2007b, p. 8).

Finally, it is worth returning to Humphrey et al. (2010, 2012) who conclude that the assertion that SEAL has had a major impact on attendance, behaviour, learning, achievement etc. is not borne out by the data. Where there were statistically significant changes in measured outcomes, the associated effect sizes were marginal. There were also some potential iatrogenic effects including a decline in academic performance for children in Key Stage 1, and negative changes in attitudes towards school and relationships with teachers among children in Key Stage 2 during the pilot (Humphrey et al., 2009). There were a number of key variables where SEAL made no difference e.g. attendance (Humphrey et al., 2010, p. 6).

3.12.3 Deficit model/ therapeutic education

Another criticism of SEAL is that the model is built upon a diminished view of the self, which posits that our children are depressed, anxious and unable to manage their
emotions without specific adult intervention. As Coleman (2009) notes in his paper *Well-being in schools: empirical measure, or politician’s dream?*:

In their view [Ecclestone and Hayes (2008)] and in that of Craig (2007), there is a fundamental flaw in the idea that pupils are somehow lacking some capacity to deal with emotions, and that it is the school’s job to make good this deficit. (p. 290)

SEAL was a universal intervention, between 2005 and 2010, nearly all primary if not secondary pupils participated in it. Millions of children were instructed on emotional management and reflection, based on an assumption that they needed this. Are we saying most young people have emotional problems? This question was central to the work of Craig (2007, 2009), Furedi (2003), Ecclestone (2004, 2007, 2013, 2014) and Hayes (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009).

Ecclestone and Hayes have been particularly critical of social and emotional learning in the British education system. In their book, *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (2009) they critique what they term the rise of therapeutic education in England, being activity focused on perceived emotional problems and aiming to make learning processes more emotionally engaging. For Ecclestone and Hayes, SEAL exposed children to intrusive interventions ‘that probe, elicit and assess their emotions, and make them accountable for them’ (p. 163). This reinforces a view that they are vulnerable and at risk. The programme is built upon a new ‘pseudo-psychological sensibility’ (p. 122) which was promoting the fundamental role of the state in supporting individuals’ emotional self; essentially putting government into the head of young people, who due to their vulnerable and depressive states needed this. This position, in particular the politicisation of the emotional self, is further promoted by the work of Furedi (2003, 2006, 2008, 2009) who argues that beliefs regarding young people’s emotional states serve a political purpose in opening up the private self to public therapeutic management, and reducing people’s willingness or ability to face risk, fear,
threat or challenge. Increasingly, the professional management of emotion was accepted as a crucial task by both the private and public sector' (2003, p. 84).

Craig argues that the idea that our young people are damaged and depressed is a fallacy. She cites as a core source *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder* by Allan Horwitz (Craig, 2009, p. 2). She thinks that one of the rationales for SEAL in England and Wales, a whole school, taught approach to social and emotional skills, was to respond to this rising tide of depression (p. 3).

In the work I’ve been involved with in the past few years I have talked to thousands of people in the UK about what’s happening in our schools and parenting practices and almost everyone agrees that we have followed in America’s footsteps. Some say this is the path we are now on; others say we have been travelling down this road for a considerable period of time and are beginning to see the same results. What’s interesting is that most say that these ideas are so embedded in our psyche that few people question the practices (p. 13).

Ecclestone and Hayes’ and Craig’s concerns that normal emotions are being medicalised are also voiced by Bingham, (2007) who expresses concerns regarding the conformity of emotional expression associated with SEAL and, in particular, the possible negative consequences of this approach.

Childhood depression and, in particular, its influence on SEAL is an area much explored by the programme’s critics. Craig raised concerns not just about the validity of the figures used by the DFES but the actual methods utilised for the gathering of such data, arguing that the instruments used to measure childhood depression take no account of the context and thereby cannot discriminate between normal adolescent emotions and depression etc.

One of the main problems with removing context from the diagnosis of depression is that it grossly inflates depression statistics, making existing population estimates meaningless.

(Craig, 2009, p. 4)
Craig supported her concerns by referencing the work of Matthews et al. who in regard to the validity of *Emotional Intelligence* found ‘in spite of current theorizing about EI programs, we really do not know that much about how they work, for whom they work, under what conditions they work, or indeed, whether or not they work ’ (Matthews et al., 2002, p. 466).

3.12.4 **Ideology - individualistic instrumentalisation**

Over the past decade, most social and emotional learning practice in English schools has been built around an Objective List Theory (OLT) model of wellbeing. This defines wellbeing as an externally observable state thereby instrumentalising the emotional self. It is this model upon which SEAL and its learning outcomes were built. One problem with OLT is that, as Thomas Scanlon (1993) asserted, it assumes it knows better than the person whose well-being is in question (p. 188) what things make life worth living. This is particularly relevant when dealing with children, whose subjectivities are different from adults, necessarily fluid as they develop (Watson et al., 2012).

There is an epistemological dilemma here as social and emotional learning is, arguably, socially, culturally and politically constructed and located. The instrumentalisation inherent to SEAL therefore reinforces parochial norms that describe part, not all, of society. Certain groups fall outside normalised ideas of SEL. This raises the questions ‘should the state dictate such values and feelings? [and] who is deciding on the ‘legitimate’ knowledge or ‘truth’’? (Evans, 2011, p. 347). SEAL was created by a group of expert practitioners in the employ of the state. It had no input from children, nor did it reflect what children and families thought supported their wellbeing, as evidenced in the DCSF report *Childhood Wellbeing* (DCSF, 2008a). OLT approaches to children’s wellbeing presume adults know
what children need to be ‘well beings’. I would argue that SEAL is blind to the *subjective, contextual* and *relational* nature of wellbeing (Watson et al., 2012; Boler, 1999).

SEAL places the emphasis on the individual child to regulate *inner states*, creating ‘feeling rules’ (Hochschild, 2003) and/or regimes (Foucault, 1995) which legitimise certain responses and not others. In regard to diversity, this position, as Burman (2009) states, ‘covertly reinforces existing structures of (class and ‘race’) privilege’ (p. 141).

(McLaughlin, 2008) notes that where individuals, including children, are responsible for the management of their own emotions, there is ‘a neo-liberal view of the subject, i.e. *we are all responsible for ourselves rather than being interdependent*’ (p. 362, my emphasis). This point is reinforced by Burman (2008) who argues that, as with the mental hygiene movement, ‘individual children are blamed for ‘poor skills and impulse-control’.

Focusing specifically on the work of Peter Sharp, a member of the SEAL steering Group, Burman argues that his version of emotional literacy is also noteworthy for how all references to gender, race and class are washed away. What remains is the classical humanist subject, devoid of any such attributes, (Burman, 2008). In Burman’s opinion, SEAL has led to a situation where emotions become a ‘vital commodity’ (p. 151).

### 3.12.5 Unforeseen negative consequences

SEAL can have negative consequences on the young people taking part. This was a criticism first aired by Craig when looking at the results of the Hallam (2006) evaluation which showed that some results went down after the pilot, particularly for boys (Craig, 2009, p. 8). This is a feature of SEAL also picked up by Bingham (2007) who was concerned that repeated focus on self-evaluation may be at best uncomfortable, at worst distressing (Bingham, 2007, unnumbered page). Craig thought SEAL could be a large-scale
psychological experiment on young people, which may backfire and undermine their well-being in the longer-term. Commentators have wondered whether SEAL, through its preoccupation with the self and feelings, would encourage narcissism and self-obsession, thereby undermining the very thing, social and emotional learning, that it was intended to improve. (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009).

The idea of SEAL as a large-scale psychological experiment was picked up by the US, not UK, media. In October, 2009 the magazine Newsweek ran with the headline How Biased Science led to Emotional Intelligence Curriculum in all UK Schools. Po Bronson challenged the evaluations supporting the SEAL programme and referred to Hallam (2006)

Students’ self-rated awareness of emotions actually went down, the first year of the program, and slowly crept back up over the next two years. Their attitude toward school didn’t improve until the third year of the pilot, and then only modestly.

(Bronson, 2009, online)

The Newsweek article identified that the pilot had actually had no impact on pupils’ self-esteem or social skills and had in fact, according to pupils, lowered the quality of their academic work. The belief that SEAL could actually have a negative impact on pupils’ academic learning is a point addressed by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) who are concerned that emotional or therapeutic education in schools (of which SEAL is included) ‘jettisons and distains the intellectual in favour of emotions’ (p. 60). One could also argue, as I and colleagues have previously (Watson et al., 2012), that time spent exploring the self and feelings is time taken away from subject learning. Ecclestone and Hayes recognise this as the shift from the intellectual to the emotional. Taking this perspective further, the idea that SEAL could have a negative impact was given further credence by Humphrey et al. (2010). In their summary they identify unintended negative consequences including reduced trust and
respect amongst pupils for teachers, reduced liking for school and reduced feelings for school and classroom supportiveness (Humphrey et al., 2010, p. 3).

3.12.6 Summary

In reviewing the SEAL evaluations, one can identify three key features, each connected to the SEAL discourse. Firstly: the use and application of the term ‘evidence’. This socially and politically located phrase was attached to the SEAL programme from the very beginning yet the very evaluations designed to demonstrate this ‘standard’ did not, in fact, apply the very same criteria they were propagating. I would argue that this was due to the term ‘evidence’ being from the start an empty phrase that was utilised in the service of political action rather than as a scientific term. Secondly on reflection, it is clear that, due to the loose implementation model that SEAL operated, (SEAL was whatever each school called SEAL as long as it followed the 5 domains OLT model) any wider evaluation on SEAL was immediately problematic as one could not in fact measure SEAL on a like for like basis. Further muddying the water here was also the fact that some of the evaluations were undertaken by the programme designers. A position that questions the ‘objectivity’ of the evaluation process.

Finally, I would contend that the power and influence of the New Labour in England political discourse driving SEAL can be seen overtly in the manner in which the SEAL evaluations are wholly positive at the start of the programme and any sense of negative findings is not revealed until the end of the New Labour regime. Furthermore it has been reported to me by Humphrey et al (2010) that the (negative) evaluation findings presented were challenged by the New Labour in England regime very shortly before leaving office. Following the demise of New Labour and firstly the election of the Coalition government, followed by the current Conservative government, SEAL as a government supported
initiative has publically vanished (Watson et al, 2012) with the materials being removed from the Department for Educations website and the programme closed down. However I deliberately use the term ‘publically’ for the reality is that with over 90% of English primary schools doing SEAL during the New Labour period many of these schools are still delivering SEAL activities and using the SEAL materials almost a decade later (Bannerjee et al, 2014).

At the policy level with the current governments interest in traditional subjects and the introduction of the EBAC, social and emotional learning has been far less visible with no specific programme or approach validated or endorsed and very little guidance forthcoming from the Department for Education. As Bonell (2014) notes

> Education policy in England increasingly encourages schools to maximise students’ academic attainment and ignore their broader wellbeing, personal development, and health. (p.1)

Over the past few years we have seen a shift from social and emotional learning to the re-emergence of character education (Ecclestone, 2015) and connected to this a growing interest in the teaching of ‘resilience’ factors (Burman, 2014) Yet overriding these developments a new and dominant discourse has emerged once again returning to grave concerns regarding children’s mental health and broader wellbeing but locating these concerns within the frame of a children’s mental health crisis (Humphrey and Wigelsworth 2016, Ecclestone, 2016). This discourse, similar to SEAL, is again grounded in a diminished view of the child and according to Ecclestone maintains the perspective that a wide range of vulnerable and troubled people require support, in education establishments, through social and emotional interventions. Whether this will play out in policy terms in a similar manner to SEAL, with a nationally prescribed programme solution, is unlikely due in part to the autonomous and fractured nature of the current English education system (Ball, 2013) and the reluctance of government to prescribe programme solutions.
Returning to SEL practice the present realities are a free market free for all with a wide range of diverse private and not for profit social and emotional learning programmes. These are often targeted, presented as prevention interventions, and are delivered across schools in England and Wales with little or no Local Authority or central government coordination. The most popular of these are Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Second Step, the UK Resilience Programme, Caring School Community (CSC) and the many mindfulness schemes currently operating in English schools (Humphrey, 2014; Humphrey and Lendrum, 2015; Weare, 2015) These programmes like their SEAL predecessor are in the main built on a deficit view of the child, one atomised and devoid of cultural, class and race factors (Burman, 2014), pursue an objective list model of SEL skills and abilities and maintain the school as a site for social and emotional intervention.

3.13 Literature review conclusion

This literature review firmly places the roots of the New Labour in England SEAL model in the thinking of the self-esteem (and later social skills) movement that rolled out across America during the 1970s and 80s. It argues that the SEL discourse in England has been captured by an American neoliberal version of what constitutes useful and appropriate emotions, one appropriated by New Labour in England, and assisted by the twin discourses of the child as vulnerable and moral panics concerning the state of modern society in England. This process was driven by a small but powerful SEL policy network that both created the need for SEL (Fairclough’s discourse as both shaping and shaped) and then populated through the work of Daniel Goleman, a particular version of SEL through the development of SEAL. One could argue that the production of SEAL saw New Labour in England
essentially nationalise a localised market, thereby incorporating SEL into the language and service of the global knowledge economy.

The SEAL programme became an instrument through which New Labour in England believed it could address issues of social justice, employability and anti-social behaviour with, I would contend, behavioural change at the heart of the programme. A position that I believe resulted in the participants (teachers, pupils and parents) or consumers becoming agents of their own emotional surveillance (Emery, 2014). Through connecting the inner emotional world of the child with the knowledge economy and standards agenda New Labour in England sold the programme to schools as a simplistic way of fixing a range of school and societal problems. This message was then reinforced through the ‘evidence’ discourse and the thin evaluations that took place during the early years of SEAL. This was SEL as a form of governmentality (Foucault, 1995)

The SEL discourse in Wales took a different approach, clearly reflecting the different historical and cultural values and political aspirations of New Labour in Wales (Clear Red Water) and the absence of a powerful SEL policy network, as existed in England. For much of the New Labour in Wales period, there was in fact no applied SEL discourse to talk of but rather, locally desired and defined emotional health and wellbeing programmes generally directed towards targeted groups of pupils. The first two years of the Welsh Assembly Government saw a clear ‘red water’ emerging between English and Welsh educational policy and SEL was no exception to this. The Welsh Assembly Government clearly believed that by tackling issues of poverty and social exclusion, particularly through a children’s rights agenda, the needs of children would be best met. Social justice, cooperation and the citizen were all key ideological concepts shaping the Welsh SEL discourse. There were little to no conversations regarding moral panics or a deficit model of the child. This position is not
wholly surprising when one considers that the Welsh people at this time were overtly focused on building a nation (Osmond, 2010).

The third term of the Welsh Assembly government and, in particular, Leighton Andrews’ 20 point plan, saw the emergence of a specific Welsh model of SEL. One still concerned with social justice but also reflecting elements of the neoliberal standards, employability and achievement agenda. However the rampant neoliberalism of New Labour in England never transferred through to Wales and the SEL framework (for instance Demonstrating Success) and discourse that developed (emotional support as a form of social justice and community development) was still applied at the local level with no national, universal, model of SEL emerging.

As this literature review demonstrates, the story of SEL in England and Wales during the New Labour period is a complex one. The subject of SEL has clearly had much academic attention paid to it yet this has not translated to the home/international field of study nor the influence of local and international policy networks and discourses. This review does, I believe, offer the first critical analysis of its kind and will I hope act as both a resource and a ‘conversation’ driver for those both working in the subject field and those determined to challenge the dominant hegemonic model operating in England and growing in Wales (Emery, 2014).
4 Methodology and methods

4.1 Research questions

I open this chapter with a restatement of my research questions for as Pryor (in Thomson & Walker, 2010) notes, these should capture what the research is about.

- How was the development of SEL policy in England and Wales framed by New Labour?
- What were the accounts of experience of policy actors who sought to develop and deliver SEL policy in England and Wales?
- How did national tradition, history and identity (including versions of childhood wellbeing) influence the discourse and policy of Welsh and English SEL under New Labour?

All of the research questions are concerned with SEL. Beyond SEL, as the literature review demonstrates, one can see other levels of subject interest; New Labour, neoliberalism and English and Welsh education policy. These subjects alone tell the reader much about me and my approach and thinking, as well as influencing how others will react to the study. The creation of the questions followed the thinking of Su et al. (2010) in that they were built from ‘an attention to what others have said and are saying; attention to what others have written; and attentiveness to one’s premonitions’ (p93). One could say that the questions were a process born from my experiences, thinking and discussions as an active member of the SEL community since 1995. In this sense the research questions are a reflection of my own journey and identity (Dunne et al. 2005) and as such the focus is on interpretation,
comparison, relationships and ultimately critical explanation with regard to Welsh and English SEL policy thinking and doing.

4.2 Introduction – methodology and methods

This chapter is the engine room of the thesis. It will describe and explore what I did, with who, how, why, when and where. Methodology and methods are different. Methodology is the theory and thinking that supports the research and locates it within a particular methodological tradition or paradigm, methods are the actual nuts and bolts of what was done (Thomson & Gunter, 2007). This chapter will be presented in four parts. It will open with i) an exploration of the methodological location for this study, the qualitative approach, along with the ontological and epistemological thinking ii) the second section will deal with the methods; the people, places and process (semi structured interviews) that formed the data gathering iii) the next section will detail how the data was understood and the process of analysis iv) it will close with a consideration of the ethical issues associated with this study.

Each of these stages will be supported by my own critical reflections (drawn in part from the research diary I kept) and the drawing of a reflexive frame in order to both guide the reader through the complex process of building a critical theory research project and to illuminate through the act of transparency the thinking and doing that has supported this research process. Following in the tradition of my colleague Rogers (2012), I believe this reflexivity, so long as it adds substance rather than rhetoric (Tronya, 1994), provides a greater level of depth and trustworthiness to the process and findings (Flick, 2009).
4.3 Methodology - qualitative research

In undertaking educational research one enters a philosophical arena that on first glance may seem well ordered and clearly signposted. One only has to turn to one of the many research manuals (Silverman, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) to identify that there is a natural order or process to be followed when conducting educational research, that according to Grix, (2004) involves

Setting out clearly the relationship between what a researcher thinks can be researched (her ontological position) linking it to what we can know about it (her epistemological position) and how to go about acquiring it (her methodological approach), you can begin to comprehend the impact your ontological position can have on what and how you decide to study.

(Grix, 2004, p. 68)

This well described, systematic process may well operate smoothly for many researchers, however for me, understanding and expressing clearly the philosophy supporting this study continues to be a challenging task and one that I have wrestled with since starting the PHD. This challenge relates not so much to the tools used to gather the data or analysing (the methods) rather it is a methodological issue of philosophy and paradigm.

In the recently revised edition of the Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Denzin & Lincoln, in attempting to define the field, conclude that a revolution is underway, one that sees qualitative researchers using a range of strategies, across a range of disciplines and operating within a fuzzy, uneasy, theoretical field that encompasses neoliberalism, pragmatism and poststructuralism. In essence Denzin and Lincoln see the contemporary qualitative researcher wearing a multitude of hats and grappling with a range of theories, yet determined to offer an interpretive analysis of current times. This revolution is defined by the politics of representation, which asks what is represented in a text and how it should be
judged. ‘We have left the world of naive realism, knowing now that a text does not mirror the world, it creates the world’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 12).

This position, driven by an emphasis on text, discourse and power relations in a poststructuralist or postmodern world, as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln, is of course not without criticism as one can see in the writings of Hammersley, (2007) and in the powerful conservative regimes of evidence or scientific-based research (SBR) (Slavin, 2003).

Furthermore in regard to present activity within educational research the positivist and post positivist doctrine has a tendency to dominate the minds and purses of funders and policy makers (Martin & Kamberelis, 2013), a situation that Lather has termed the ‘repositivisation’ of education (Lather, 2006).

Yet, for me, reading Denzin and Lincoln’s reflections allowed me to explore further and investigate a range of writing that encouraged me to make some sense of and understand my own philosophical confusion. I have always been clear that my intention was to undertake a ‘critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgments in order to improve educational action’ (Bassey, 1999, p. 39). Ultimately this statement has served as my compass through the philosophical arena and given me the confidence to assert that my work is part of and builds on qualitative inquiry as social justice. This position speaks directly to me and has allowed me to find a space, not a label, which this thesis could sit within.

4.3.1 Methodological thinking

This chapter was difficult to write in that it demanded I return (as a different person) to unpick, thinking with theory, a personally difficult and emotionally raw period of my life. This process had a huge impact on my understanding of the thinking and theorising, the methodological issues that ground this study. It was at this earlier mentioned point of epiphany (Chapter Two) that this PhD started, a full two years before I registered for the PhD
programme. For me the story of my methodology is the story of the personal and the political intertwined, my journey from neoliberal SEL policy actor to critical education researcher.

4.3.2 Ontology

It is important to make explicit one’s ontology, that is how one views the nature of reality, what exists and what it looks like (Mertens, 2010) as this is a necessary step in order to develop an accompanying epistemological base. This is a qualitative, standpoint CDA inquiry as social justice, and therefore sits within the body of work known as critical theory (Mack, 2010). Yet this thesis is determined to build on the ‘thinking and doing’ of Apple (2013) and therefore to go beyond deconstructing the dominant SEL discourse and move towards suggesting an alternative, democratic and thick version of SEL. It is this process that I believe places me in the position of both a critical theorist (deconstructing) and critical secretary (constructing) (Apple, 2013).

In the doing and writing of this thesis I have identified that the nature of the self I bring and the study I present has been driven by a view of reality that is multifaceted. Yet this is a critical study with a clear intention to reveal inequality and dominant discourses, for the study to be relevant a particular validated version of reality must exist over and above the myriad versions offered by a relativist philosophy (Barrett, 2011). With this in mind I position this thesis within the realm of historical realism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) which is generally associated with a critical theory paradigm and believes in the existence of a ‘… virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values crystallized over time’ (p. 100). One should note here that the term virtual is used in the pre-internet context and is not referring to a virtual digital existence but rather its traditional usage.
My thesis is interested in how people (policy makers) make sense of their world and how researcher identity and the research process impacts on this. Indeed my work follows three broad ontological principles (definition, construction and activity) associated with critical studies of this nature (see for instance the work of Ball, 2008 and Fairclough, 2001). According to Cohen et al. (2007) cited in Mack (2010), factors associated with such work are:

(1) social reality is defined from persons in society, (2) social reality is constructed through media, institutions and society, (3) social behaviour is the outcome of particular illegitimate, dormitory and repressive factors, illegitimate in the sense that they do not operate in general interest – one person’s or group’s freedom and power is bought at the price of another’s freedom and power.

(Mack, 2010, p. 6)

My model of social reality (informed by Fairclough’s approach) aligns itself with the work of Bhaskar (1998) and his three domains of reality model. This can be defined as a critical realist perspective of reality. In terms of his framework, my thesis flows across all three domains, the real, actual and empirical. The domain of the real refers to agencies that are independent of both mind and society. The domain of the actual refers to events that take place, while the domain of the empirical refers to what is observed or sensed by human beings. It should be noted that these domains are not free standing but rather cross over and interweave. Relating this to the researcher (me) and researched (interview participants), one could state that the Real domain is the actual physical and mental work undertaken by myself and the interviewees, the Actual is the effect of power generated by the work undertaken, seen or unseen. Finally, the Empirical is the space of experience and history, where we have come from and what we know.

Bhaskar’s domains of reality give this thesis a solid and respected framework that does not constrain or contradict the aims of the study. Furthermore it offers a space whereby I can unpick and understand the experiences or observations of some policy players involved.
in the Welsh and English SEL discourse. It is a perspective that sits comfortably with a study seeking to reveal the power relations and inequalities pulling and pushing the discourse, texts and voices. Moreover it is also interested in what was not said, or omitted within the SEL discourse as well as recognising the ‘reality’ of the material social practice (e.g. money, jobs, school buildings and education staff) within the SEL story.

4.3.3 Epistemology

If ontology refers to what is there to know, or what can be known about the objects of study, epistemology asks the question how can we know it, or what can be regarded as gathering appropriate knowledge (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012, p. 37). This study is an interpretive study. I the subject (the researcher) am gathering knowledge about an object, the SEL policymaker’s experiences. However as I have indicated in Chapter Two, there is a strong insider/outsider perspective operating across this thesis which I believe moves this interpretation process into what is termed the double hermeneutic cycle (Giddens, 1993). This means that the interpretation process is moving beyond simply the interpretation of what the participants express but also accommodates myself as the researcher making sense of my role in the interview process and the interpretation of the data. This process in particular is explored in Gunter et al. (2014).

I also wish to remind the reader that although this study is interested in making meaning of participants’ (and my own) experiences, it is also very much focused on uncovering the forces behind SEL. This process of revelation will support new thinking about what SEL could be; the constructive critical secretary element. It is therefore not a relativist piece of research but rather a thesis that, in its critical location, acknowledges the notion of a
‘real’ reality, but acknowledges the challenges in capturing this ‘reality’ objectively (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

As one can see there are some similarities to a constructivist perspective in these assumptions. However although this study acknowledges a complex reality, its critical essence goes a step further by claiming that the acceptance of differences of perception as equally legitimate does not take into account the factors that privilege one version of reality over another (Mertens, 2010). These factors can be social, economic, political and historical.

4.3.4 Epistemological challenge

My epistemological position, one that reflects power, social conditions and inequality, allows me to immediately present one of the challenges to this study. This piece of critical research is occurring within a broader ‘epistemological empire’; the current neoliberal regime of truth (Apple, 2007; Gunter et al., 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This thin version of truth, one that has created a new discourse of common sense in education related to standards, evidence, employability and testing (Carusi, 2010; Gunter et al., 2014), has, I believe, squeezed educational research in such a manner that much non-positivist, social justice research, emanating from the ‘Other’, struggles for legitimisation in the world of neo-positivist, evidence-based epistemologies. In the land of current English neoliberalism, one-eyed scientific research is king. Apple (in Gunter et al., 2014) refers to this process as epistemological reduction and notes that this reduction can be countered by research that does not shun ‘complexity, contradiction, real people’s experiences and narratives’ (p.xi). I believe this study contains all of those elements in its attempts to shape a counter hegemonic argument.
For purposes of balance it should be acknowledged that there is much critical expression taking place within the education world (Gillies 2011; Ball, 2013; Gunter et al., 2014) and this has on occasion resulted in the neoliberal discourse being challenged, see for example the discussion related to *The Bell Curve* in (Barrett, 2011). In this article Barrett makes clear that *The Bell Curve’s* status was ‘largely discredited through extensive critical review’ (p. 4). My position ultimately defines that my thesis is a discourse of resistance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), challenging both the commodification (Timimi, 2011) and governance (Dahlstedt et al., 2010) of children’s social and emotional states and the processes whereby the market place and ‘common sense’ has captured the SEL discourse.

4.4 Methods

The methods I undertook were consistent with and shaped by my research questions and methodological stance (Mason, 2011). They were shaped and informed by previous CDA studies and research methods explored in the excellent *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education* by Rebecca Rogers (2004) the scholarly *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* by Wodak and Meyer (Wodak & Meyer, 2008) and for me the indispensable *Routledge International Handbook of Critical Education* (Apple, Au and Gandin, 2009). Useful papers included those by Moreau & Leathwood (2006), Sims-Schouten et al. (2007), Oerton & Pilgrim (2014) and Mulderrig (2003).
4.4.1 The sample

It was evident to me well before this thesis took shape that two of my strengths in the field of SEL were firstly my knowledge of the subject and its development since it was first talked about in the UK, and secondly the network of relationships I had developed over my years as a SEL practitioner and policy actor. The first of these strengths I utilised fully in co-authoring *Children’s Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Critical Perspective* (Watson et al., 2012). The second of these strengths I fully utilised for the purposes of this thesis, gaining access to and interviewing the key policy actors in England and Wales. As this work was always going to be as much a reflection on my journey as it was the story of policy actors and the SEL discourse it was clear from the start that as a qualitative, critical theory, thesis I would be listening to these policy actors and myself. The sample was therefore purposive (Ritchie et al. 2013). I chose to talk with policy actors that I had some form of a relationship with, ranging from close and friendly to distant and mistrustful. England and Wales were chosen as this is where I had worked and had participated in the SEL discourse.

My first task was therefore to gather together a list of those who met the following criteria:

i) had been a senior national level policy actor/part of a policy network that was instrumental to the SEL discourse in England or Wales during the New Labour period 1997-2010

ii) I had either a previous working relationship with or they were aware of my work in England and Wales and could be contacted through other relationships.
I was aware from the outset that although the pool of potential participants could be rather large (up to 30), in order to be effective for this thesis, it would need to ultimately contain around 16 names (in expectation that one third would not take part) ideally equally divided between England and Wales. It was this group of 16 (9 in England/7 in Wales) who formed the first sample for this study. My initial list of contacts contained a range of names and organisations that unbeknown to me at the time are reflected in Ball & Exley's (2010) *New Labour Policy Networks* paper.

4.4.2 Interviewing elites (and challenging the notion)

If one accepts Lilleker’s (2003) notion that elites are ‘those with close proximity to power or policymaking’ (p. 207) it is evident that my participants fell into this category. Although it must be noted that I have some problems with the term ‘elite’ and its current usage, particularly the simplistic way it is often applied in a powerful/powerless binary and as an unproblematic category. The idea that ‘elites’ can be neatly defined and are static does not sit with my own thinking. I would advise the reader to explore the writing of Smith, (2006) in order to understand my position better.

However I do recognise and acknowledge that my potential interview participants did reflect many of the qualities attached to the term ’elites’, and at the level of fluid power (see below) all my candidates did hold this at some point. This of course raises a number of particular issues including access, power dynamics and control for it is likely, due to their connections, profile and status, that my candidates were well experienced in the interview process and managing it. A situation that Bateson and Ball (1995) note, as the elite’s ability to skilfully employ tactics in order to ‘weave narratives of justification’ (p. 208). A literature has developed in relation to dealing with these issues and in particular the interview process...
itself (Woliver, 2002; Desmond, 2004) which I drew on when both seeking and contacting my participants and developing the interview schedule. It should also be noted that I was not an inexperienced researcher, looking upwards (Smith, 2006), but rather one who with my insider history had both an understanding of the issues relating to elites and also extensive interview and media training myself. As Hannabus (2000) notes the insider knows his / her environment well, knows by instinct what can be done and how far old friendships and favours can be pressed, just when and where to meet up for interviews, what the power structures and the moral mazes and subtexts of the company are … (p. 103)

This insight and the experiences of my insider status were, I believe, crucial in helping me to navigate the interview process.

4.4.3 Making contact with the interviewees

Mercer’s 2007 paper exploring the challenges of the researcher investigating places they have worked in, considers that the insider researcher wields a double-edged sword whilst treading a series of delicate paths. I would concur with this but also add that my status as both an insider and outsider further complicated this experience. On the one hand I used my insider history, connections and knowledge in order to ensure that positive contact was made that would be likely to result in the interview being granted. On the other hand I was also aware that my outsider status as a critical voice in English SEL would be likely to raise challenges and barriers to gaining access to previous English SEL colleagues. Finally, I also had to tread Mercer’s delicate path in regard to ensuring for methodological purposes I held onto a sense of outsider status, the researcher peering inside. This challenge is best illuminated by the following example.
One of my key possible interview participants was a very high profile English academic who had been working at the heart of the SEL discourse since the start of the New Labour period. I had a historical relationship with this person and we had met in a SEL context previously. As I was putting together my initial approach email to the possible participants, I met with this person at a conference. Naively, I had not considered how I would respond to meeting possible interview participants in a social situation. This was a mistake as the world of SEL in England and Wales is ultimately a small one and as I still operate in this field, it was likely this situation would occur. To add to these difficulties I was also at the time presenting a paper outlining my critical response to work this academic had been heavily involved in. The outcome was, not surprisingly, negative and difficult.

Following the presentation of my paper I was approached in public and verbally castigated for what the person believed was an unfair critique of their work. Strong and heated language was directed towards me and I felt trapped, fearful and embarrassed. I attempted to respond politely and rationally, asking the person if we could meet later to calmly discuss my work and how important their voice was to my study. Both requests were refused and I left the conference with my ‘castigation’ being the talk of the evening. This was a real world outcome to the conceptual notion of the insider/outsider status I was treading, and had repercussions that reverberated throughout the time of this thesis. Unsurprisingly this person was not one of my final interview participants.

4.4.4 A note on the issue of power

Bringing the narrative back to the interviewing of elites I believe the above experience demonstrated one of the key challenging elements the researcher needs to navigate carefully; the use of power. Power is a complex phenomenon and one can identity a
number of perspectives in the conceptualisation of power (Smith, 2006). As this thesis is a critical discourse analysis, my understanding of power is one that challenges traditional structural interpretations (Fecho & Allen, 2003). Instead I look towards a post structural, fluid and relational notion - power that produces and is exercised, that partly reflects the thinking of Foucault (1995) (although as a CDA work, I see power in this context as ideologically subjugating a particular group or way of thinking) and I acknowledge that power is connected to truth and knowledge and therefore discourses or as Fairclough (1989) would note, the relations between language and power. This is power as a multiple and horizontal concept that recognises that wherever power exists, so does resistance. This understanding is another reason for my uncomfortableness in simply accepting an unchallenged notion of ‘elites’. My relationship with all of the potential interviewees and the actual interviewees was far more complex, richer, sensitive and fluid than simple ‘elite’ understandings can give voice to.

4.4.5 First contact with the interviewees (see Appendix 4)

Following Lilleker’s (2003) advice, my approach to the pool of potential interviewees was an email to each one directly (from my university email rather than my personal one) establishing three clear elements: what my project was about; why I wished to interview them; and the broad areas I was going to cover. I adopted a particular tactic, one acknowledged by Herod (1999) and others, of flattering the prospective interviewee and making it clear that they had been approached as their voice was an important one and needed to be heard in the story of SEL. The mail also included the full title of the PhD and a description of the type of issues I would like to explore with them. The language was collaborative and collegiate (I made it clear I would travel to them and meet them at a
location of their choice) and the email finished with a link to my most recent book publication, thereby asserting my knowledge and academic status in the field.

The email I sent was, however, not generic and although each one contained all of the above elements, each message was tweaked to appeal to the individual’s sense of participation and status in the SEL community as well as the reality of my relationship with them at the time. For example for those based in the Welsh SEL community, I signed off with a reference to when we last met and how nice it would be to see them again. For those in England (aside from the ex-Government minister), I generally made reference to the importance of their work, commented where possible on a piece of work we had delivered as colleagues or, where I had no direct relationship, made reference to a high level colleague who I knew was close to them. One could argue that I was duplicitous, in that I presented to the candidates only the positive face I wanted them to see and although the word ‘critical’ was in my PhD title, I did not push this element on first contact. Morris (2009) recognises that this duplicity takes place and considers it in relation to how often we ascribe duplicity to ‘elites’ when the researcher is in fact using the same ‘performance’ techniques. I would argue that this process of performance on my behalf again challenges the ‘elite’ concept and demands a more nuanced understanding of the power relationships.

Of the 16 emails that I sent a total of 11 responded positively and agreed to the interview; six from England and five from Wales. Interestingly, the majority of those who either refused or gave no response were serving politicians in high profile posts (Ed Balls (England), Jane Davidson (Wales)).
4.4.6 The interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Participants</th>
<th>Welsh Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1</strong> - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Education)</td>
<td><strong>W1</strong> - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Health/portfolio included SEL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E2</strong> - Senior Civil Servant (National Strategies/SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W2</strong> - Senior Civil Servant (Education/responsible for SEL development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3</strong> - Member of SELIG/NELIG (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W3</strong> - Senior Government Advisor (Academic/Children and Young People)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E4</strong> - Head of SEL national campaigning group (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W4</strong> - Head of Young People’s national campaigning group (Contributed to national SEL framework)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Location and roles of the policy actors interviewed

From a total pool of 11 respondents, the final number of people interviewed was 9 as one participant each from England and Wales ultimately proved unable due to diary commitments to agree an interview time and was ultimately dropped from the schedule albeit after many months of chased emails and phone calls. From the figure of 9, the above table shows the final interview count was 8 participants. The ninth, English, interview was undertaken but is omitted from this thesis due to wanting to ensure a sense of parity for England and Wales.
4.4.7 The interview process

The interviews took place between Autumn, 2011 and Spring, 2012. All interviews were conducted at a location decided by the participant and I travelled to hotels, houses, cafes, universities and seats of legalised power across England and Wales. Each participant was sent the themes of the questions to be asked beforehand, and a two hour schedule was agreed. All participants were informed that the interview would be digitally recorded, that they would remain anonymous, and were made aware of the confidentiality guidelines. This process is explored and unpicked towards the end of this chapter in the ethics section.

During the interview process I kept a research diary and these notes will be referred to in order to give depth to the experience of doing research with high profile policy actors. It is also important to note that I came to the interviews at a point where the for the first time SEAL in England was being publically critiqued (my paper in BERJ, the work of Ecclestone and Hayes, Carol Craig) and in Wales the new Education Minister, Leighton Andrews, had published his contentious 20 point plan (Andrews, 2015) moving education in Wales into the standards and performance agenda. These are vitally important points to note, as both of these actions were challenging to and critical of what had gone before, particularly in relation to SEL. For my participants one could argue that the fluid forces of power and the discursive genres were shifting again and this was a period (alongside the introduction of the UK coalition government) of change.
4.4.8 The interview schedule (see Appendix 5)

May (2010) contends that, ‘interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings’ (p. 120). As this is a qualitative CDA study, I chose to undertake semi-structured interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) with the research participants for this and three other specific reasons. Firstly, I wanted to gather richness and depth of data for which as Lilleker (2003) notes, interviews are ideally suitable. Secondly, my strength of contacts and insider knowledge meant that it would be likely the interview approach would engender intimacy and openness between myself and the interviewees, resulting in valuable data being gathered (Clark, 1998). Finally, this method was the most efficient in terms of gathering a large amount of information from the right people in a relatively short period of time. There was a time early in this study when I did discuss alternative approaches with my supervisor, including a focus group (Radway, 1984) approach however it was quickly evident that this would be unlikely to work due to identity and anonymity issues as well as the access and time problems connected with gathering a group of policy actors together. I was also aware that this approach would not have succeeded due to the unlikelihood of getting a range of different policy actors to reveal rich information on their activities with colleagues present. Interviews, I believe, gave me the best opportunity for getting a real insight into the thinking and actions that has often taken place outside of the public eye and would therefore illuminate the SEL policy process and discourse.

Semi structured interviews sit comfortably with the researcher who is looking for meaning derived from social phenomena and social interaction (Sarantakos, 2005; Talmy, 2010) that is how did the policy actors interviewed make sense of the world they operated in? How did they understand it? For as Marston (2000) states understanding how policy happens and how it is experienced by policy actors is under researched. My interview approach followed that of Potter and Wetherall (1997) who consider that the art of such an interview is
“…keeping to the schedule enough to ensure that the topic is dealt with by each participant, but at the same time letting the conversation flow and following up interesting lines of talk as they happen.” (p 84).

The interview questions were built around the themes associated with the study’s overall research questions and were open ended in order to allow for flexibility and build rapport between myself and the participant. Pursuing the thinking of Kvale and Brinkman (2009) the interview questions followed a three-stage process of introductory, general and specific. Each question had prompts to support the theme, built around exploratory statements such as ‘Can you tell me more about that’ or the mention of a key text/document/activity the participant had been linked to. Each interviewee was asked the same range of themed questions although due to history, location, relationships etc. the questions were not word for word the same for each participant. All interviews were digitally recorded for transcription purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/theme and order in which they were explored</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEL Knowledge/Discourse</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how participants located and understood SEL as a concept</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Labour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how New Labour thinking and activity impacted on the policy discourse. Testing claims of different versions of New Labour in operation in England and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEL policy and actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how policy discourse is developed and enacted from a policy</td>
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maker’s perspective. Exploring national networks, influences and power

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<tr>
<th>Devolution (Wales only)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and unpicking the role of devolution in the SEL discourse/policy process</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>National history/identity/childhood wellbeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how the participants views were created and creating within the context of wider social, cultural and political factors particularly in relation to national identity and history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9: Themes for the interview questions

Before moving on to the analytical frame and coding used for this study it is important to note that I was fully aware of the limitations concerning semi structured interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), particularly the notion that respondents may well exaggerate, forget, refuse to discuss or downplay their role. I do however believe that the sample I gathered, supported by my analysis of the literature, managed to capture the balance between being broad enough yet also focused enough to be considered representative of New Labour SEL policy actors in England and Wales during this time.

4.4.9 Who were the interviewees?

E1- I have written about this experience elsewhere (Gunter et al., 2014) as it was unique to me. The interview took place in the House of Commons and I was physically searched before entering the building. I therefore arrived in the public area we had agreed to meet in feeling anxious and nervous. The interviewee was friendly but in a formal manner and was clearly rushed. I was told that by E1 that they only had 40 minutes and we would
have to conduct the discussion in a café area. This was noisy and disruptive, partly due to significant and high profile people being pointed out or introduced to me. E1 was very direct in managing the interview, ignoring certain questions and prompts and being very vague around certain specific aspects of SEL and their role in policy development. Around half way through the interview in order to engender greater trust and try to gather richer data I revealed that my Grandmother had in fact been close to E1s retired ‘high profile’ Labour party Minster father and this resulted in a much more informal and revealing discussion taking place which unfortunately was cut short due to another appointment.

E2 – The interview with E2 took place at their home and ran well beyond the 2 hour slot. I already knew E2 as an acquaintance of a friend and we had worked briefly together during their time as a key SEL policy actor. I found E2 very welcoming and very engaging to the point that I was concerned I was being too soft and not digging into some of the more sensitive areas I desired to discuss. E2 also revealed during the process a detailed knowledge and engagement with my work along with a historical episode where I was going to be engaged for advice (this didn’t happen due to E2 moving roles) that was unexpected as well as flattering and left me floundering a little. The interview was very rich in detail and all aspects of E2s role and participation in SEL were covered.

E3 – I met E3 at a university office. This interview ran beyond the 2 hour slot and E3 was very engaging and very reflective regarding previous SEL activities. E3 is now retired and it was perhaps partly this status that led to E3 to being very open and willing to engage in critical discussion. Indeed E3 was very determined to ‘put the record straight’ on a few points. E3 was very interested in my research and enquired deeply into the academic frame and my personal academic journey. There were many moments when it felt that I was talking to a wise elderly academic supervisor. No questions or subjects were off limits to E3 and the interview was conducted in a private office with no disturbances or sense of urgency.
E4 – E4 met with me in their office and then decided we would do the interview over lunch in what proved to be a very busy central London restaurant. E4 was very chatty and informal and throughout the conversation placed themselves at the heart of the discussion and asserted their thinking and actions quite strongly. The location of the interview was very relevant as it symbolised E4s discourse which was very metropolitan, busy and referred to many well-known policy actors and government schemes and programmes all centred around central London. E4 was very animated and talked about themselves very confidently often straying away from the research questions. E4 asked very few questions about my research. In terms of transcription this was the most difficult interview to transcribe. The interview lasted around 90 minutes.

W1 – We met in a café located in the district W1 represented when a politician. The café was part of a regeneration initiative W1 had worked on when representing the area in the WAG. W1 was very welcoming and approachable. The interview was steady and thoughtful and W1 was clearly very passionate about his SEL activities and the development of the WAG. W1 located much of the conversation in a political frame and gave rich responses to the questions. The interview ran smoothly and we talked for just under two hours.

W2 – I met W2 at a hotel they had chosen and the interview was conducted in a quiet café area. I already had a friendship and recent working relationship with W2. The conversation was very friendly, rich in detail and similar to W1 located in the political agenda of WAG. W2 was very open and willing to unpick more challenging questions, with great detail, as well as asking many questions about my research. W2 was very well connected with senior WAG politicians and offered to set up links for interviews if I needed this access. The interview ran well beyond the two hours allocated.

W3 – I met with W3 at their University office. I had no previous relationship with W3 so the interview process took a much more formal and traditional route. The focus again was
on the political discourse supported by a detailed explanation of the academic perspective they had been delivering. Each question was given a thoughtful reflective response and the conversation did not particularly stray beyond the interview questions. The process did at times feel somewhat like a job interview and we slipped into the roles of senior academic and early career researcher, perhaps without realising it. The interview lasted 90 minutes.

W4 – Similar to W2 I had a recent working relationship with W4 although we had not developed a friendship in the same way. The interview with W4 was very informal and conducted in their (shared) office. Although the conversation was comfortable there was a thinness to W4s responses and much of the conversation was located around W4s own practice rather than locating things in a wider context. W4 was very passionate about the development of SEL and young people but we struggled to ‘click’ and I felt frustrated at the brevity of the responses. The interview felt as though we were only skating around the subject and never really, despite my attempts, dug into what W4 really thought, putting aside their organisation’s perspective.

4.4.10 Reflections on the interview process

De Sola Pool (1957) states ‘every interview (besides being an information-gathering occasion) is an interpersonal drama with a developing plot’ (de Sola Pool 1957: 193, cited from Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 14). Interviews are an active, interactional and interpretative process, a toing and froing between the participants where both co construct the meanings that emerge. As this thesis holds that language is both socially constructed and socially constructing my data is a product of this meaning making (Gubrium, 1995). It is important to draw the reader’s attention to three key aspects of the interview process. These have been captured as ‘What is said is inextricably tied to where it is said, how it is said,
importantly, to whom it is said’ (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). It is these three areas I wish to briefly explore for they have been important ingredients in shaping the data I will analyse.

- How - the co-construction process
- Who - the impact of professional identities on epistemology challenges
- Where - the situated nature, particularly the Welsh/English context, of the interviews

4.4.11 Co-construction, professional identity and the situated nature

There has been much written on the generation of interview data (Basker, 2004; Gubrium and Holstein, 1995; Rapley, 2004) with, particularly, post-modern commentators concluding that the contemporary interview is more about performance, reflexivity, power and identity than it is about delineated roles, objective truth and concepts of neutrality. Of particular interest to me here is the co-construction process in regard to how the data was spoken or said from the perspective of the different roles or voices present in the room.

The talk the interviews produced was jointly constructed around firstly our previous experiences, identity and relationship (where it existed) and secondly (influenced by the first) the mutually co constructed dominant interests or common ground that we pieced together as the interview progressed. I have written much already regarding my insider/outsider status with the interview participants and do not wish to revisit this. However, what has not been made explicit is that my status (connected to experiences, identity and relationships) from my perspective seriously shaped the talk that took place, the co-construction process.
4.4.12 Professional identity and building on Flick et al

Flick et al. (2004) identify two types of attitude that the interviewer may have (influenced by their insider/outsider status) towards the interview process when probing participants experiences. The first is termed *a feeling of exploitation*, the second *a feeling of happy coincidence*. In the first instance the *feeling of exploitation* derives from the interviewer carrying a latent guilty conscience that the interview is being undertaken for their own personal benefit (completing a thesis, project, work activity etc.). In this case Flick et al opine that the interviewer is likely to be wary of pushing the process through asking challenging questions, taking too much time or getting close to the interviewee, which may result in a ‘thinner’ engagement and resulting data. The alternative approach or *feeling of happy coincidence* in contrast is built on an approach that believes the interview is a beneficial coincidence whereby the interviewer’s curiosity meets the desire of the participant to have their voice heard through an enriching experience. In this instance it is more likely that openness, engagement and a greater depth of data will be generated.

These categories are interesting and clearly have value to understanding the early formulation of the interview activity. However, I am cautious as to the somewhat simplistic, binary nature of the terms. One can certainly see that the different shades of my insider/outsider status and how this was interpreted and understood by the interviewee and expressed by myself impacted on the interview activity. For the purposes of giving greater clarity to this process I therefore propose a third category to Flick et al.’s attitude types, the *feeling of happy exploitation*. I would categorise this attitude as one where the interviewer’s (my) curiosity met the desire of the interview participant to be heard but I still carried, due to different shades of the insider/outsider relationship, certain elements of the exploitation process. Of course one has to be careful here as I believe my insider/outsider status was constantly ebbing and flowing (very rarely a static thing), however one can see across the
relationships particular elements that were more dominant indicators of my status to the participants. This third position can I believe be applied in my case to the interviews where I knew the participant professionally (insider) but we were both aware that my position in the SEL community had moved from one of insider (to them) to an outsider. I believe that by taking this third category into consideration the dynamics of my interviews can be illuminated in the following manner:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant</th>
<th>My relationship to the interview activity</th>
<th>How I viewed our relationship at time of interview</th>
<th>Interview genre (Fairclough, 1992)</th>
<th>Venues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of exploitation</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Formal interview</td>
<td>Workplace meeting space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E2</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy coincidence</td>
<td>Insider</td>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Home Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy exploitation</td>
<td>Insider/Outsider</td>
<td>Formal interview</td>
<td>Private Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E4</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy exploitation</td>
<td>Insider/Outsider</td>
<td>Informal interview</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W1</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy coincidence</td>
<td>Insider</td>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Café/Home Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W2</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy coincidence</td>
<td>Insider</td>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W3</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of exploitation</td>
<td>Insider/Outsider</td>
<td>Formal interview</td>
<td>Communal Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W4</strong></td>
<td>Feeling of happy exploitation</td>
<td>Insider/Outsider</td>
<td>Formal interview</td>
<td>Private Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Interview activity building on Flick et al.

4.4.12.1 Co-construction

At the practical level the dynamics indicated above are helpful for illustrating a number of issues that impacted on the talk in the following manner. Firstly the co-construction process took a different shape and form dependent upon how I viewed both the interview activity and my relationship with the interviewee. An illustration of this would be
the talk between myself and participant E1, who I viewed myself as an outsider to and
approached with a feeling of exploitation and W3 who similarly I approached with a feeling
of exploitation and felt something of an outsider to, if not wholly an outsider. Both of these
interviews were conducted in fairly public, communal spaces that by their nature made
intimate or personal discussion difficult. The space also felt very temporary and transitional
therefore from my side did not encourage a depth in the talk or longevity. Both of these
interviews were the shortest that took place and the talk that occurred was as an
educationalist interested in SEL.

Secondly, my own perception of my status alongside the interpretation of the
interviewee had an interesting influence on the talk created in that, where I was personally
confident that I was seen as a SEL insider and where the interviewee had known my identity
as a SEL practitioner for a relatively long time, the co-construction was built on a common
ground of SEL as a subject of interest and importance. The ‘how it was said’ utilised the
language of skilled and experienced SEL practitioners/policy actors knowledgeable about the
stories and actors involved. These interviews were the longest, most in-depth and rewarding
data wise for we became vocal collaborators (Rapley, 2004) on the SEL story and, although
at times had clear differences of opinion, ultimately deeply cared about the subject area and
as such granted each other an identity that supported this position. This scenario was
particularly powerful in interviews E2 and W1. In contrast, where the perceived status and
relationship was much less, one can identify that the common ground and co-construction
were built upon broader subjects such as Welsh politics (W4) or English education policy (E1
and E4).
4.4.12.2 Situated nature

Finally all of the interviews are situated in a particular context(s). Drawing on Foucault (1979), Holstein and Gubrium state that ‘Meaning is not constantly formulated anew, but reflects relatively enduring local contingencies and conditions of possibility ‘(p 149). It is these local contingencies and conditions of possibility that I wish to consider in the light of the Welsh/English element of my interviews.

With the Welsh interviews I was asking the interviewees to talk about a period in Wales that was strongly driven, particularly in the early post devolution years, by a “Wales is different” discourse (Hawker, 2009). This concept of difference was understood and developed through Wales’s relationship with and to England. All of the Welsh interviewees talked about England, generally in the form of the ‘other’ (physically, politically, and socially) a ‘them’ and ‘us’ in binary opposition. This usage of ‘England’ and how Wales was articulated in relation to this was a powerful local contingency in the talking process. None of the English interviewees talked about Wales or any other country.

Fairclough (1995) identifies genres within discourse which he contends are ‘a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity’ (p.14). Genres are in effect a form of acting taking place within the discourse. There are many genres in operation and often one can identify multiple genres taking place at the same time. For example within a university department staff/student supervision session the range of genres could include conversational, educational, political, managerial, medical etc. It is important to note this for clearly different genres can result in different activity, understanding and outcomes. The order of discourse is the sum of the genres in use and is vital in setting limits
on what can and cannot be said (Fairclough; 1992). This thinking is developed and expanded
upon by Keep (2005) who in exploring New Labour and the policy narrative contends that

stories that underlie policy serve to structure the geography of the ‘land of the possible’
wherein policy makers come to determine and then promulgate what they can and cannot seek
to do in this field (p.1).

When interviewing my participants it became evident that each of the two countries
had a range of different and powerful genres shaping the order of discourse taking place – the
land of the possible. There was some convergence in the operational genres but it was the
divergence that dominated the interview talk.

A final point to note here is the issue of another language, Welsh, being present in the
interview talk. All of the interviews in Wales were conducted in English and one must
consider whether this approach alone shaped the interview talk in Wales. In approaching the
interviews in Wales in this manner, I question whether I was simply propagating an English
‘colonial’ view of Wales (Day, 2006). I assumed and utilised English as the dominant
language yet two of my Welsh interviewees were fluent Welsh speakers and greeted me in
Welsh as well as using common Welsh phrases in the talk (phrases that they knew I was
conversant with). Examples of this included bore da (good morning) diolch (thanks) and te
neu coffi (tea or coffee). Did my English language approach challenge, conflict or deny their
identity? Was the use of simple Welsh language words an attempt to draw their own language
into the interview frame or was it done in order to make me feel welcome and an insider?

In using the English language to interview Welsh speakers did it limit what could be
discussed and the meaning made in the interview? Did I perpetuate a ‘limiting’ English
perspective of Welsh identity? Or as Hall (1996) would state impose a ‘continuing creative
power’ (particularly in the context of Welsh education history and the story of the blue
books). The points I raise here regarding educational research and the Welsh language have not so far been explored in any of the home/international educational research literature.

4.5 My analytical frame

In setting out my analytical frame I draw from Fairclough’s *Discourse and Social Change* (1992); Jorgensen and Phillips’ *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (2002); and Roger’s *Critical Discourse Analysis in Education* (2004). Each of these texts deals with both the methodology of CDA and, most importantly, the methods; that is the application of specific analytical procedures to the data. It is generally acknowledged by CDA practitioners that there is no singular ‘right’ way or correct systematic process for applying CDA to data (Rogers, 2004). What forms data, how it has been gathered and the aims of the study, particularly the research questions, all play a role in shaping and constituting how the analyst approaches the data. As Fairclough notes

> One has to be selective, i.e. to make judgments about which ‘mix’ of available resources yields the most fruitful theorisation of the research topic

(1992, p.9)

The data analysis for this thesis was a two part process of 1) reading the data (throughout the building of the thesis), then 2) interpreting it (during a specific data analysis period during the final year of the thesis). One could say that the data analysis grew with the thesis, as I tested and drew out the hypotheses through examination of the data, a process that reflects the thinking of Wodak (2010) that the analytical process is a constant movement back and forth between theory and empirical data.
CDA is inevitably selective, and as Wodak and Meyer (2001) note ‘CDA is biased – and proud of it’ (p. 96). Clearly my own experiences and positionality will be reflected in the data I choose to present and emphasise and what I choose to leave out. Fairclough (1995) acknowledges this approach stating that ‘One way to select for the corpus (body of data to be reviewed) is moments of crisis /miscommunication /clarification/jumps in style or mood (p 230). No CDA analysis can employ all of Fairclough’s tools and therefore it is a process of picking the right tools for the job in hand. With this in mind I have, as noted earlier, reviewed previous CDA studies that have taken a similar approach and carefully examined the CDA literature for guidance in this process. My choice of research questions, and the thinking this thesis is built upon have heavily influenced the tools of CDA and depth of approach I have utilised. The job is to offer an explanatory critique of the SEL discourse in the period and places under study. In detail this means to employ a CDA process that will

- Illuminate the links between language, discourse and social practice
- Highlight the range of discourses at play in the SEL story across England and Wales
- Demonstrate the links between discourse types, ideology and power/governance
- Identify assumptions made about the role of the child and the influence of national identities, history and traditions on shaping the dominant SEL discourse

4.5.1 A brief reflection on the analytical process and CDA

Before detailing the stages I went through in analysing the data and the framework I used, I wish as a Critical Discourse Analyst to draw the reader’s attention to the fact that as
this is an interpretative process I will in effect be creating a new discursive practice regarding the SEL discourse across England and Wales. Taking Fairclough’s stages of production, distribution and consumption and applying them to my analytical process one can see that in interpreting the interview data or talk I am producing new data. This data will then be distributed through this thesis and the papers, talks and presentations I give built on this thesis. Finally one can see that the future audience that engages with my activity will essentially consume and construct from my data a further version of the SEL discourse. One can therefore identify that this thesis operates on two levels, the first a CDA of the SEL discourse across England and Wales during the New Labour period. The second a reconstituting of the SEL discursive practice during this period in the context of a critical researcher challenging the story or dominant versions of what has gone before. It is important to acknowledge this duality for with it comes a responsibility that my process (particularly the judgements I make) is clear, transparent and explicit in its ambition to promote a more egalitarian (social justice) version of SEL and its associated discourse that recognises subjectivity, context and the relational needs of the young people who come into contact with it. This statement meets what CDA commentators refer to as Critical Language Awareness, the need for the analyst to recognise how their research may be used in the field it is exploring.

4.5.2 CDA and interview data

Within this thesis discourse is understood to be socially embedded and, as such, shaped by power relations. Fairclough’s *Three Dimensional Model* provided me with a well referenced, academically robust, analytical framework through which to investigate my data. It should be noted that Fairclough’s three dimensional model has been utilised by a number
of critical commentators both within the world of education (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Collins, 2001; Woodside-Jiron, 2003; Mulderrig, 2003; Taylor, 2004; Johnson, 2014) and across wider academic research particularly in the fields of healthcare and nursing (Carter, 2011; Qiu, 2013). It this framework that formed my point of entry to the data and with this in mind, following the thinking of Fairclough (1992) I state clearly that the broader social practice or context for my analysis is: New Labour in England and Wales between 1997 and 2010.

4.5.3 Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model

As noted in Chapter 2, the Three Dimensional Model is built on three interdependent boxes or stages; text, discursive practice and social practice. It should be noted that these terms have ebbed and flowed over the years but the interpretation I present and utilise is the most consistent and commonly used. There is no traditional starting point, with some authors starting with the social practice and others entering at the text stage. Indeed one could state that in defining the need for a thesis to be undertaken in this a subject area one is already making use of the third dimension - social practice. It is a desire to address an issue of social practice (the neoliberal commodification of SEL) that drives this thesis. Fairclough’s three dimensional model will provide me with a framework that supports an explanatory critique of the SEL discourse across England and Wales during the New Labour period.

4.5.4 Nuts and bolts

What do Fairclough’s stages mean in regard to this thesis? I draw here on Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002); Hilary Janks’ Critical

4.5.5 Text

According to Jorgensen and Phillips the analysis of text concentrates on the vocabulary, grammar, syntax and sentence coherence - the formal features from which discourses are realised. This reflects the thinking of Eagleton (1991) that words have gone beyond a medium for passing on ideas or expressing consciousness, to become a powerful force in shaping social practice and particularly the concept of power. At the practical level textual analysis requires the researcher to look at the linguistic features of the text (my interview data) or the inside elements, the words and structure. As noted earlier I do not have the space to undertake an in depth micro linguistic analysis (and this would not be in the tradition of CDA) so I will at this stage emphasise four elements of the text, for as Jorgensen and Phillips and other commentators note it is not necessary to use all the methods.
4.5.6 Discursive practice

According to Fairclough (1992) the stage discursive practice ‘focuses upon processes of text production, distribution and consumption’ (p.71). This stage will form the main body of the analysis. Essentially all three of these processes are concerned with the social and necessitate reference to the economic, political and institutional contexts within which the discourse is generated. This element of the model is particularly concerned with how texts (both verbal and written) are interpreted, used and reproduced; one could call it the journey of the discourse from creation to public interpretation.

Integral to this analysis is the role of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (as detailed in the earlier Text section). Both of these factors need to be explored and understood in order to capture what Fairclough (1992) calls the historicity of the text, ‘historically transforming the past –existing conventions and prior texts – into the present’ (p. 85) and what discourses they draw upon.

For my purposes this part of the analysis will require me taking the interview data and identifying examples of where the respondents are either a) talking about how the SEL discourse was produced, distributed and consumed (their interpretation) b) how they contributed to the production, distribution and consumption (their activity and my
interpretation). I am particularly interested at this stage to reveal which discourses were at play in England and Wales during the production, distribution and consumption of SEL according to the data given by my policy actors. This is important for a high level of interdiscursivity (multiple discourses) indicates social change whilst a low level tends to demonstrate a commitment to the established social order (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Finally it is important to note that for Fairclough and CDA analysts in general the discursive practice stage is crucial for it acts as the bridge between the text and the social practice. It is the actual functioning of the discourse (people as producers), the manner in which the text is maintained or transformed and the influence this has on social change and vice versa.

4.5.7 Social practice

Social practice is the final element of the three dimensional model. Jorgensen and Phillips identity two particular components to this activity, firstly the relationship between discursive practice and the order of discourses taking place and secondly mapping the non-discursive social, political and cultural structures and factors that create the wider context for the discursive practice; Fairclough (1992) calls this the social matrix. This stage is commonly referred to as the explanatory stage for it allows the analyst to draw conclusions on how the discursive practice both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices; texts shape and are shaped by social practice. Issues of ideology, power and governance can therefore be illuminated through this process for as Janks (1997) notes this level of analysis allows the researcher to explore how the text is positioned or positioning? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? And what are the consequences of this positioning? (p.329)
In order for this final stage of analysis to be comprehensive and successful the analyst must draw on the thinking and conceptualisation of social and cultural theorists. With this in mind I draw the reader back to Chapter Two where I set out the conceptual thinking supporting this thesis and employed in the analytical process.

4.6 The analytical process (see Appendix 5 & 6 for examples of how I applied the process)

4.6.1 Stage 1 – my material

The transcribing of the interviews was a slow and complex process. I had much discussion with colleagues regarding the process of transcription and in particular issues regarding passages of conversation that were hard to understand due to recording issues, background noise etc. Where this happened the transcription was marked as inaudible. The transcripts averaged just under 10,000 words each although some were less and others more. This is an important point to note as clearly not all interviews gathered the same level or amount of data. Some participants had much more to say than others. Once the final transcription was completed I read and reread each interview in order to make myself familiar with the conversation.

4.6.2 Stage 2 – applying the research questions

The next level of analysis came with taking the final transcripts and reviewing them for data (excerpts of speech) that was relevant to the research questions/themes. An approach supported by O’Connell and Kowal (1995) and a number of CDA practitioners (Fairclough, 1995; Rogers, 2004). Data that was relevant was highlighted and dropped into a new file. This was a complex process as I wished to make sure I was not censuring or presupposing the
relevance of what the interviewees stated however as with all conversations there were passages that had no bearing on the research questions. Examples of this would be conversation regarding my travel arrangements, lunch/tea/coffee discussions, historical stories that were clearly not relevant, and interests outside the remit of this thesis. A large amount of interview text was lost from the start and ending of the interviews as this was generally relationship building conversation re-establishing familiarity and locating where (if applicable) our previous meetings had left us. This outcome reflected much of my earlier thinking regarding co-construction and my insider/outsider status. This editing process resulted in my reducing the total amount of data to a more manageable figure and formed the final transcripts for the CDA analysis. Interestingly at this stage the transcripts for both English and Welsh participants balanced out at between 2500 – 3500 words per person.

4.6.3 Stage 3 – Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model

Taking firstly the English and then the Welsh transcripts I coded the data from each transcript through the following lenses; discursive practice (the production, distribution and consumption of SEL); text (the language [wording, grammar, use of nouns] genres and discourse orders used by the interviewees) and the social practice (broader social/cultural/economic/political events). It should be noted that certain aspects of data fell within and across multiple categories. Furthermore emphasis was placed on the discursive practice and social practice elements with less focus being placed on the text analysis level.

On a practical level to help me with this process I took each interview in turn and physically highlighted in different coloured pen the data from the transcript that illuminated the lens I was applying. On completion of this task I then cut out the relevant data and placed the paper slip (labelled with the participants name code for example E1) into one of three
boxes each representing one dimension of the model (text/discursive/social). Where a slip was placed in one box but could also be related to or placed in another box then the initials of that box were written on the slip. This resulted in each interview being literally physically broken down and placed into and across the three dimensional boxes. At the end of this process I had three boxes for the Welsh respondents and three for the English respondents.

### 4.6.4 Stage 4- Fairclough’s model directly connected to RQs

At this final stage I bought together all the data gathered from the stage 3 review

England - Text/Discursive Practice/Social Practice

Wales - Text/Discursive Practice/Social Practice

From this basis I then applied each research question to the three boxes applicable to each country. In effect each RQ was considered against six deposits of data. My job here was to identify what each element of the CDA process (for England and then Wales) had to offer in regard to answering the research question applied to it. Although each lens had something to say certain lenses proved to be more applicable to particular questions for example the social practice dimension to policy makers experiences although ultimately each of the lenses or dimensions are interconnected and reliant upon one another in order to understand the whole.

### 4.7 Presentation of the findings and discussion

As this is a thesis of resistance and one that wishes to both present new ways of thinking about particular aspects of education and give voice to alternative processes that have taken place the presentation of my findings is heavily influenced by the thinking of Fairclough (1992) and Apple (2012). Both of these commentators are strident in their
assertion that the educational researcher or critical discourse analyst must utilise their skills to ensure that findings are conveyed in a manner that makes them accessible to a range of audiences (particularly the general public), recognises the discursive practices inherent to the research itself and challenges the dominant thinking. The political right has built a discourse, in education particularly, that privileges their messages and leave little space for alternative versions or histories of education to be talked about. Apple (2012) refers to this as historical amnesia and one need only to consider how the term ‘comprehensive’ has been denigrated in England over the past decade to see this process in action.

It is imperative to me that the findings and discussion point out contradictions and identify new spaces for how SEL is understood and enacted. Ultimately to provide a thick description of the SEL story that can be useful to academics, educationalists, journalists, critical commentators, school communities and both individual and public bodies concerned with keeping particular public education traditions alive and in the collective memory. With this in mind I have been writing and presenting my thinking to a range of audiences including: academic conferences, think tanks, trade union groups, public debates, popular media and a Welsh national cultural magazine. All of these activities, the people I have met, and the debates that have resulted have been crucial to the development of my thinking and have enabled me to draw together my academic findings in a manner that captures the public ear. The findings will be utilised for a range of presentations and articles linked to a wide scope of media and public platforms.

The findings along with the discussion will be presented in three distinct sections. Each section will directly address one of the research questions (through Fairclough’s Three Dimensional Model) with section one answering question 1, section two responding to question 2 and section three addressing question 3. Each section will through utilising CDA
pursue an analytical and explanatory critique of the SEL story linked to the literature review, my conceptual thinking and theorising and associated critical thinkers in the field.

4.8 Ethics and confidentiality

This study was undertaken following the British Educational Research Association Guidelines (2004) which state that

The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants’ data is considered the norm for the conduct of research. Researchers must recognise the participants’ entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, unless they or their guardians or responsible others, specifically and willingly waive that right.

(BERA, 2004, p.8)

Throughout the research process issues of ethics and confidentiality were discussed with my supervisor, and the study itself went through a departmental evaluation each year. The key ethical issue connected to the study was ensuring the anonymity of the interview participants. This was taken very seriously and all text in relation the participants has been thoroughly checked in order to ensure no person can be recognised or identified through a process of deduction.

The interview process itself followed all recognised guidelines, with participants receiving details beforehand, an assurance of anonymity, a copy of the interview transcript for comment and full details of how the data would be used. The interviews were recorded digitally with the participants consent only and electronically stored following the UoM guidance. It was agreed that all recordings would be destroyed 12 months after the thesis had been successfully accepted as a Doctoral work. Once each interview has been fully transcribed a copy of the text was sent via email to the interview participant along with a request to identify any areas they wished to add to or change. The majority of interviewees responded by saying they were wholly comfortable with the transcript although one English
interviewee did ask for a minor change to be made (this was done) whilst one other English responden
tated that they had neither the time nor inclination to read through the text.
Finally all of the data gathered during the lifetime of this study has been held on password protected digital systems that only I have knowledge of. A digital backup of the data has been maintained throughout and similarly this is password protected and stored in a locked desk.
5 Presentation of findings

5.1 Answering the research questions

This thesis understands and applies CDA as both theory and method, a way of understanding the social world and a tool for exploring and critically transforming the social world. Having closely engaged with the field of CDA throughout the development of this thesis one of my first questions on entering the results stage was how have other CDA commentators presented their findings? This is a question that has attracted the attention of other CDA practitioners, in particular Rogers et al (2005) who noted that for education researchers it would be of interest to know more about the representation of findings. It is with this question in mind that I open this section of the thesis.

5.2 Representation of findings

Having closely reviewed a wide range of previous CDA theses (Carter, 2011; Gladstone, 2010; Smythe, 2006) as well as the wider CDA literature (Rogers, 2005; Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 2000; Woodside-Jiron, 2005) it is evident that the research design of the thesis is both shaped by the characteristics of the study (as well as the characteristics of the researcher) and the analytical methods employed. As this thesis is built upon a Faircloughian model of CDA, (including the analysis framework), and primarily interested in the language and social construction of the New Labour SEL message in England and Wales (the communicative event) this section of the thesis shall answer the research questions in a structured, methodical, form following the three dimensions of the
analysis model employed. This directly builds on and reflects the structure used by Fairclough (1995) in for example his analysis of academic job advertisements.

Each of the three research questions shall in turn be critically explored through the lenses of text, discursive practice and social practice. Clearly the balance between these three lenses will ebb and flow depending upon the nature of the research question being answered and the relevance of the lens to the subject and location in which it is being explored. For example when reporting upon discursive practice and production due to the absence of national strategies in Wales (a production mechanism) the amount of content is weighted towards English responses rather than Welsh. It should also be noted that because of its macro nature and because of its innate influence on the other research questions RQ1 will by necessity demand a longer analysis.

Supporting this structured analysis each question will incorporate critical discussion linking back to the literature and utilising the thinking and theory of commentators such as Apple (2010), Gunter (2011) and Ball (2008) and focusing upon the relationship between discursive practice and the broader social practice thereby supporting the study in reaching its final conclusions (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Ultimately by employing this structure I am confident that my findings will clarify what went on for New Labour in England and Wales regarding the SEL discourse and, building on the thinking of Geertz (1973), reduce the puzzlement of this time and offer an explanatory critique of what ‘…manner of men are these’ (p16).

5.3 Presentation of the data

Throughout the following chapters I will be including quotes from my interviewees. These will be presented in italics and indented. The source of the quote will be given
according to the key presented in the methods section and represented below. This means that W1 is referring to Wales - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Health/portfoilo included SEL). Where text is substituted by the letters XXXX, this is done in order to not reveal data that would indicate who the participant is. Text in brackets is my insertion in order to give clarity and/or context to the conversational quote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>English Participants</strong></th>
<th><strong>Welsh Participants</strong></th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E4</strong> - Head of SEL national campaigning group (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W4</strong> - Head of Young People’s national campaigning group (Contributed to national SEL framework)</td>
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Figure 12: Location and role of the policy actors involved
6 The New Labour frame in England and Wales

How was the development of SEL policy in England and Wales framed by New Labour?

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Figure 13: Location and role of the policy actors involved

6.1 Introduction

This question is concerned with examining, interpreting and explaining how SEL was imagined and enacted or put into the service of New Labour politicians in England and Wales between 1997 and 2010. As it is concerned with development the main focus is placed in England between the years 1997 (when New Labour came to power) and 2007 (when SEAL was firmly established in state schools across England, (Humphrey, 2012a)) and in Wales between 1999 (when devolution was enacted) and 2008 (when Welsh SEL policy took a distinctly different turn (Emery, 2013)). However one could say that in actuality this question starts for England and Wales together in 1996 with Tony Blair’s *Education, education, education* speech which as Ball (2008) notes, repositioned education to the fore of the policy stage.
6.2 Text – England

The order of discourse is the accumulation or gathering together of the range of discourse genres (e.g. medical, welfare, business, consumer) used in the social field in this instance the field of SEL. It is important to identify these, for as Fairclough (2013) acknowledges the order of discourse is both socially shaped and socially shaping; it limits what can and cannot be said and thereby shapes the resources available. Text provides a language for the reality of the SEL subject.

In examining the order of discourse one can determine what orders of discourse were present at the time and whether the interview participants were and are reproducing the dominant order of discourse or alternatively were presenting a new way of talking about and imagining SEL. For the English interviewees all participants presented a range of genres (both when reflecting on New Labour activity and in their own interpretation of SEL) consistent with the New Labour third way (Giddens, 1998) order of discourse. A hybrid order that combines the genres of consumerism, social justice, neo liberalism, standards and measurement, modernisation/renewal, the knowledge economy and what Ecclestone (2007) refers to as therapy culture.

I would suggest suspect it [SEL] came from their wellbeing indicators the need to find - which Antidote was sort of part of in the beginning as well which is the need to find a different measure for GDP, right, and a sense of wellbeing capital captured E4

I always remember the funny story um of a Dutch journalist ringing up just before the 97 election, ... and he said ...I hear that the Labour people have a secret weapon ‘Antidote’ LAUGH ... we were described as the group therapy for politicians E4

...an awful lot happened before anyone started talking about SEBS [social, emotional and behavioural skills] and my impression of where SEBS came from ... was that Tony Blair had been ... on, you know to some housing estate and felt we need something else E4
As one can see from the above, E4 uses the genres of measurement, emotional capital and therapy speak. The final quote takes a reflective view on development of SEL and clearly frames it in the modernisation/renewal discourse, i.e. SEL as a solution to social problems. In a similar vein E1 utilises the genres of modernisation and locates SEL firmly in the school and as a solution to lack of attainment

*as early as 1997/1998 I think there was an understanding that for some children to succeed at all they had to have ... support that went beyond just good teaching in the classroom. And I think over the years that perhaps developed into well let’s do something in the classroom with this as well E1*

This extends further into a clear framing of SEL as part of the New Labour third way, i.e. SEL as a tool for fixing a broken society

*...the lack of social development that some children from perhaps non confident families, I don’t think it’s to do with poverty it’s to do with parenting and I think working class parents are well able to ... you know ... um ... to bring up their children but some parents lack that ability or that motivation E1*

The above quote captures one of the key tenets of the New Labour discourse that is the social engineering function of education (Ball, 2008) where the individual (often working class) is held responsible for their success and issues such as poverty or lack of work are excluded from the discourse. Placing the emphasis on the parent and the individual (common to New Labour discourse) E1 goes a stage further and directly frames SEL in the measurement and standards agenda, a case of the literal nanny state defining what is best for working class children and then applying the ‘medicine’ in this case SEL conflated with academic achievement and the notion of consumer choice

*I think we felt it was our job to give them ambition and to give them the qualifications so that they had choice. E1*
The third way order of discourse (social justice meets the marketplace and standards and achievement) is perhaps best captured by E2 who on reflecting back to the drivers and formation of SEL, its framing, and in particular SEAL notes that:

*There was a number of agendas that had been flagged...antisocial behaviour, and this is where you started in fact is that there was a sort of idea you know...tough on crime tough on the causes of crime, and there was a belief that you, that you should er put something in place that was to help the causes of crime or some of these agendas* E2

Similarly E3 acknowledges the third way order of discourse that was taking place

*the big agenda is the standards agenda even the behaviour bit is only because it’s affecting standards er when it’s the chips are down why do want it children to behave better? Not because they’ll get on better with other people because they’ll get on do better at school,* *GCES’s.* E3

Other text tools useful for understanding how SEL was framed by New Labour in England are representation (the relation between two entities, how x is connected or set against y) and collocation (a sequence of words that occur in the interview text more often than expected or by chance or how one word is juxtaposed with another in the text). Across the English interviews in regard to representation the text is structured in the manner of problem/solution with the problem being children’s behaviour and the solution a version of SEL delivered in school.

*SEAL was responding to a concern about secondary behaviour and the belief that there needed to be something done* E2

*the starting point was you know what can we do to ensure that Tony Blair doesn’t have to go into a housing estate and he sees burning cars* E4

*I think it [SEL] did respond to behaviour but, as you well know you’re a minister you, you talk to um teachers in schools serving disadvantaged areas, the teachers say to you you expect us to get them to level 2 by the age of 7 and when they come in they cannot even sit in a seat, they cannot talk, they cannot articulate their needs* E2
in schools most of our kids were being excluded because of anger ... they were angry and this anger spilled over into aggression, mainly boys because that's the way boys cope with anger...it was there that we then started getting to emotional literacy so it came via anger E3

This solution focused frame adopts a promotional tone (Edwards and Nicoll, 2001) linked to a managerial and standards register where for the interviewees, when examining collocation, the word behaviour is used beside standards, agenda and strategy. The word emotion/al is used beside outcomes, literacy, learning and development.

_the big agenda is the standards agenda even the behaviour bit is only because it’s affecting standards_ E3

_so she said to them yeah this’l [SEL] make a difference to getting us off the plateau in terms of reading 86% or whatever they were then on and it also will meet the behaviour agenda_ E2

_we set up a personal and social health education agenda, we got the working group, we got the compulsory citizenship on the curriculum and all that in my mind was part of ... um social and emotional development_ E1

_the SEAL documentation would say one of the outcomes of SEAL was improved social and emotional environment in schools_ E2

...the emotions became part of the school agenda as it were E3

6.3 Text – Wales

Across the Welsh interviews the range of genres used includes social justice, citizenship, welfare, children’s rights and social transformation connected to nation building. SEL when it is spoken of is imagined and enacted in the frame of a deeper and wider transformative event. There is a clear absence in all of the interviews of standards, measurement, neo liberalism/consumer, modernisation or therapy genres. The order of discourse reflects what commentators would signify as social democratic, a community
shaping active citizenship (Taylor, 2004). The Welsh order of discourse mirrors what Hawker (2009) refers to as the three C’s, collaboration, community and cohesion. This matches the different educational discourse articulated by New Labour in Wales post devolution, the clear red water (Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2002).

\[\text{I would say over the first three or four years \ldots of the Assembly certainly on the Labour side you know one of the big priorities was trying to readjust...redistribution}\]

\[\text{Social justice is one of the influences driving this [SEL] in Wales}\]

\[\text{[SEL is] that feeling of being um secure in one’s place in a family in a community um having a sense of agency and capacity to act independently um having some being author of your own biography as opposed to being a character in somebody else’s script…it has a social if you like a psy- as well as a psychological component it has a for me it has a clear sociological component}\]

\[\text{For me it was kind of \ldots how do you, you know, how do you develop, how do you allow people, young people to develop. I just personally think that just the academic does not really do it. And it actually doesn’t even capture maybe the most important bits \ldots looking at how to develop - not only measuring}\]

As the above indicate the order of discourse in Wales was framing SEL as an element of a wider social justice agenda alongside locating SEL in the community and as a process rather than an outcome. The word behaviour is used once only in all the Welsh interviews and when it is used it is as a representation of what Welsh thinking is not.

\[\text{They’ve always had this notion it seems to me of across the border as childhood as threat and disruption and disorder and that may be a function of you know urbanisation going back who knows what but we’ve never really had that sense of our children as somehow as \ldots a threat…I can’t imagine how we would have that behaviour conversation really because it doesn’t it still doesn’t make sense to me to think in those terms}\]

Yet this social democratic order of discourse for New Labour in Wales changes as the forces and tools of a neo liberal education agenda (Harvey, 2005) with its PISA, measurement, standards and outcomes impacted on the assembly. This occurs from 2007
onwards and in particular following the introduction of Leighton Andrews as Education Minister (Evans, 2015).

*it’s [SEL] got a harder edge now and the standards unit...That Leighton Andrews has set up ... the banding of schools...The reading tests that they’re introducing... um ... ... there’s lots of er speculation about going back to league tables W2

Leighton came from economic development...the priorities have changed the economics have changed the you know the election had been and gone the leadership had changed the priorities had changed so it’s not gone by any means but it is a kind of empty rhetoric with unemployment rates pushing the 20s and you know 25 percent in the under 25s in some parts of Wales ... er rights talk participation talk wellbeing talk can seem a bit like an empty gesture W3

In regard to representation and collocation one can identify that for the Welsh interviewees New Labour in Wales was representing their children’s policy (and as such SEL) through language and words that located it as a binary opposite to New Labour in England. English SEL activity was the neo liberal x to the social justice communitarian y of Wales.

*I think our expectations of children and young people are quite high and I think they’re probably broader in their reach broader in their extent and probably longer in their reach than they are in England I don’t know it seems that if kids do well ... at their you know they get their three A’s they nobody gives a monkeys about what happens to them elsewhere that they can’t you know sustain a relationship W3

*It [policy activity] was very different to England even though there was a labour government in England at the moment, there was what Rhodri Morgan called clear red water W2

SEL activity was framed through a Welsh difference, with this difference being connected to national identity. Across the Welsh interviews when the participants used the word Wales which they all did frequently the term was connected to the words children’s rights, community, left (politically) and social justice.

*...you know there is also Wales’s adherence to the United Nations Charter rights of the child W4
Wales, which is really interesting. Three left of centre parties. If you look at the sorts of things that they would support and the sort of things they say they are, they are completely different to the English rhetoric W2

...a lot of people in Wales will identify themselves with that we feeling that particular sense of community not just a geography and place although that's important and being Welsh is important in that na-national identity but that that sense of being part of a choir or a chapel W3

...a lot of these sort of ideas of social justice communitarianism and all of that has a more ready constituency here in Wales W1

6.4 Discursive practice

Discursive practice is how the text is produced, distributed and consumed. For my purposes it is reporting on the journey of the SEL text (both written and verbal) and its framing by New Labour in England and New Labour in Wales. This section will focus on two particularly pertinent elements of discursive practice; interdiscursivity (how different discourses are related and connected) and intertextuality (how words and phrases (texts) that have been used before are appropriated by the communicative event (Fairclough, 1995). The discursive process will allow for me to establish links between the text level and the final social level (Janks, 1998).

6.5 Intertextuality – England

Across the English interviews one can identify that SEL is strategically linked at the broader level to notions of new managerialism (Lynch et al., 2012) a particularly ideological approach to public services that is concerned with accountability, performance, visibility, league tables, target-setting and measurement (Kirkpatrick & Lucio, 1995; Power et al., 1997). Through this new managerial frame the policy actors utilise two particular texts,
Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence and the New Labour standards agenda, in order to craft a particular version of SEL.

6.5.1 Goleman intertextual chain

All participants draw on the Goleman Emotional Intelligence text (1995), reproducing elements of the publications messages, framework and content. Firstly, one can see the Goleman text acting as a foundation or signifier for the interviewees, a frame through which to locate SEL in

written formation predated the publication but not by very long of Goleman’s book on emotional intelligence E4

She [Senior Civil Servant] had er a sort of er a belief in Daniel Goleman type Emotional Intelligence because that’s where she started from E2

Obviously Goleman was important in terms of in terms of put- er translating it into sort of which could be then adapted as a cur- as a curriculum E3

Secondly, Goleman utilised the concept of the child at risk and a deficit or diminished model of the child (Ecclestone, 2007) thereby presenting a moral panic (Humphrey, 2012a) for EI to respond to. This deficit message is reproduced by the English interviewees.

They actually lacked the social skills as it were, they lacked the social skills because they’d never been taught these. E3

We’ve got to address the whole motivational issues and then som- social and emotional issues. E2

There is an issue about the um the lack of social development that some children from perhaps non confident families, I don’t think it’s to do with poverty it’s to do with parenting E1
Thirdly, the Weare and Gray (2003) report is cited by three of the four English interviewees as being significant in the framing of SEL. The Weare and Gray report reproduced much of the Goleman text, messages and theorising - indeed it calls the Goleman publication a ‘seminal work’ (p.15). One can see the intertextual chain building from Goleman to policy actors to Weare and Gray and to the DfES.

...they started [DfE] then with Kathy’s [Wear] report E3

*Once there are wheels had started rolling and you’ve paid for the Weare and Gray report you’re probably going to do it anyway* E2

...she’s not been at the forefront of these discussions in the way that Katherine [Weare] is, which is interesting in itself’ E4

6.5.2 New Labour standards and achievement intertextual chain

All of the participants drew on the words, thinking and theorising of the New Labour standards and achievement text as exemplified in David Blunkett’s 1999, CBI speech and the white paper Schools Achieving Success (2001).

*The big agenda is the standards agenda even the behaviour bit is only because it’s affecting standards* E3

*At the macro level...achievement, achievement would be improved* E2

*She [Senior Civil Servant] talks about again you know we need a lot more evidence-based practice* E4

*I think you can see it [SEL] as a continuation of the literacy and numeracy agenda* E1

*[SEL] gave a voice to something that they knew that you couldn’t really address the achievement agenda without addressing something more* E2
6.6 Intertextuality – Wales

The Welsh interviewees drew heavily on two particular texts, Rhodri Morgan’s, Clear Red Water (2002) speech and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Interestingly in comparison to England the Welsh interviewees do not draw on the Goleman text or the New Labour in England standards agenda. The words and phrases that are drawn on, utilised and repeated in the service of SEL are layered on top of a wider and broader social and political context connected to a particular version of the state and a locally flavoured version of New Labour in Wales. This position is succinctly captured by the following statement drawn from Morgan’s Clear Red Water speech ‘…government can and must be a catalyst for change and a force for good in our society. Although to a Welsh audience this might sound simple stuff, it is certainly an idea which would be contested elsewhere’.

6.6.1 Clear Red Water intertextual chain

The text of Morgan’s speech and the personality of the man himself is reproduced throughout the Welsh interviews. Both the man and the message produced a framework, location and language (the production conditions; Fairclough, 1995), through which the SEL policy actors constructed, distributed and ultimately consumed SEL across the principality. The political and social theorising that Morgan’s text allowed for, including direct policy production, acted as a signifier of a certain style and approach, one that Morgan defined as
‘Doing things the Welsh way’ (Morgan, 2002). This was a route that emphasised equality and universality over choice and the marketplace, one that placed community and partnerships at the heart of public services. As Evans (2015) notes in his scholarly review of post devolution education in Wales this was a period characterised by ‘made in Wales’ policies.

I think Rhodri Morgan er you know he said that the … biggest achievement of his time was to establish the foundation phase in the education system in Wales W1

Key drivers would be Rhodri… W3

it was very different to England even though there was a labour government in England at the moment, there was what Rhodri Morgan called clear red water W2

I think it was … leadership from Rhodri Morgan in terms of being convinced early on about the benefit of early years And the absolute essential nature of social justice W2

Perhaps the strongest intertextual element coming from Clear Red Water was the notion of Welsh otherness. This otherness is located through setting Welsh policy as a binary opposite to Westminster politics. England is framed as a land where policy is concerned with competition and consumerism and the child, individually located, is viewed as a threat to be managed. In contrast Wales is painted as a place where citizenship, community and social justice are the dominant forces with the child being positioned as an equal citizen with rights and located within the community and state rather than at an individual level.

In England they seem to have two notions of childhood only one childhood as threat or second childhood as investment in the future they have no real sense of the value of being alongside living alongside there’s no real sense of the current value of childhood itself W3

It’s about being Welsh … er and it’s about feeling downtrodden for years by England W2

I think Wales can do it [social justice] because politically it stands in a different position … it stands in a different position, you know politically…W4

You know a lot of these sort of ideas of er social justice communitarianism and all of that has a more ready constituency here in Wales… I think the political er centre of gravity in Wales you know is definitely to the left of England W1
The second element to the Clear Red Water chain is the document The Learning Country (2001). This paper drew heavily on Morgan’s thinking and reproduced it as a policy paper and WAG paving document. This is a key document in the Welsh SEL story for it acted as lens through which SEL was understood and as a location for it to reside in as a policy process. The Clear Red Water text that fed into the Learning Country led the Conservative Assembly Member, William Graham (Evans 2015), to comment that the Education Minister had ‘attempted to make Wales different instead of making Wales best’. An interesting reflection considering the standards agenda intertextuality taking place at the same time in England.

*The Learning Country then sort of tried to consolidate a lot of of that [social justice] erm together in educational terms* W1

*The Learning Country very definitely [as a driver]. Er, that was actually incredibly enlightened people were amazed that things they had asked for were listened to and that was a, a absolutely tremendous foundation* W2

*The Learning Country was a strong foundation for developing our responses to child poverty and social justice* W3

6.6.2 United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) intertextual chain

The UNCRC text is repeated and pointed to as authority by all Welsh interviewees when talking about the development of SEL. The rights framework is utilised as both a reason for developing SEL and a force for ensuring minimal resistance to the approach adopted. If something is done under the auspices of the UNCRC one can see that it would be very difficult to find fault with this, a tactic not dissimilar to one of the discourses attached to SEAL in England whereby SEAL critics were faced by the statement *do you not want children to be happier*. The UNCRC was a framework that SEL policy and thinking was strategically linked to. This textual connection and how it served policy needs is reflected on
by other academic commentators including Chaney & Fevre (2001), who contend that in Wales issues of equalities and human rights are embedded in education policies and Hawker (2009) who believes this ‘rights-based approach, owes its origins to a socialist tradition of citizenship and engagement’ (p. 5).

I mean one of the things that has been distinctive about public policy towards children in Wales has been what’s been brigaded under this notion of a rights notion W3

There was no vote on the um er the proposition that we use the UNCRC as the basis for our policy there was no vote because nobody was going to speak against it W3

I think that from the point of view of development of policy er in Wales that you know I think we realise the inadequacy of previous definitions [of rights] W1

But it’s actually about taking a proactive approach to ensure that young people are helped to engage. Now I don’t think that’s counter to the rights agenda W2

I have some … um belief that the assembly is trying to work in a wider, with a wider remit… you know there is also Wales’s adherence to the United Nations Charter rights of the child W4

We were sort of saying that these were the things that the UNCRC require us to be working on you know to give children a better start in life W1

6.7 Interdiscursivity

This is the process whereby the data is examined in order to identify what discourses the participants draw upon and are articulated together when talking about the SEL communicative event. This is key in helping us to understand how SEL was framed by New Labour in England and Wales for it allows us to recognise the deeper ideological forces at play and the power relations that shaped the interviewees’ thinking and doing of SEL. As Fairclough notes;
‘The seemingly limitless possibilities of creativity in discursive practice suggested by the concept of interdiscursivity… are in practice limited and constrained by the state of hegemonic relations and hegemonic struggle.

(Fairclough 1993: 137)

Essentially SEL could only be imagined and enacted within the spaces that the social conditions and power relations allow. Linked to this is his further assertion that when one identifies a high degree of interdiscursivity with a multitude of discourses being drawn together this is reflective of change in society whereas a low level of interdiscursivity signals reproduction of the established order. Ultimately the stories that underlie policy serve to structure the geography of the ‘land of the possible’ wherein policy makers come to determine and then promulgate what they can and cannot seek to do in this field (Keep, 2009: 1).

6.7.1 England

The data indicates a complex and high degree of interdiscursivity across the English interviewees. A wide range of discourses are drawn upon and at the higher level all English participants can be categorised as presenting a new interdiscursive mix that combines elements of neoliberal free market business thinking (Hill, 2001), new managerialism (Farrell and Morris, 2003) (particularly performance management), therapy discourse (Ecclestone, 2007) and New Labour in England’s education standards and achievement discourse. This new discursive mix employs a high level of nominalisation (vagueness and lack of specificity) and modality (commitment to the truth of a claim) (Fairclough, 1995). One could conclude that ultimately the mix in England is a hybrid managerial discourse concerned with shaping the ‘other’ in the image of itself.
Behind this higher level of English interdiscursivity sits a range of lesser but still powerful discourses combining the individualistic, promotional discourse of New Labours’ third way alongside a discourse of moral panic (Humphrey, 2013) whereby children are at risk or damaged (a deficit model of childhood (Watson et al. 2012)) and in danger of losing (economic) opportunity when understood in a neo liberal achievement agenda.

This hybrid blend of interdiscursivity is exemplified in the following statements from the English interviewees.

*But they actually lacked the social skills as it were, they lacked the social skills because they’d never been taught these* E3

E3 combines a deficit model discourse with features of the neoliberal ‘other’ framing SEL through a measurement discourse (albeit one built on an assumed truth) that judges ‘they’ don’t have what the speaker possesses, in this case social skills. A further neoliberal discourse of individual self-promotion is also at play whereby poor performance resides not in social, political, economic, and educational institutions, but rather in the child, and by extension, the family (Lubeck & Garrett, 1990, p.327). Both modality and nominalisation are very strong across this statement. In regard to modality an opinion (that there is a lack of social skills) is presented as a categorical fact thereby making it sound authoritative whilst nominalisation is employed through the vague term social skills, we are left to populate this term ourselves. Interestingly one could consider that the interviewee recognises the nominalisation taking place with the ‘as it were’ strategically placed after the first usage.

*I don’t like that word feral and it’s ... but there is an issue about the um the lack of social development that some children from perhaps non confident families, I don’t think it’s to do with poverty it’s to do with parenting and I think working class parents are well able to ... you know ... um ... to bring up their children but some parents lack that ability or that motivation* E1
The statement from E1 again reflects the self-promotional, performance driven, achievement and deficit discourses blended together to form a specific, New Labour in England, interdiscursive mix. Strong nominalisation and modality are in evidence with the speaker relating an opinion built on a series of vague and undefined processes (social development, non-confident families, parenting etc.) as a categorical fact. The dominant discourse here is built around the managing of the ‘other’. This time giving the ‘other’ a name ‘feral’ and locating them as the children of (some of) the working class (Squires, 2006). One could conclude as Lowe (1993) do that this discourse is essentially policy or politician as parent. The working class parent is objectified as feckless and in need of moral guidance (McCaig, 2001) for the deficit in the feral child is connected to poor (or perhaps non middle class) parenting skills rather than any wider social economic factors. This is a position and process that Gewirtz (2001: 366) identified as New Labour’s resocialisation programme, the determination to ‘make all families like middle-class families’.

6.7.2 Assumed truths

The use of nominalisations and the strong speaker modality across the English interviews is connected to what one could term assumed truths (Moor and Miller, 1999), that is evaluative statements, personal experiences and suppositions are presented as factual knowns or agreed common sense (Carusi, 2010). Apple (2004) highlights this practice as a clear discursive process intended to redefine common sense for the purposes of the market. As he succinctly notes we should be aware of mistaking rhetoric for reality.

The assumed truths relayed by my interviewees are important to highlight for it is these very truths that have powerfully shaped the SEL text and practice;
i. the absence of social and emotional skills in young people, (how could this have been tested and known? And judged by who?)

ii. that this absence was due to poor parenting (defined and measured by who?), located in working class communities (as defined and decided by who?) and independent of wider socio economic factors

iii. that by working on children’s social and emotional skills better learning and higher educational achievement would follow in English schools (a wholly untested theory in England)

As key policy actors in the English SEL story my interviewees carried these truths into the policy making process as highlighted in my literature review and acknowledged in the thinking of Humphrey (2013). Further to this it is also important to recognise that beyond framing SEL in a particular manner these assumed truths were also in the service of the English New Labour government for, as shall be revealed in the social practice section, they were the basis upon which ‘Government’s policies are sold as merely technical solutions to what is assumed to be an agreed problem’ (Fairclough, 2013, p.183)

6.7.3 Use of the deficit model of discourse

The American SEL commentator Hoffman (2009) has an interesting perspective on the use of the deficit model believing that this discourse becomes another way to focus attention on measurement and remediation of individual deficits rather than a way to redirect educators’ focus toward the relational contexts of classrooms and schools. This is a position that fits with my earlier thinking and that of Lubeck & Garrett (1990) regarding how the
object of inspection (the child or parent) is positioned as outside of political and economic factors and instead located as a self-promoting individual responsible for their own development. Failure is considered in a cultural and moral frame rather than a structural one (Ball, 2008). With this in mind one could argue that the deficit discourse in England was in reality there to service the broader New Labour in England standards and measurement discourse and promote what has been termed a remoralisation process (McCaig, 2001).

6.8 Wales

In Wales the creative mix is located in and of service to New Labour in Wales, particularly Morgan’s Clear Red Water thinking. However this is superseded and itself shaped by the significant and deep change that took place in Welsh politics with the introduction of devolved government in 1999. This was the first time since the 1536 Acts of Union, that Welsh politicians had (limited) direct control over the democratic process and policy making. This change is at the heart of the interdiscursive blend for the Welsh interviewees which brings together a range of transformative, social democratic, nation identity, socio-political and social justice discourses. This is an interdiscursive model that places the citizen and the state together as one collaboratively building a new society, grounded in children’s rights, on the memories and shadows of past failings and historical disenfranchisement. It is a collaborative discourse concerned with equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity (Phillips and Harper Jones, 2002).

They [the Assembly] were absolutely as one in terms of the sort of society they wanted to see… To build for Wales that it is one in which people have the opportunity to achieve their
potential that everyone has what are regarded as the basics of life which is they don’t live in poverty W2

The above quote from W2 captures the heady interdiscursive mix operating across the Welsh interviews. A transformative discourse can be seen in the active declaration to ‘build’ a particular form of society, a position that presupposes this vision is not currently in place, thereby connecting to the Welsh otherness discourse. This vision through the use of ‘for Wales’ is wrapped in a nation building discourse. Alongside these discourses sits a social democratic political discourse (opportunity, everyone, society and people) that is both universal and collaborative. Finally one can see the social justice discourse at play as this journey will result in the removal of poverty. Modality is strong with the speaker, through drawing together a range of discourses, creating a passionate, almost rallying call. There is a clear sense of commitment from the speaker to the statement, for example the use of absolutely, which results in what Fairclough (1995) would term obligation modality. In contrast, nominalisation, in comparison to England, is weak, with the process of change being connected to specific (albeit slightly vague) tasks and a clear outcome. This creative mix of discourses reflects what Bradbury and Andrews (2010) have called civic Welshness, a perspective that Egan and Marshall (2007) believed placed collaboration, community and the citizen at the heart of New Labour in Wales’s policies.

I think there was a very strong belief that er people’s social and economic circumstances determined their life chances… so that was a social justice issue I think … er equally if people were to improve the life chances then Wales as a country would prosper as well W1

This interdiscursive mix in the service of civic Welshness is evident again in the above statement by W1 where the interviewee blends together a transformative, social democratic, collaborative (note the lack of the ‘other’) and social justice discourse wrapped within a nation building frame. Modality is strong as witnessed by the use of ‘strong belief’
whilst nominalisation is low as the process, building an equitable Wales, is given specific form through the identification of social and economic factors, essentially the message is that poverty and social exclusion reduce people’s quality of life. This is a message acknowledged by Drakeford (2010) who remarks that ‘When things go wrong in the lives of children and young people, the Welsh focus has been on trying to put right flaws in the system on which they depend, rather than on focusing on the ‘deficits’ in young people themselves. (p. 141).

6.8.1 Tempering the transformative

As I have noted elsewhere discourse and the interdiscursive mix are not fixed positions but rather ebb and flow with the social forces at play (Fairclough, 1995). It is therefore important to acknowledge at the interdiscursive level that the presence of a social democratic transformative discourse and the absence of a neoliberal measurement and standards discourse is not consistent for the Welsh interviewees. After the introduction of Leighton Andrews as Education Minister new forces, concerned with outcomes, standards and measurement (I have termed this neoliberal lite) start to shape the discursive mix (Evans, 2015). The interviewees reflect on this change as can be identified in the following statements.

*Now we’ve got Leighton Andrews taking a harder more combative and challenging role, he doesn’t not believe in this stuff but he’s much more old schooly standarady sort of thing* W2

*Leighton when he took over er um … had to deal with and did deal with the fact he had to do what anybody would have had to do which is to look at the issue like the economic output end. The academic achievement end of Wales’s schools because they were not good enough. We had not tackled some of the deficiencies that we knew we could and should have tackled* W3
6.9 Social practice

Having examined the text and discursive practice my focus now turns to the social practice which has shaped and framed the SEL discourse. Fairclough identifies two particular approaches to be taken here. Firstly, to investigate what kind of networks of discourse the discursive practice belongs to and secondly, to make explicit and map the social, cultural and political relations that formed the wider context of the time. By revealing these connections I will illuminate how the discursive practice acted as a bridge linking the SEL text to the wider social practices and in whose service and interests it operated in.

6.9.1 Networks of discourse

In England one can identify that the network of discourse is a blending of the neoliberal self-sufficiency, homo economicus discourse (achievement, opportunity, outcomes, skills) (Lynch, 2010; Thaler, 2000) with a new managerialism discourse (standards, measurement, risk) (Apple, 2007). Ultimately this was a human capital (Becker, 1962) network of discourse operating across the education sector. The neoliberal consumer discourse worked to position the child as wanting in the skills necessary to compete successfully (economically) in the knowledge society. It created a framework whereby success was grounded in individualism and personal qualities and poor performance was the result of the individual rather than the state and structural factors. Moreover the neoliberal discourse necessitated a framing of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The ‘us’ being the successful achievers, the middle class, whilst ‘them’ became the ‘other’, generally the working class (Gewirtz, 2001).
Working alongside the neoliberal discourse is the new managerial discourse that shapes activity into a quantifiable, accountable form thereby creating a frame that must measure and have standards (Reynolds, 2008). In England one can identify a pervasive view in education that outcome rather than process was the priority. I have stated in the literature review that the standards and audit elements were crucial in developing SEL into a psychosocial objective list model (for what cannot be measured cannot be audited). I believe the findings related here support that claim.

In Wales the network of discourse was a different blend (up to 2008) to that in England. It bought together a made in Wales (WAG, 2001: 1) network and a collectivism or socialism (with a small s) (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010) network of discourse. In fusing these two networks together Wales created a modernist, ‘civic society’ (Day, 2006) socialist frame through which much of the SEL policy and text was filtered through. One only has to return to both the text and the discursive analysis to see the consistent use of concepts and words such as everyone, equality, belonging, universal, cooperative, social, community, rights and justice. The strength of this discourse network is illuminated in the following statement from the Assembly which acknowledges that the objective is to create;

>a civil society which offers equality of opportunity to all its members regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, language preference, religion, or family/domestic responsibilities; is inclusive and enables people to participate in all its economic, social and cultural activities.

(WAG, 2000: ch. 2, para. 2.7)

6.9.2 The social matrix

The high level of interdiscursivity taking place in both England and Wales indicates that change and transformation were taking place in both countries. Having identified the networks of discourse it is now pertinent to ask what changes were taking place and in whose
interest was the discourse operating in and for what purposes? It is to these questions I now turn and in particular two key forces, the election of New Labour and the introduction of the Welsh Assembly Government.

6.10 **England – A political earthquake (The Guardian, May 2nd, 1997)**

The emergence of New Labour and its resounding election victory in 1997 was seen as a political earthquake (The Guardian, 1997) and a major change in British politics (Fairclough, 2000). The emergence of New Labour and the forces that shaped it have been much discussed elsewhere (see for example Fairclough, 2000 and Hill, 2001) what I wish to identify here is the dominance of specific New Labour thinking and talking, where this was located and to what extent this process shaped the social matrix.

As White and O’Neill (2013) assert the New Labour project was one of a business management, instrumentalist, approach to politics with Tony Blair acting as the Chief Executive. For education this resulted in the marginalisation of Local Authorities, the marketisation of education services and structures, increased measurement and auditing of education activity and ultimately education being valued as an economic function. The outcome of this modernisation agenda (Phillips and Harper Jones, 2002) was an unprecedented level of policy overload (Coffield, 2006) and for those within the education arena a period of intensive change.

To fully understand the social matrix taking place in England at the time I believe, as do Fairclough, (2000) and Ball, (2008), that one must locate the New Labour network of discourse in the wider and deeper global neoliberal governance agenda (Apple, 2007). The discursive practice identified in my interviews with the English policy actors is a reflection of
the messages (outcomes, improvement, achievement, enterprise) and thinking (modernisation, change, marketization, individualism) utilised by international organisations such as the OECD, World Bank, World Health Organisation and the US Clinton administration. Essentially New Labour (in England) education policy was thought and made in the service of the international market (Ball, 2008). As Fairclough (2000) has acknowledged this was an order of discourse designed to serve the power of neoliberal enterprise, one I believe that was enacted through new managerialism and the coordination and steering of policy networks where ideology trumped professional knowledge and experience Bache (2003). One could argue that the social matrix in England shaped a discursive practice that was ultimately built on the governance message that there is no alternative (TINA) to the globalised neoliberal agenda, it was a limited and instrumentalised space.

6.11 Wales – A comrade in Cardiff (The Guardian, December 30th, 2002)

Aughey et al (2011) in exploring the road to Welsh devolution identify the miners’ strike of 1985/5 as a key moment in the creation of a new civic Welsh consciousness. Feeling under attack from a hostile, unrepresentative and ideologically driven Conservative government Welsh commentators have referred to 1979 as the ‘blwyddyn y pla’ (year of the plague) (Williams, 1985). Interestingly all my Welsh interviewees made reference to the miners’ strike noting it as both an attack on the principality and a powerful force in creating change. A change that according to Kim Howells (in Aughey et al, 2011) led to new alliances being forged and old differences being put aside.

The second referendum was yes because people voted against Thatcher and Redwood, never again wanting to find themselves completely exposed to hostile UK government W1
Yeah, so something in the psyche that er, you know, even goes back you know to things like the miners’ strikes and things like that W2

After a failed referendum on devolution in 1979, the National Assembly of Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government were founded in 1999 following a close vote which the yes camp won by only 1% (Royle, 2007).

Civic society had of course existed prior to the introduction of the Assembly but as many commentators note this had been a civic society built on the twin pillars of the Welsh language and religious nonconformist thinking (Day, 2006), an exclusive model and one that struggled to survive Thatcherism. Through the introduction of the Assembly what began to emerge, partly forged in anger to English hostility, was the determination to create and animate a new civic society (Osmond, 1998; Morgan, 2000) that could both draw in the No voters from the devolution referendum and create an inclusive unifying version of Welshness. Devolution could therefore be seen as a nation building project (Day, 2006) i.e. the opportunity to create a national identity for the stateless nation. The significance of this is that an inclusive understanding of Welshness became the frame through which the SEL discourse and the education debate must be viewed through.

The above thinking is supported by a number of commentators including Reynolds (2008) who asserts that the left leaning political thinking combined with a paradigm of the state as both a feature of support and provision ‘…created a climate of greater trust in provider determined solutions, the ‘producerism’ that sits in contrast to English ‘consumerism’. The writ of the New Labour Blair project, built on neoliberal thinking and located in Westminster, found itself clearly rebuffed in Wales as the Assembly strove for Clear Red Water between itself and its New Labour colleagues in England.
The discursive practice and the networks of discourse were in Wales in the service of and shaped by the social practice. It is an ideological order of discourse, a new hybrid combination, reflecting the transformative nation building process. On the one hand the discursive practice is utilised to strengthen an emerging Welsh civic identity whilst on the other it is also a discourse of resistance to neoliberal consumerist ideology and concepts of English colonialism (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). It is an assertive discourse of Welsh Labour in the service of challenging English New Labour.

6.12 Summary

Having applied Fairclough’s three dimensional model to my interview data related to RQ1, I believe a clear distinction appears between how England and Wales framed the SEL discourse and whose interests this was in. In England the ideological social matrix of neoliberalism presented a limiting space (TINA) that reproduced through the discursive practice resulted in a framing of SEL that had to be understood through measurement, standards and a creation of the other. In pursuing these factors, the policy actors in England shaped a version of SEL that directly reflected the economic goals of the international marketplace. This was SEL as a tool for moulding the deficit, pliable, conformist student, ready and able to participate in the flexible labour market. Governance was central to this frame for by allowing the government to get inside pupils’ heads. Responsibility for achievement became the ownership of the participant and failure was theirs alone. New Labour in England built a frame that was outcome driven and focused upon how the other could be fixed.
In Wales my research indicates a very different frame being utilised by New Labour. The nation building Welshness and civic society matrix formed, through the discursive practice, a frame that meant SEL could only ever be imagined and enacted in a transformative, social justice form. This was a frame that had to be open and inclusive, thereby resulting in the absence of standards and measurement, for if not, it would be undermining and contradicting the overarching principles of inclusivity and social justice that drove the first two Assemblies. New Labour in Wales built a frame that was process driven and which focused upon how, through supporting their children, a newly formed inclusive nation could be developed.

This different frame in operation across the two countries is nicely captured in Sir Michael Barber’s introduction to Leighton Andrews, Ministering to Education (2015) publication where he negatively opines that in relation to education, the government in Wales had in effect chosen to be ‘not England (ix)’. One could respond to this rather colonial or TINA perspective that the better question would be why would Wales choose to be England?
7 Accounts of the experiences of English and Welsh policymakers

What were the accounts of experience of the policymakers who sought to develop and deliver SEL policy in England and Wales?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Participants</th>
<th>Welsh Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1 - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Education)</td>
<td>W1 - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Health/portfolio included SEL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2 - Senior Civil Servant (National Strategies/SEAL steering group)</td>
<td>W2 - Senior Civil Servant (Education/responsible for SEL development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3 - Member of SELIG/NELIG (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td>W3 - Senior Government Advisor (Academic/Children and Young People)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4 - Head of SEL national campaigning group (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td>W4 - Head of Young People’s national campaigning group (Contributed to national SEL framework)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 14: Location and role of the policy actors involved

7.1 Introduction

This question is concerned with identifying and exploring accounts of the policy making experiences of the interviewees during their time as key players in the SEL conversation. I wish here to illuminate how the accounts of the interviewees reflected, or otherwise, the geography of the land they were operating in (Keep, 2009). A land that, as RQ1 has revealed, presented very different spaces in England and Wales. Were the interviewees simply ciphers acting as the discursive bridge for the land they were operating in or was their experience and relationship with the SEL discourse far more complicated and complex than this?

In regard to Fairclough’s three dimensional framework my emphasis will be on examining the text element to understand the level of connectedness the interviewees had to
the second level the discursive practice; the production, distribution and consumption of the SEL discourse. My main tool of analysis will be modality, that is the exploration of text to identify the levels of commitment the authors attach to their talk, for as Fairclough (2013) notes what people commit themselves to is connected to how they identify themselves. Finally at the social level I shall be paying particular attention to the power relations and ideological thinking of the policy machinery (Ball, 2008; Goodwin, 2011) that drove SEL policy in England and Wales.

For the purposes of this question I shall firstly examine my data from the English interviewees, this will be followed by the Welsh interviewees with a final summary looking across the experiences in both countries.

7.2 England

This section shall, through examining the interviewees’ use of modality and identification, shed light on how the English policy actors talked about their connectedness (or otherwise) to the dominant SEL discursive practice, i.e. the shared language (Fairclough, 2000) they were sending. Through examining the data in this manner I shall start to reveal where the interviewees personally positioned themselves within the SEL communicative event and the dynamics and tensions that accompanied this.

7.2.1 Modality

As RQ1 revealed all the English participants promoted an instrumentalised, deficit model, solution focused SEL order of discourse. However at the modality level my data
reveals a rather different picture in regard to the interviewees’ connectivity to the SEL
discursive practice. The first level, exhibited by E1, is a strong consistent modality clearly
committed to the claims they make and the dominant instrumentalised discourse. The speaker
presents claims or presuppositions as truths (strong categorical (truth) modality) and
obligation modality (what needs to be done/the action) is strong throughout the conversation.

So it’s [SEL] got two problems it’s very difficult to measure progress and show in inverted
commas value for money E1

The above quote demonstrates a taken for granted assumption that measurement and
economic value are problematic to SEL and secondly that answering these are therefore
important. Whilst the following statement again reveals a strong modality based on a
presupposition that if followed, or obligated, necessitates that SEL is located within the same
frame as other national curriculum subjects. This statement also locates the SEL advocates
(pre the SEAL programme) as being outside of the measurement and standards community.

I think too often those people who want improved reading and writing turn their back on the
social and emotional development and those who want social and emotional development
turn their back on the reading and writing E1

For E1 this strong and consistent modality runs through the interview and there are no
identifiable moments where the rhetoric and reality are not as one. In the language of New
Labour, E1 is ‘on message’. This results in a conversation whereby there are very few, if any,
discernible gaps or fractures that reveal experiential or personal traits. The language utilised
by E1 makes it difficult to locate personal experiences and one is left considering the
following reflection by Lister (2001) ‘ministers…all too often sound like speaking word
processors when interviewed’ (p.427).

The other three English participants however presented a much more mixed and
complicated form of modality. Although consistently supportive of the dominant SEL
discourse, particularly the need for SEAL as it was framed, they exhibited a much weaker modality when talking about the policy mechanisms and activities through which the discourse and SEAL was enacted. There is a gap for E2, E3 and E4 between the rhetoric of SEAL and the reality of the delivery.

*I remember trying to argue that there should be an emotional social thread through all subjects and was told very firmly this was not part of the ministerial brief therefore we couldn’t talk about it* E4

*Given that schools like packages and need boxes and like to be told how to do it ... um it might have been nicer if it had been better, the materials um but at least it was good that there was something* E4

For E4 one can see from the critical and hesitant statements above a weaker modality regarding the location of SEL and the creation of the SEAL materials. This criticism becomes explicit in the following statement exhibiting strong modality in a direction different to what one could call the English SEL consensus:

*So, one of my major critiques, criticisms of the [SEAL] material, which I expressed many times in the meetings was that all these stories were prescriptive* E4

This is a significant statement from E4 for it serves a number of purposes. Firstly they position themselves as someone who has been critical of SEL on a number of occasions (many times). Secondly it tells us that this criticism has been expressed within the SEAL steering group (the meetings) and finally we are informed that the interviewee was uncomfortable with the standardisation of the materials.

In a similar manner the modality exhibited by E3 is strong regarding the need for SEL and reflects much of the dominant discourse. However, it differs when talking about how SEL thinking was drawn together and then managed by the SEAL steering group, of which they were a member. The following statements demonstrate strong modality but from a
different perspective. We can hear the sound of frustration and the voice of someone who was struggling with how the SEL, or to be specific SEAL, discourse was being managed.

Social and emotional aspects of learning, I said I’m not happy with that either actually because you’re assuming learning equals academic learning E3

[The steering group] Became more and more frustrating...Er because of the politics of it really er so um I mean I remember the big battle er I remember XXXXX ringing me up and saying what shall we call this because I’m having real pressure to call it SEBS [Social and Emotional Behavioural Skills] E3

Interestingly with no knowledge of who the other interviewees were or what was said E2 appears to respond to the concerns voiced by E3 and E4. Utilising a defensive modality and therefore being rather weak in regard to commitment to the statements made, E2 highlights, from their perspective (The National Strategies), the realities of policy mechanics, specifically money and timescales.

I think there were people who thought er things were done for a malign reason almost and actually it wasn’t it was for an expediency and I think one of the main factors is is the er timescales that were placed on things E2

you know then if you believe that and you’re give an opportunity to actually do something that’s based on fairly good you know principles and logic er gut feeling er bit of research bit of knowledge of things and thinking well that is going to make a difference ... and you’re given two years to do it what would you do? E2

He [E4] er was very subversive when it came to SEAL because he didn’t like it he felt it was taking over his world er and he hadn’t been given the voice that he’d hoped for in it and there wasn’t a plot about that it’s just was a sort of practical element of that E2

In utilising modality I have identified a level of compliance, frustration, tension and defensiveness among the English interviewees with the SEL, SEAL, policy mechanism process, namely the Steering Group and the machinery that enacted the groups’ thinking the National Strategies. As E1 (a Government Minister) reveals none of this and E2 (Head of a
Government Unit) reveals but is measured, my thinking here is that the interviewee’s willingness to reveal is likely connected to i) how close to the centre of New Labour power they were and ii) how they personally positioned and identified themselves as agents of government, albeit in different shapes, sizes and forms.

I therefore shall develop this strand further by exploring how the interviewees positioned and identified themselves (levels of ownership), within the communicative event, through their text utterances. For, as the CDA scholar Van Dijk writing in Wodak and Meyer (2001) observes, that aside from the semantic structures other properties of text (pauses, positionality, hesitation etc.) can serve as signifiers of the realistic interests attached to the communicative event by the speaker; their perspective, mood or emotional response.

7.2.2 Identification

All of the English interviewees weave a discourse built on a particular professional identity or identities. In each instance this is explicitly stated early in the interview and forms a consistent narrative throughout the interview conversation. For E1 their professional identity is expressed from the beginning of the interview as a Member of Parliament and a New Labour policy maker, an agent of Government at the centre of power. Through the use of exclusive pronouns (we, them, us) E1 weaves a discourse where the ‘we’, the policy makers and government (New Labour), are positioned as the professionals responding to the problems of ‘them’. It is also worth noting here that the pronoun ‘we’ is one of the most frequently used keywords in New Labour texts (Fairclough, 2000).

The language used by E1 constructs a version of reality based on a particular form of defined relationships, roles and responsibilities, not only for themselves but other sections of
society. This is a reality that legitimates a particular power and identity, one that Mulderrig (2011) characterises as manufactured consent in the service of New Labour enabling a parental form of governance. One could contend that E1 positions themselves exactly as one would expect of a New Labour Government minister ‘on message’ and utilising a language and discourse controlled from the centre. As a previous Minister remarked ‘The need to evaluate interventions collides with the political imperative not to admit to mistakes (Farrell & Morris, 2003: 8).

*I think we did a lot that was about that area so I remember we set up a personal and social health education agenda, we got the working group, we got the compulsory citizenship on the curriculum and all that in my mind was part of ... um social and emotional development E1

*No, I don’t think I mean politically we were never about that, whatever we were about we were never ever about that and I think we looked at the kids who still weren’t, you know getting the exams that, you know, really like you and I know utter key, they need them more than the middle class need them E1

*We felt it was our job to give them ambition and to give them the qualifications so that they had choice E1

For both E2 and E3 the dominant identity is that of Educational Psychologists (EP). The interview conversation is conducted through this identity with both participants opening the interview by describing their own personal journey into the SEL conversation and membership of the SEAL steering group through their role as an EP. This is a significant insight for in structuring their identities in this manner both interviewees create a pre SEAL and SEAL identity, both of which act as shadows reflecting within and across each other.

*What I am about...as an educationalist who’s interested in psychology I’m interested in the sort of the interplay of those two things E2

*We [Education Psychology service] were coming at it [SEL] from the sort of education bit, from the psychology bit because we ran what we called anger management groups E3
The SEAL identity for both E2 and E3 is created and shaped by the interplay between their role and experiences on the SEAL steering group, as policy actors, and their dominant identity as EPs. For E2 this resulted in a distinctive National Strategies identity emerging that filters the SEL conversation through a National Strategies perspective. This is a perspective that is similar to E1 in that it is controlled from the centre and though, to a lesser degree, is still consciously controlled by the speaker

*I think initially in 2003 SEAL was responding to a concern about secondary behaviour and the belief that there needed to be something done in um ... and from the national strategies point of view, which is separate you know, different stories, different thing, it was responding to the oft quoted, the er achievement had plateaued and what do we do? E2*

*once something is owned by somebody, and it [SEAL] was sort of owned by the national strategies, then it became difficult however hard we tried, when we say this is owned by everybody E2*

However there are moments when the conscious control is dropped by E2 and a measured critical voice, the EP, emerges

*The National Strategies says it has to just be whole school and then it became nothing E2*

*It [SEL] wasn’t being implemented in the way that I thought that it should have been E2*

For E3 a very different response is observed through the interplay between the EP identity and SEAL steering group member.

*I suppose there were about twenty people on this steering group, and we used to meet probably once a term probably, I don’t remember, and they’d then report what they were doing and then advise as it were E3*

The steering group is presented in a functional, distanced, manner with little modality, as exemplified by the use of the words ‘suppose, probably and don’t remember’. One could
conclude that E3 had weak connectedness to the steering group and therefore, as witnessed in the following statements, is willing to reveal dissatisfaction with the mechanism

So that was that was the the bit [steering group] where I began to get more and more frustrated with the way the the way in which it was being hijacked E3

I didn’t like this aspects of learning...So the heresy, my heresy in the DFES was to say actually the most important learning is about learning to live in community. It’s about building community E3

Interestingly one can see a flavour of the Welsh discourse emerging in the above statement from E3. With this in mind it is no great surprise they considered themselves, at this point, to be a heretic. The term heresy is important to pick up here for its use indicates and supports mine and others’ thinking (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009) that the SEAL steering group due to its proximity to the centre of New Labour power (and as a mechanism for applying it) was consciously controlled by the dominant SEAL order of discourse, a discourse that as Humphrey (2012b) notes was evangelical and, as the frame question has revealed, was limiting. Furthermore running through both of the above statements is a strong sense of the speaker’s alternative identity which is that of an experienced and confident EP.

The challenges faced and the identity constructed by E3 are perhaps best captured in the following quote taken from a section of the interview revealing the SEAL steering group developing a SEAL checklist

I said I said what’s this about? I’m not interested in this, and nor were the other people there but you see the civil service will say well we’ve got to do it, we’ve got to do it, so I said well if you’ve got to do it, do what you like E3

Finally for E4, a similar conflicted identity is revealed by the data. A member of the SEAL steering group E4 opens the interview by positioning themselves as a SEL practitioner and activist (Director of a national campaigning group) involved in the SEL conversation prior to the development of SEAL and the formation of the steering group. Again a pre SEAL
and SEAL identity are at play here. The pre-SEAL identity is strongly presented through using the organisational ‘we’ whereby the organisation is located as a respected source of knowledge and activity regarding SEL.

_We had a conference called The XXXX in 1998...we were asked to work with SELIG E4_

_We were asked to run a conference on teacher health and wellbeing which as a strand in the emotional, no no in the Healthy Schools Programme so that was by the Department of Education and Health, so the fact that we were seen as the people to do it E4_

_How did it [SEL] emerge? I mean, I had a lot of conversations with XXXX around how Southampton became interested in emotional lit, why - emotional literacy, at the same time as XXXX [their organisation] formed E4_

From the perspective of E4, their organisation was crucial in developing the SEL conversation and putting the subject into the government’s gaze. One could contend that this was partly due to the manner in which E4 and their organisation connected to and utilised a series of high profile New Labour policy actors, a position E4 makes clear in the interview

_so we then got the, you know, the Tessa Jowell the Patricia Hewitts E4_

_I always remember the funny story um of a Dutch journalist ringing up just before the 97 election and he said er ‘I’ve been reading er ... press clippings to write about this election, and I hear that the Labour people have a secret weapon xxxx’ ... we were described as the group therapy for politicians E4_

This organisational identity and strong connectedness to the development of SEL (and New Labour) once drawn into the SEAL steering group presented for E4 a challenging situation for, as noted earlier, their organisational aims were squeezed by the limits and restrictions of the steering group and the policy mechanisms both shaping the group and expressing its thinking. This position resulted for E4 in an interesting tension whereby from the organisational point of view they are frustrated and disappointed with the SEAL steering
group yet from another perspective, as carriers of the New Labour badge, are reluctant to be too critical.

*I wasn’t that excited [about the steering group]. Because it was so far from what we had been proposing* E4

*I think you do have to slightly empathise with politicians who ... they’re sitting there um ... ... trying to um deal with all these interests groups and all these lobby groups really, and then trying to make sense of it all* E4

It is important to note here how E4 (and E3) is distancing themselves from the English SEL communicative event. There is a sense of ‘this isn’t what I signed up for’ coming from both interviewees. One must consider how much of this distancing is a result of the poor national evaluations of SEAL and the dropping of SEAL/SEL from the government agenda post 2010. If SEAL had been a success would E4 and E3 be so ready to distance themselves from the programme? Returning back to the literature review one could conclude that for E4 their identity reflected that of other New Labour policy actors ‘whose identities and professional trajectories are often bound up with the policy positions and fixes that they espouse’ (Peck & Theodore, 2010, p. 170)

7.3 Discursive practice - England

My findings so far have identified a range of experiential accounts for the English interviewees in their role as policy actors shaping the SEL communicative event. These include compliance, tension, frustration, pragmatism and disappointment. Significantly my data indicates that three of the four English policy actors interviewed were challenged by, or uncomfortable with, the very policy mechanisms that, as part of the SEAL steering group, they were either a representative of (E2) or responsible for shaping and utilising (E3/E4). To
explore these findings further and add greater depth, I shall now turn my eye to a key theme that for me has emerged from the analysis above and will, I believe, give both greater clarity and credibility to my thinking; that is the issue of SEL ownership in England. For it is here that I believe the key tensions and frustrations were located.

7.3.1 Ownership of SEL – Different babies, different motives?

It was a time where there were conflicts even within the organisations in which the key players were sitting E2

I have explored elsewhere the position of SEL in England before the SEAL programme. Suffice to say the position was one of individual, localised programmes generally driven through Local Authorities (including EP services) and campaigning organisations. Of my English interviewees E2, E3 and E4 were all at the forefront (along with figures such as Katherine Weare and Peter Sharp) of these localised programmes and had invested heavily in the development of SEL practice. I referred in the literature review to the ideological position that the English policy actors had been complicit in creating and perpetuating and E2, E3 and E4 were central figures in this.

The result of this is that the SEAL steering group, while drawing together the likeminded, was also a limiting and controlling force on the aspirations, imaginations and motivations of the members. All the participants, from my research, believed in a similar Goleman, deficit, model of SEAL but they also all had very different ideas as to how this should be applied.

I had actually my model which was a much better model than [the SEAL] waves model [p.135] it was gears E3
I came with a model my model always, which was my baby, and I and I but my model always was this idea that there is a two way street between environment and taught E2

It doesn’t seem to me that programmes are necessary...there is another element to this...values E4

Furthermore, due to their campaigning activity and knowledge at the local level, they brought to the table conflicting stories of ownership. Each of E2, E3 and E4 believed they had an ownership of SEL, a problematic position in a nationalised (Kirby, 2006) programme.

I feel an ownership of the words, the strings of words that I put together and I feel an ownership in some elements of it and so I feel an ownership in the fact that I invented er invented…E2

We gave a sort of focus for it possibly and a shape to it which made it easier for people to take it on ...E4

that was the first time in any authority the word emotions was used...Well that was that was I suppose Peter Sharp and myself E3

One must ask the question here as to how the policy actors could have invented these SEL concepts that as my literature review indicates (a) were already prevalent in the US education system and (b) have been around in education for centuries. Perhaps it speaks to the ego of the individuals who found themselves at the ‘top table’ during the English SEL communicative event?

As Ball (2008) asserts policy intellectuals play an important role in establishing credibility and truthfulness (p. 5) within the policy discourse and yet what the above findings indicate is that particular actors in the SEAL steering group were not as on message as perhaps the centre of power would have wished. At the practical level the result of this was according to E2 that
Some people felt their babies had been taken away and in some way er changed I would imagine some thought they were never going to be given credit maybe for their babies E2

One of the fundamental factors in this conflict was the role of the National Strategies as transmission agents for the government’s thinking. This is a point acknowledged and elaborated on by E2 in the following statements

We [National Strategies] constructed a reality of SEAL and XXXX managed DFES out there, so she er managed that and all the conflicts that we are talking about E2

There was definitely feelings er that I think people didn’t … entirely necessarily understand some of the constraints that that were placed upon the National Strategies E2

7.4 Policy network thinking

Drawing these findings into policy network thinking and CDA, one could conclude that what is being witnessed here is the power relations of personal relationships within a shared policy framework (Ball, 2008). As Ball elaborates these specific policy communities are generally profitable for the non-state actors participating (E3/E4) and provide valuable insider information, perhaps factors that ensured the continued participation of E3 and E4 within the SEAL steering group. A position supported by Keep (2009) who considers that ‘self-interest is hence a major motivation for subordinate agencies in not disrupting the narrative’ (p.22).

At the CDA discursive practice level I would contend that the power struggle over ownership can in fact be drawn back to the key role E2, E3 and E4 played in producing and distributing the SEL discursive practice (Fairclough, 2000). One could argue that those concerned with production will inevitably through their actions develop a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership is not necessarily problematic so long as it is institutionalised and stabilised, through for example the use of agents such as the National Strategies. However if
those who have propagated the narrative start to feel disconnected or unheard one could conclude that the narrative is in danger of being polluted as various factions attempt to mediate and reinterpretate in this instance the gospel of SEAL. Another perspective would be that for E2, E3 and E4 they were faced with decisions, once inside the system, in conditions of undecidability (Derrida, 1996) whilst being utilised and compromised by the neoliberal machinery (Peck and Tickell, 2003). One could ultimately conclude that for E2, E3 and E4 (as well as E1) they were complicit in creating the very land of the imagined that ultimately sought to contain them.

### 7.5 Wales

As RQ1 has revealed, the New Labour frame, up to the third term of the Assembly, was a very different space to that operating in England. There were no national standards or national strategies in relation to SEL and the policy actors were active in a land that, at this moment in time, was a laboratory for change (Evans, 2015). The experience of the policy actors was therefore shaped and located in their relationship to the community level collaborative thinking and the dominance of a *made in Wales* discourse. Different contexts aside, I will however explore the policy actors’ accounts in the same manner as was undertaken in England, that is predominantly through the lens of text, particularly modality and identity. This will be supported by an examination of the actor’s relationship to the discursive practice, again with an emphasis on identifying tensions, fissures and gaps in the interviewees talk.

#### 7.5.1 Modality
Building on my earlier findings I shall start this section by exploring the level of connectedness the Welsh policy actors had with the dominant SEL discursive practice, that is SEL as understood through children’s rights and developed locally as an element of a wider Welsh social justice project.

There is a clear consistency across the Welsh interviewees with all participants demonstrating a strong modality, sense of connectedness, in relation to the dominant discursive practice. The interviewees reflect back the social justice discourse and demonstrate a clear commitment to it whilst also articulating a wider policy consensus. This modality operates at both a categorical (truths) and obligation (directive) level (Fairclough, 2013). For W1 the social justice driver is presented firstly as a categorical commitment and then broadened to include the producer of the social justice agenda the Assembly.

*You know it [social justice] would be just a sort of given that that’s where you’d start from* W1

*when the Assembly took over I think that things that were recognised was that ... er the distribution for example of resources within public services in Wales were certainly not targeted on need* W1

This is an interesting development for, on further examination, one can identify that for all the Welsh interviewees, the implicit authority (truth) claim is much more frequently located at the level of the Assembly rather than at the individual level, a very different position to that in England. One could contend that my interviewees gave the Assembly the authority to speak for them thereby expressing the very unity of thinking that took place. One can see in the following quotes examples of this relational, unified modality. In the first quote W2 not only presents a categorical commitment to social justice through the Assembly but also ascribes expressive modality elements to this in the fact that officials through a shared ‘belief’ were ‘delighted’ to participate. This ‘belief’ is also present for W4 whilst in a similar
manner the categorical commitment is placed with the Assembly officials (they). Finally for W3 the categorical commitment is children’s rights and this is located again in the Assembly.

Yes, you know so that [social justice] was much wider through the cabinet that belief. And that enabled officials to do it. There would be lots of officials who would come and go and lots of officials who would absolutely believed in it as well and were delighted to work W2

a lot of the things behind there have come from us influencing what it might look like in the end and then that feeding back into us, but they’ve let us get on with it and they see it as an important thing so I have, I have some ... um belief that the assembly is trying to work in a wider, with a wider remit W4

But it was there was no vote on the um er the the proposition that we use the UNCRC as the basis for our policy there was no vote because nobody was going to speak against it W3

This sense of shared purpose or unity is also captured in the level of obligation modality, the notion of activity or action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), the interviewees place on the assembly and their fellow policy actors. The actions of the policy community are presented as being authentic, as exemplified by the use of words such as heart, king, champion, strong, crusade and campaign. This is an important finding, for it reaffirms the ideological power of the discursive practice and illustrates a positive experience in regard to the relationship with the Assembly for the interviewees.

They [the Assembly politicians] would articulate it and yeah we worked like mad giving them the briefing for all of this but they’d use the briefing and they’d elaborate on it and they could do it and they would do it from the heart W2

Rhodri could talk to a pauper or a king and regularly did in the same conversation W4

Departments within the assembly will champion the whole thing. They will champion participation, they will champion the voice of the young person, they will champion all those things W4

Huw Lewis was very strong on the child poverty but Gwenda Thomas from day one was very strong on the UNCRC ... and she’s deputy minister so for social services...Er so she from the very early stage you know crusaded or campaigned for you know the Assembly to adopt the UNCRC W1
The above data reflects the findings of a number of Welsh policy commentators (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010; Hawker, 2009; Oerton & Pilgrim, 2014) who have concluded that the Assembly, in particular the first two terms, witnessed a cross party, consensual, collaborative policy making agenda. Moreover it adds depth to the Welsh ‘nation building’ frame I identified in RQ1, a process referred to by Drakeford (2007) as progressive universalism.

7.5.2 Identification

Across three of the four interviewees (W1, W2 and W3) there is a consistent and dominant social democratic political identity revealed that is flavoured with a made in Wales perspective and is in the service of the new Welsh nation state rather than a specific political party. There is very little talk of New Labour across the Welsh interviews and when it is referred to, it is generally as a negative signifier as seen in the following two quotes from (New) Labour in Wales policy actors:

*it was very different to England even though there was a labour government in England at the moment, there was what Rhodri Morgan called clear red water* W2

*I mean I’m not too much of a new Labour person* W1

Identity for W1, W2 and W3 is very much built around the concept of Welsh nationalism with a small n. I am understanding national identity here in the manner that Hall (1996) would articulate it as a form of suture that binds together institutions, practices and myths (Haesly, 2005) that together compose the imagined community. In this sense if the big N is Welsh independence then the small n I refer to here is a nationalism built upon the
individual and the collective having a shared sense of a civic left of centre Welshness
(Bradbury and Andrews, 2010; Haesly, 2005), one imagined within a devolved but not
independent nation state. For a critical reflection on this position of nationalism with a small
n see Price in Osmond and Finch (2012).

One could conclude that the dominance of this small n resulted in the political, social
and cultural being at the forefront of identity for three of my four Welsh participants. This is
in contrast to England where all the interviewees wove a strong individual professional
identity into the conversation.

*I think that er and I mean I think the political er centre of gravity in Wales you know is
definitely to the left of England...it’s a bit like Scotland in that sense so you know a lot of
these sort of ideas of er social justice communitarianism and all of that has a more ready
constituency here in Wales* W1

*It was a a resurgence of Welsh nationalism...Nationalism with a small n* W2

*Things work to produce that sense of ooh we’re us we’re welsh we’re different. Which is I
don’t know I mean I don’t know how whether this is good or bad in terms of international
politics it’s real I mean it’s tangible* W3

This identity of civic Welshness (Haesly, 2005) for the three interviewees was closely
connected to what I have referred to earlier as the blwyddyn y pla (the year of the plague) and
what other commentators (Norquay & Smith, 2002) have considered the moment where a
particular version of twentieth century Welshness (for a thorough and engaging discussion on
the complex and shifting narrative of Welshness and Welsh identity I would direct the reader
to Osmond and Finch (2012)) came closest to extinction, that is the 1979 election of Margaret
Thatcher as Prime Minister of Britain.

*The second referendum was yes because people voted against Thatcher and Redwood, never
again wanting to find themselves completely exposed to hostile UK government* W1
I think that the Thatcher experience and the feeling the outlying nature of Wales... And the disproportionate nature of er the effect of the closure of the mines for example that is so deep seated W2

You know somewhere somewhere where in that nexus between um er that sense of we feeling that sense of having resisted [Thatcherism] and having living in the shadow of a big neighbour does force people into some well it doesn’t force people it encourages people into a collectivist/collectivism W3

The years of Thatcherism are important forces on and signifiers of identity for W1, W2 and W3. However other powerful signifiers of civic Welshness are also drawn in to the identity narrative such as the miners’ strike and the flooding of the Tryweryn Valley (Johnes, 2012). This combination of social and political forces demonstrates what Drakeford (2007) has referred to as the Welsh historical cocktail which is a powerful combination of class, economics and politics and has ‘resulted in a greater receptivity to a set of policy approaches in which collective effort, social solidarity and the sharing of prosperity command a premium.’ (p. 172)

So the Labour party the unions er the Welsh -communitarianism history. Yeah the closure of the mines the er [Tyweryn] valley flooding in North Wales... It really did galvanise Welsh nationalism because I think that for a lot for probably people of my generation even though I didn’t live in Wales it probably was er you know the defining moment W1

And we did a thing that um er evoking the period of the miner’s strike er and and ... it was too painful it was too recent in the room there were probably very few people of my age and my who had been on pickets or who had remembered the work of the women in the communities not many people would have been there. But the memory if you like was still strong oh yeah it was almost too painful to do it’s still too early to talk about the miner’s strike W3

Yeah, so something in the psyche that er, you know, even goes back you know to things like the miners’ strikes and things like that. There is something that, there’s absolutely in the part of everyone’s experience in Wales W2

The strong and at times passionate modality revealed above leads me, along with earlier findings, to conclude that for W1, W2 and W3, their experiences of the SEL communicative event as policy actors can only be understood and viewed through this lens of
civic Welshness and the devolution project. The interviewees were part of and felt personally connected to a production process developing a new version of Wales that, for all of them, was an inclusive, intimate, collaborative journey built on a shared national story or imagining of Wales. This view is supported by Bradbury and Andrews (2010) who reason that the post devolution rise in civic Welshness was due to a united intention on the behalf of the political elite to shift the Welsh centre of gravity. As one who often sat in the meeting rooms populated by my interviewees (the political elite), I can confirm this thinking through a direct comment made to me by a Senior Civil Servant working for the Assembly who noted that what we were working on (SEL policy) was part of a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity to build our nation, we will never get this again’, a perception caught by W3:

*Devolution is an interesting beast in that for a lot of people the devolution project is a nationalist project it is actually about developing a nation and country building for a lot of people* W3

### 7.5.2.1 A note on W4

In contrast to the other interviewees, in regard to identity, W4 created a slightly different self in that their dominant identity and strongest modality was as a children’s rights professional.

*I tend to follow what I think we should be delivering to young people from our experience* W4

*what we do is say ‘OK’ there needs to be a dialogue between the young people who have expertise and a, and the, and the professionals, to come, to, to, in terms of participation that’s the top of the tree* W4

*I’ve always just worked with young people and I think what works for them* W4
However this was located in a particular understanding of Wales that bore much in common with the other participants. As one can see nationalism with a small n and nation building are present for W4 albeit with a slightly more hesitant modality, through, as the quote below shows, the use of probably, sort of and you know:

*I think it’s also probably, the national identity bit helps to tie things together because you know you can, you can sort of say ‘Oh this is for Wales’ W4*

*I think Wales can do it because politically it stands in a different position … it stands in a different position, you know politically it, we, happens to work that way W4*

The outcome of this is that W4 connects the ‘I’ of their own identity to the collective, inclusive, ‘we’ of the assembly, the one identity being co-dependent on the other. This position is captured clearly in the following statements strong on obligation modality.

*You know, we [WAG] tend to or I tend to work from where, the young people I’m working with - what do they require? W4*

*For me to work with the assembly government I, I, I, I shiver of n- of working elsewhere W4*

Taking this co-dependent relationship a step further W4 clearly identifies their organisation’s work as a (discursive) bridge between the young people of Wales and the Assembly policy.

*I think we’re seen as one of the delivery organisations for what the assembly are trying to do. So they see us clearly as that, so it’s easier to do that … um … you know they’ll see us as that for different reasons, because we’ve been effective, because we’re willing to take on W4*

*For W4 one can see that the relationship with the Assembly and the SEL communicative event in Wales was, in a similar manner to the other interviewees, a positive, inclusive experience.*
So I can get far closer to what the policy is and far- m - and my voice and what we think as an organisation can be heard W4

7.6 Discursive practice - Wales

The previous findings indicate that the Welsh interviewees were intimately connected to both the constitutive and constituted (Fairclough, 2003) nature of the Welsh discursive practice. The text and particularly the levels of categorical and obligation modality demonstrate a strong commitment to the transformative, inclusive, nation building discursive practice operating within Wales at the time. Yet this practice was also due to its shaping by hegemonic relations and struggle (Fairclough, 1993) - a particular form of power that although seemingly broad and inclusive (a one Wales vision) was also a source of tension (Mooney & Williams, 2006). Firstly in regard to the New Labour project in England and secondly to those other voices in Wales including those who saw devolution either as a subordinate status (Price, 2012 in Osmond and Finch) or alternatively felt that Labourism had become an unchallenged hegemony. One could argue that it was the forces of the first, New Labour in England that, as the final section of this chapter shall show, had a direct impact on interviewees experience as policy makers.

In Wales tensions for the interviewees are connected to the changing nature of the discursive practice as a new process of production, distribution and consumption emerged bridging a different set of social forces and resulting in a different form of text being pursued, the era of Leighton Andrews.
7.6.1 The arrival of Leighton Andrews

One can identify that the modality for the Welsh interviewees is generally connected to a transformative process, that is the development of the social justice agenda/UNCRC children’s rights agenda, and a set of Welsh civic values. Interestingly when the talk turns to the later post-2008 period of the Assembly (The PISA performance crisis (Andrews, 2014)) and the SEL conversation, a different picture emerges. Here we can see a different discursive practice that creates a text much more concerned with the language of standards, outcomes and measurement. This was a period of questioning and change from a different perspective, one that was critical of what had gone before and as Elaine Edwards (General Secretary of the Welsh Teachers’ Union, UCAC) notes resulted in a white knuckle ride for education (Evans, 2015). This was clearly a significant and challenging experience for the interviewees.

*I think that probably you know we were doing er ... we thought we were doing had all the right policies but I think up until things like [2006 PISA assessment] came out that er well you know and sort of showed that well you’re not actually delivering on the outcomes* W1

*And because we had never extended from Jane Davison’s you know no league table stuff ... we hadn’t developed a sufficiently strong school improvement agenda... We just didn’t do it and and I don’t know why* W3

*There are no quick wins in the things that that we’re talking about. It’s generational and to a great extent I think that was understood by that first cabinet. Er so maybe they weren’t sharp enough about asking for results early enough and Leighton Andrews has come in education wise and is looking for quicker wins now* W2

One can detect in the above quotes hesitancy, pauses and a sense of reflective questioning for the interviewees. The modality regarding the social justice discursive practice is no longer strong and categorical but in Fairclough’s terms at the median to low end. This weak modality indicates a more subjective truth commitment (Fairclough, 2013) to the social justice/SEL conversation thereby creating a new space. This is a space I would contend that,
for the interviewees, is a direct result of the neoliberal standards discourse exerting its power on the land of the imagined. As the interviewees reflect further on the introduction of a standards and outcomes discursive practice and the introduction of Leighton Andrews as Education Minister, one can see that two factors are occurring. Firstly we get the sense that something is over and secondly the subjective space is squeezed in a different direction as a series of critical truth commitments are made regarding the process driven, transformative, social justice discourse that shaped SEL. One can sense that the interviewees are attempting here to articulate the experience of being on the receiving end of a particular power.

*I don’t know why I’ve never spoken to him about it I mean ... you know he sort of just said you you know ... it’s purely about educational performance which I think it is it is it’s going back to the fact that you know you need some sort of delivery er W1*

*he had to do what anybody would have had to do which is to look at the issue like the economic output end the academic achievement end of Wales’s schools because they were not good enough. We had not tackled some of the deficiencies that we knew we could and should have tackled W3*

*you can’t keep it going, and we can’t you know we will be pushed into an English quick win model W2*

### 7.7 Policy network thinking - Wales

Reynolds (2008) considers that in Wales, particularly during the earlier years of the Assembly, the policy process was built on working ‘with’ education professionals rather than the English model of working ‘to’ or ‘on’. He contends that this resulted in a land where Welsh education policy actors ‘were to be trusted, to be listened to and to be respected (p. 757). A further outcome of this approach was, as noted elsewhere, the trust in Local Authorities to deliver education policy and thereby an absence of policy mechanisms such as the English National Strategies (Evans, 2015). For my Welsh policy actors the data clearly
reveals that much of their experience was located in this consensual ‘everyone around the table’ (Cairney, 2008) policy approach, the actors and assembly were as one.

My Welsh policy actors worked together as part of a policy community on a common problem, social justice, through an ideological frame that the policy discourse worked to privilege. (Ball, 2008). The cognitive frame, interaction and inclusion of the Welsh education policy network all indicate a strengthening, at this moment in time, of a made in Wales policy network that, drawing on the thinking of Keating et al (2009), indicates an emerging post devolution, horizontal, territorial policy community.

7.8 Summary

My findings indicate that for the policy makers connected to the SEL conversation in England and Wales their experiences were reflections of the land of the imagined they were operating in. For both sets of actors this resulted in an engaging, participatory experience when the relationships of power were in the ideological service of the SEL discursive practice my interviewees both created and advocated. However once the sources of social power reshaped the SEL discursive practice, in England through the mechanism of National Strategies and in Wales through the entry of a dominant standards discourse, then tensions and fissures are evident. These cracks are revealed through the interviewees’ stories of frustration, loss, confusion and sadness as the discursive practice is reshaped. This is a finding that I believe adds further depth to Ball’s (2008) assertion that policy is a human process with all the attendant forces and irrationality.

In England one can identify that the experience of being discursive practice producers, connected to notions of ownership, was in part a position that inevitably, once the
discursive practice was nationalised through SEAL (Watson et al. 2012), led to a conflictory space due to the limiting SEL frame in operation. This space between the rhetoric and reality is a significant finding and one that I believe merits further investigation in regard to New Labour in England educational policies. Clearly this finding also begets the question as to why my English participants generally remained active within the SEAL Steering Group when for E2, E3 and E4 they were at times perpetuating a SEL discourse that they were personally uncomfortable with. To fully answer this question would clearly require further study however I draw the reader to both my own (Watson et al. 2012) and Humphrey’s (2012a) earlier reflections on the generally unchallenged nature of the SEAL discourse and the thinking of Stich (1993) as a useful frame to apply here.

For my policy makers in Wales there is strong evidence that the SEL communicative event was in essence part of a wider nation building journey, a position that reflects the findings of much of the policy analysis published (Phillips and Harper Jones, 2002; Drakeford, 2007; Reynolds, 2008). In contrast to the limited land of the imagined operating in England at the time the imagined land in Wales, driven by the power of devolution and asserted through the Assembly, was one built on ideological notions of a made in Wales inclusivity (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010). This ideology created a space where for my policy actors the rhetoric and reality, for a short moment in time, were as one in a land of Clear Red Water. It was only when powerful social forces attached to the global neo liberal agenda (PISA, national standards, measurement) gained traction in the Welsh discourse and the producers of the system were no longer given the freedom to run it (Evans, 2015) that this positive, intimate, experience changed shape and become one of confusions and uncertainty. From being in a position of innovative, process, producers my Welsh policy actors found themselves having to operate in a new land where outcome rather than process mattered and the producers’ voice had less power.
8 England and Wales: National tradition, history and identity

How did national tradition, history and identity (including versions of childhood wellbeing) influence the discourse and policy of Welsh and English SEL under New Labour?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Participants</th>
<th>Welsh Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1</strong> - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Education)</td>
<td><strong>W1</strong> - Ex-Senior Government Minister, Labour Party (Health/portfolio included SEL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E2</strong> - Senior Civil Servant (National Strategies/SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W2</strong> - Senior Civil Servant (Education/responsible for SEL development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3</strong> - Member of SELIG/NELIG (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W3</strong> - Senior Government Advisor (Academic/Children and Young People)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E4</strong> - Head of SEL national campaigning group (SEAL steering group)</td>
<td><strong>W4</strong> - Head of Young People’s national campaigning group (Contributed to national SEL framework)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 15: Location and role of the policy actors involved

8.1 Introduction

Understanding and identifying the influences of national tradition, history and identity on the SEL communicative event is a complex and nuanced process. The factors being examined here (tradition, history, identity), as well as the process of CDA, demand an exploration of the wider social practice and the situational aspects (Fairclough, 1995) at the level of both within and between the individual nations. My thinking here, supported by the work of Fairclough (1995) and Wodak (1999) is that at the social practice level discourses serve the construction and reconstruction of national identities in part through which version of the nation and its attendant cultural, social and political components is talked about. In illuminating this process as a CDA activist my intention is also to reveal and question the configurations of power at play in the construction of concepts of nation. In answering this
question my emphasis will be on identifying the links between the social practice and the text
and discursive practice operating within and across the two nations for as Fairclough notes
the world is not simply text.

The discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free
play of ideas in people’s heads but from a social practice which is firmly
rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures.

(Fairclough 1992, p. 66)

In undertaking this exercise I shall be making use of my earlier findings as well as
drawing on my theoretical concepts (see Chapter 2), specifically new managerialism
(Beckmann & Cooper, 2004), neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005), collective memory (Apple,
2007) and the critical policy thinking of Ball (2008; 2012). I shall start by exploring the
English position and working from the social practice level I will examine the national
traditions, identity and history at play during the SEL communicative event followed by a
specific probing of the childhood wellbeing discourse. This section will conclude with a
critical examination of the situational aspects (time and place), that is the English identity and
its shaping during the New Labour period. The Welsh section shall follow a similar format.
My intention for this section of the thesis is to reveal what changes took place in forms of
interaction around political, social and cultural issues (Fairclough, 2000) during the New
Labour period and in whose interests these were.

8.2 Which England?

As revealed in RQ1 and RQ2 the English policy actors and the SEL communicative
experience was developed through an order of discourse and discursive practice that was
generated and regenerated at the social level through a specific neoliberal understanding and
doing of education. Ball and Exley (2010) refer to this process as idea allegiances and mutual reinforcement operating within an interconnected policy network. At the social level the key here is to identify what shape this neoliberal form took and how it influenced national tradition, history and identity for as Bradbury and Andrews (2010) note there are within all countries a number of competing versions of national identity, history and tradition jostling for supremacy.

8.2.1 Social exclusion

One can identify across the English interviews an order of discourse, the discursive practice and text, that is socially shaped by and socially shaping the national identity and education activity through the creation of a particular social (national) identity, relations within this and the systems of knowledge being valued (Fairclough, 1993).

now have three full generations in the same area without the support, now I haven’t sort of got evidence for this, but I think those white working class people who were left behind in those areas would totally lack confidence E1

At that time the two agendas were behaviour and achievement in the national psyche E2

We were in the dog days of the Major regime the sense, there was a sense of social corrosion and society falling apart …and a sense that New Labour rode really, a sense that society, its fabric, needed to be rebuilt, particularly in more deprived communities E4

There were two agendas remember and the big agenda is the standards agenda even the behaviour bit is only because it’s affecting standards er when it’s the chips are down why do want it children to behave better? Not because they’ll get on better with other people because they’ll get on do better at school, GCSE’s E3
As one can see from the above quotes a picture is being drawn here of a land (England) that at this moment in time is damaged. The social practice has constructed and is constructing a version of England that is experiencing serious problems with social cohesion. This identity is directly spoken of by E4 (note the use of social corrosion, society falling apart) and E1 (without support, left behind) whilst E2 and E3 work from the solution perspective talking about the need to address behaviour, achievement and standards. A discourse that in order to have legitimacy presupposes that firstly these factors are weak or absent and secondly that they are the right solution to fix the problem. The language used by my interviewees is revealing for it directly reflects the social practice operating at the time of New Labour in England and the ‘crisis of social exclusion’ (Mandelson, 1997).

The crisis of social exclusion was a powerful discourse utilised by New Labour in England (Doherty, 2011; Fairclough, 2000) with Tony Blair declaring to the Labour Party Conference in 1997 that the establishment of a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was vital to the country’s future. The term social exclusion was a broad and all-inclusive term that was used by New Labour in England to draw together a range of issues including child poverty, worklessness, anti-social behaviour, school attendance and behaviour and family breakdown. Most importantly for this thesis SEL was shaping and shaped by the social exclusion element of the social practice for it was seen as a panacea to a number of social ills, a position made clear by the Education Minister, Ed Balls, who declared that SEAL was a tool for teachers to ‘…make sure good behaviour and an atmosphere of respect are the norm in all schools’ (Balls, 2007).

8.2.2 Relations and systems of knowledge

At the national level in regard to societal relations the social exclusion agenda has been critiqued by a number of commentators (McCaig, 2001; Fairclough, 2000, Gewirtz,
2001) for its attempt to re-educate the working classes through a moralisation programme whereby lack of achievement is due to a cultural and moral deficit rather than structural issues (Ball, 2008). The working class would achieve if they were more middle class. What we have here is a repositioning of the working class as a group adrift from the successes and achievements of the New Labour middle class in need of a resocialisation programme. A process captured in the following statement by Peter Mandelson (1997) "This is about more than poverty and unemployment. It is about being cut off from what the rest of us regard as normal life."

This national remoralisation is reflected in the talk of the interviewees who across the board locate the children they worked with on SEL as lacking a specific set of skills or systems of knowledge, skills that I and others (Dahlstedt et al., 2011; Gillies, 2011) would argue are specifically designed to shape governable citizens serving a flexible, entrepreneurial, globalised, market place. Furthermore there is an assumption that the current model of society is the correct one, a manner of thinking that connects to the wider neoliberal There Is No Alternative (TINA) perspective (Apple, 2007).

*These lads could not socially smile nobody had ever taught them how to socially smile because as you know there are two different smiles* E3

*[SEL would] make them more robust and able to give them confidence and ... and I think it was saying to teachers who teach in those areas you know, what you do in developing self-confidence with those children and resilience is really important, because teachers would often say kids have not got resilience* E1

*What you do, at the very bottom line is you actually help children learn the social and emotional skills of being a human being that can live in the society* E2
Reflecting on the above quotes from my interviewees what comes across is the socially shaping force of a particular version of society (England), a vision of the nation that is confined by the limits of the neoliberal imagination (Ball, 2012). This is a vision of England that is grounded in the New Labour in England aspiration and achievement (Blunkett, 1999) discourse where the act of smiling, being robust, resilient and confident are valued systems of knowledge necessary to challenging poverty and lack of opportunity. The remoralisation social practice limited what was and was not available for discussion, this was the land where the working class were, like the public services they populated, undergoing a modernisation process. It is a working class reshaped as diminished in cultural values rather than one located in the traditional economic and class barriers so beloved of the England of the 1970s and 1980s. This modernisation process was according to Haylett (2001) a cultural project with New Labour in England undertaking a representational shift whereby through the dumping of various ‘others’ into the social exclusion space a new social identity was being produced built on a poverty of identity as traditional forms of thinking and doing (knowledge systems) were deemed outdated and worthless in the globalised knowledge economy age. Gewirtz (2001) considers this process as New Labour in England making the many behave like the few.

I think the big problem and this is one that SEAL’s been criticised for a lot is the is…the whole idea of it being white middle class E2

8.3 England - childhood wellbeing

I have made clear throughout this thesis that much of the SEL conversation in England was built upon a deficit model of the child (Watson et al., 2012) operating within a society focused on risk management (Pupavac, 2001), therapy thinking (Ecclestone, 2012)
and audit culture (Apple, 2007). These beliefs and forces were powerful social practices
(connected to the neoliberal imaginary) for they shaped how England viewed and understood
childhood wellbeing in policy terms. Indeed I have argued elsewhere (Watson et al., 2012)
that the deficit, therapy and audit discourse was responsible for taking English SEL down the
route of the objective list model through the development of the performance driven SEAL
programme. Yet as RQ2 demonstrated for the policy actors concerned with this process there
was a tension between the discourse they created and perpetuated (deficit, individualistic,
performative) around SEL and the child and as this played out the reality of its outcomes for
the child (the prescriptive, new managerial, SEAL model). This disconnect and at times
contradictory position is not uncommon to New Labour policy activity (Fairclough, 2000;
Ball, 2008; Rogers, 2012) as modernising, targeting and (re)moralising so often undermined
more traditional Labour notions of social justice, equality and community. Childhood
wellbeing for New Labour was a powerful high profile discourse part of the children first
social practice that combined a hybrid mix of locking children into a ‘becoming’ (Lister,
2006) adult’s position (future consumers), thereby inviting paternalism and new managerial
micro management, and a ‘being’ state which understood the child through the individually
experienced body (Schepers-Hughes and Lock, 1987) dislocated from the social and political
body. For a full discussion of this position see my writing in Watson et al. (2012)

This invest and regulate notion of childhood wellbeing is reflected by my English
interviewees. For E2 that the Government is interested in children’s SEL is in itself to be
celebrated yet on examination E2 has a version of childhood wellbeing (socially constructed)
that is at odds with the New Labour in England policy mode

*I think that something that says well actually what we want is young people to, but this is my
vision of SEAL, is socially construct their social world if there’s such a reasonable thing to say
was a very very surprising for teachers, well for national government to take on board E2*
In a similar manner E3 pointedly highlights the realities of the contradictory discourse as one hand of Government attempts to drive policy through children’s needs, albeit prescribed by adults through an objective list model, and the other hand sets out a limiting, prescriptive, framework for what should be done to children.

At the same time The Children Act which was sort of going through parliament The Education Reform act was going through parliament, and one was saying the national curriculum is what determines what children receive, and the other was saying it’s children’s needs and and that that er split...E3

The national position regarding childhood wellbeing in England is perhaps best captured in all its glorious contradictions through the voice of E1, a previous New Labour Minister, who manages to state what they don’t want and then through the creation of a paternalistic remoralisation propagates the very thing they wish not to seek. Place has simply changed to identity.

I think it’s about values in society I, I do not want to go back to the day, I really do not want to go back to the days where working class people knew their place that’s not what it’s about that would be awful, but the breakdown of social class barriers I think has put pressure on those who aren’t mobile. I think it’s quite difficult for them really E1

8.4 An absence of England

I noted in the introduction to this section that the term England/English was used only once across all of the English interviewees. This absence at the text level is magnified by the fact that all of the interviewees talked about regional locations (Southampton, Cumbria, London and Manchester) as they connected these to their professional identity which as noted earlier was their principle identity in comparison to the Welsh interviewees who placed national identity first. This leaves a space in England where national identity is visibly absent, a space that I would contend is further illuminated through a second absence the lack of
identifiable English traditions or history spoken of by the interviewees. Whereas the Welsh interviewees presented a number of shared national history/tradition signifiers (the miners strike, the ‘othering’ of England, Thatcherism, Tryweryn Valley) there were no clear examples of shared national history/tradition signifiers (aside from the New Labour in England modernisation and change discourse) across the English texts.

Unpicking notions of Englishness (and its absence) is a complex task and one that has, particularly post devolution, occupied many cultural and political commentators, see for example the work of Hall (1996) and Kumar (2003), the latter who considers that English national identity is both enigmatic and elusive. My thinking on this issue draws me towards a threefold explanation for what is going on here connected to cultural identity, devolution and neoliberalism. In the first instance drawing on the thinking of Hall (1996) I believe that my interviewees’ talk reflects a version of English identity that often goes unspoken due to the manner in which the ‘English Eye’ observes everything else (and places it) but is reluctant to acknowledge it is itself looking. This process of ‘othering’ results in an eye that is coterminous with sight itself (p.174) and is therefore reluctant to speak of what it actually is aside from a sight. I would take this a step further and also contend that this difficulty in talking of Englishness is also connected to an understanding that what it is does not need naming as this is assumed to take place due to the English being the dominant group in the UK (Citrin and Sides, 2005).

My second perspective here is that the process of devolution has resulted in a situation where each component state of the union as it imagines and enacts, through devolution, versions of national identity, often distinct from the Westminster discourse, leaves England confused, contested and questioning as to where its collective national identity sits if at all. Tomaney (2000) refers to this as the English question. Whilst writing in the Observer (June 13th, 2004), Amelia Hill, reflects that
The recent search for Englishness is the reaction of a nation feeling squeezed out of existence by Europe on the one side, and by the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the other.

With the above in mind one wonders whether my interviewees’ reference to regional locations rather than national is connected to this confusion and is also a response built on the growing forces of English regionalism (Tomaney, 2000) see for example the discourse attached to the recent Northern powerhouse initiative (Talbot et al., 2014) in England.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the questions attached to this thesis, are the forces of neoliberalism. At the social practice level I would maintain that England has embraced and been the recipient of international global education discourses and practices (competition, choice, international benchmarking, private provision) for beyond the experiences of the Welsh (see for example the removal of school league tables in Wales during the first Assembly and the maintenance (and celebration) of the comprehensive schooling, non-selective, ideal). In regard to the development and application of neoliberalism and globalised education activity Ball (2012) refers to the thinking of Peck and Tickell (2002) and their three phases of neoliberalism; proto (the intellectual recognition), roll back (the active destruction of collectivist practices) and roll out (the deliberate creation and recreation of mobile neoliberal thinking, governance and doing). In utilising this frame I would assert that England has been experiencing stage three of neoliberal activity in contrast to Wales which, at the moment in time being discussed here, was struggling with stage one and attempting to hold back stage two. For a direct example of this process in action consider how in 2002 the Welsh First Minister (Morgan, 2002) was talking about the citizen and the responsibility of the state rather than choice within public services whilst at the same time the
UK Prime Minister (Blair, 2002) was announcing at the annual Labour Party Conference the opening up of English education to further competition and choice.

Taking Peck and Tickell’s (2002) framework, if one is to then draw on Apple’s (2007) thinking regarding the collective memory (Halbwachs, 1985) and the need for neoliberalism to reshape and rewrite this in order to serve its own interests, then a powerful question must be considered. This question is to whether the absence of a spoken about shared English identity (as well as traditions and history) across my English policymakers’ interviews is a manifestation of a nation deep into stage three of the neoliberal rollout and, as such, one that has had elements of its collective memory revised to the point where, in relation to education, the values and achievements of English post war, progressive, public education are being erased. Have we reached a stage in the neoliberal project where the neoliberal discourse has assembled truth claims and composed a reality, in the realm of education, that has resulted in England and the English finding themselves decoupled from ‘unprofitable’ and ‘public’ national tradition and histories and moving towards a free floating globalised neoliberal identity (Antonsich, 2009; Goss and Chavez, 2013)? In relation to education Ball (2012) names this process as Global Education Inc. For further thoughts on this I would direct the reader to the work of those commentators seeking to reclaim notions of progressive, democratic, socially just educational systems (see for instance the work of Au and Ferrare (2015), Thomson et al., (2011), Gunter et al., (2014) and the UK-based Reclaiming Education movement (www.reclaimingschools.org)).

8.5 Which Wales?

This section will utilise the themes of social (national) identity, relations within this and the systems of knowledge being valued to unpick through the social practice occurring in Wales at the time of this study and the influence of the identified ‘civic’ Welshness on this
practice and ultimately SEL. Through illuminating how the Welsh interviewees talked about Wales my emphasis here will be on exemplifying and critically reflecting on a construction of national identity that pursued sameness yet also was developed and maintained through difference (Wodak, 1999).

8.5.1 Social justice

I have talked elsewhere about the nation building discourse operational in Wales during the time of this thesis. At the heart of much of this national identity conversation was an understanding and application of social justice that served as a distinctive and coherent principle for the post devolution assembly (Drakeford, 2007). There are of course many varieties of social justice (Gewirtz, 1998) and it is important to clarify that the form operational in Wales was a distributive and relational model built on four key principles; that government can and should improve social and economic conditions, a commitment to progressive universalism, valuing cooperation rather than competition and pursuing equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity. How central to the shaping of SEL the social justice discourse was can be seen in the following, distributive and relational, statements from the interviewees.

_A lot of these sort of ideas of er social justice communitarianism and all of that has a more ready constituency here in Wales_ W1

_You see this to me, is a term or model of social and emotional wellbeing that is built on terms such as - and we talked about this before - social justice, communitarianism, tied in with child poverty_ W2

_If you do take rather than those sort of analytical frames notions of social justice and engagement and fairness and equity and entitlement then I think we are looking towards a kind of more egalitarian society_ W3
I believe there are strong social justice drivers [to SEL] W4

As one can see the social justice discourse is explicitly connected to the shaping of the nation for W1 and W3 whilst for W2 and W4 it is presented as a key force in shaping SEL. To add some contextual depth here it is important to note that in 2003 the Assembly appointed a Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart). This was a post created specifically by Rhodri Morgan the First Minister and was a distinctive and symbolic commitment to the values of Clear Red Water (Charles et al., 2010). For all of my Welsh interviewees I believe the Assemblies version of social justice operated as a constructive strategy (Wodak et al., 1999) for building a national identity that presupposed a Welsh sameness and difference that was I believe ultimately limiting and reductionist in its scope.

8.5.2 Relations and systems of knowledge

In considering the relationships taking place, both at the micro and macro level, I wish here to draw attention to how the national identity driven by the early Assembly influenced political and social relationships, favoured particular systems of knowledge, and consider the issues of power attached to this.

8.5.2.1 Sameness

The sameness I am talking about is a shared explanatory discourse built around the ‘made in Wales’ (Clear Red Water) thinking that in turn was drawn from a distinct version of Wales’s collective political and social past. This version of history is powerfully informed by Wales’s legacy of industrialisation (Drakeford, 2007) and religious non-conformism (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010) as well as key national indicators and signifiers (Fairclough,
2000) such as the Eisteddfod, the miners’ strike and the flooding of the Tryweryn Valley. The result of these forces was a ‘dragonization’ of the Welsh collective memory whereby the dominant version of Wales was inherently, politically left of centre, working class, collectivist and closely connected to its heritage, language and the Labour movement (Reynolds, 2008; Drakeford, 2010). This historical, collective, left version of Wales is amplified by my interviewees.

*Whichever one of Plaid, Labour or Lib Dem, you know, you’d see you know drivers that were not dissimilar* W2

*What was driving that [social justice] was er I suppose was a mixture of the unions the Labour party the unions er the Welsh communitarianism history* W1

*And that collectivist communitarian localist kind of notion of is incredibly strong in lots of marginal countries whether that be Scotland or Ireland or Brittany* W3

*I think Wales can do it because politically it stands in a different position … it stands in a different position, you know politically it, we, happens to work that way* W4

For my interviewees this sameness, presented in a progressive positive frame, operated as a system of knowledge whereby key component parameters (health, education, social services) of post devolution Wales were set inside the Welsh Labour party (Rawlings, 1998). One could argue that Welsh Labour co-opted Welsh nationalism with a small n. This resulted in a particular meaning and doing of Welsh identity that operated in the service of a political struggle (Fairclough, 2000); the creation and animation of a historical left Welsh civic society. My thoughts here are supported by Prys Davies (2002) who considers that for the early Assembly ‘Many of the leaders were too ready to promise the New Jerusalem . . . that the Assembly would transform the nature of politics in Wales’ (p.2).
A perfect example of the identity, relations and systems of knowledge at play in Wales during this period is captured in the following statement from W3 when discussing the SEL policy process in Cardiff

_Somebody then sat back in their chair and said well you couldn’t possible appoint X the poet’s wouldn’t have it and this notion that there was a cultural obligation to be met as well W3_

I would assert that through this statement W3 captures the very essence of the historical, social and cultural forces driving Welsh identity at this moment in time. One cannot imagine this utterance being located anywhere but Wales and it illuminates the distance between the English and Welsh imaginary during the main period of this thesis.

From my perspective I would strongly argue that this form of Welsh identity had direct benefits in terms of shaping SEL as a subjective, relational and localised programme within the social justice agenda. The thinking and doing that was valued meant that a standardised, objective list, national model of SEL was outside of the imaginary and would in fact have directly challenged the power relations at play. How could one place an objective list model in the service of neoliberal economic interests (SEAL) onto the child when the systems of knowledge in operation valued localism, cooperation, consensus and process?

However I would also contend that the same collective memory forces or national identity that shaped the systems of knowledge and formed SEL in Wales also limited and in due time defeated the initiative due to its inability to respond to the powerful neighbouring (England), international (USA) and transnational forces (OECD, WHO, World Bank) of the neoliberal education agenda (Ball, 2012). The absence in Welsh education of performance measures, league tables, national standards and competition (the tools of new managerialism) resulted in the alternative policy mechanisms (localism, collaboration and process ) proving insufficient to withstand the neoliberal education discourse that judged success on outputs,
numbers and grades. In politically defining the nation as a collective left built partly on a past of labour struggles and English colonialism the national identity locked down and closed the space for transformation and the inclusivity of differing political and social perspectives. Wales had become a one party nation (Evans, 2015).

At the national level the unchallenged hegemony of the Welsh left has according to Price in Osmond and Finch (2012) resulted in a nation trapped in a dead zone of traditional passive ideas leaving itself unable to imagine real independence (nationalism with a large N) or alternative forms of being and doing. Price considers that this neo tribalism has resulted in an absence of critical voices and concepts such as entrepreneurism and alternative business models thereby leaving the collective left attempting to resolve Welsh problems with Welsh solutions when in reality the Welsh need to find new Welsh solutions to global problems. As a critical realist I find this an insightful and powerful alternative discourse particularly when one considers that over 70 per cent of Welsh employees work in the private sector. A sector little talked of in the early Assemblies policy machinations. Price also taps into one of my greatest concerns regarding the monolithic voice of Welsh Labour which is its unwillingness, perhaps inability, to engage with the realities of the globalised neoliberal agenda.

An early indicator of the problems awaiting Welsh education as it clashed with the international neoliberal discourse came from Reynolds (2008) who reflected that the dominance of the national identity conversation had resulted in education not being given the priority it needed whilst lack of change and innovation (not surprising in a monolithic culture) had stifled the capacity to grow and develop made in Wales policy. The absence of standards, measurement and consumer choice was ultimately chased down and utilised by those seeking to shape a globalised neoliberal version of Welsh education. Absence was in time conflated as failure. See for example the following later statement from Reynolds (2011)
We failed to develop our teachers and build their capacity. We left them on their own to reinvent the wheel in a timewasting fashion. We left the educational producers – schools, local authorities, higher education – alone also, trusting them to operate without the need for the consumer pressures that are now the hallmark of education policies across the globe.

The direction of Reynolds thinking is reproduced by my interviewees who locate the perceived failure of SEL in Wales, under the early Assemblies social justice framework, as being due to the absence of accountability and measurement tools. The new managerial processes that as key participants in the shaping of the civic Welsh identity they had been implicit in keeping out of the systems of knowledge incorporated.

*My only sort of concern was probably there was not enough done to empower parents and accountability of educational outcomes* W1

*Because we had never extended from Jane Davison’s you know no league table stuff we hadn’t developed a sufficiently strong school improvement agenda... we did not move our schools along as quickly as we needed to. We just didn’t do it and I don’t know why* W3

*Maybe we weren’t sharp enough about asking for results early enough but there are no quick wins in the things that we’re talking about* W2

These tensions between the identity and knowledge systems valued and the forces of the performative neoliberal, measurement, discourse are succinctly captured by W2. As they acknowledge how can one set in place national standards and performance indicators within a system that is organically growing and wrapped within a collaborative, we are doing this together, longitudinal framework?

*If you want to do the data stuff or the performance er level stuff then you have to say what difference you expect, and that’s so difficult to do* W2

Ultimately a discourse was developed that branded the early Assemblies education policies and systems of knowledge as incompetent and naïve and that those supporting the system were PISA deniers (Reynolds, 2013). This discourse, as noted elsewhere, opened the
door to the introduction of Leighton Andrews as Education Minister and his focus on ‘driving up standards further and faster’ (p.xx). At the relational level Andrews (2014) reflects the problematic and divisive force of the national identity issue by declaring that a consensus approach had damaged standards and that

People in the system saw the education department budget as a kind of Christmas tree with presents for everyone, and that had to stop (p.44)

As I have argued elsewhere the introduction of Andrews was the introduction of neoliberal lite policies in Welsh education (Emery, 2014). What is interestingly absent in this final act of the Welsh SEL story is any coherent and insightful response from the collective left, including my interviewees, to the framing of their activity as a naïve, Rousseau-esque, anything goes model (Andrews, 2015). Is this lack of defence and confidence in what I believe were good people attempting to create an alternative version of education a reflection of what Price calls the Welsh passivity or is it perhaps a lack of confidence and experience in dealing with the multiple headed dragon of neoliberalism?

8.5.2.2 Difference

Addressing the issue of difference, my findings strongly indicate that the use of social justice, located in a particular version of the collective memory, as a constructive mechanism was built upon the othering of England. This is a feature elucidated upon by many commentators (Reynolds, 2008; Evans, 2015; Phillips and Harper-Jones 2002) and one I have reflected upon in the discussion attached to RQ1 and RQ2. Suffice to say that for the Assembly and my interviewees the nation of England was amongst many other things a powerful, toxic, source of neoliberal consumerism, competition and individualism. This was a version of England utilised by Rhodri Morgan in his Clear Red Water speech and is a
discourse repeated by my interviewees. As one can see the social reality and relations are again in the service of the Welsh civic power identity:

*Nothing about us without us. That notion that we have a say is just a given which is hugely fundamentally different to England* W3

*It’s about being Welsher and it’s about feeling downtrodden for years by England* W2

*You don’t have to argue the [social justice] case from principles as you would in England. You know it would be just a sort of given that that’s where you’d start from* W1

This version of Welshness defined in part through a critical reference to England, perhaps laudable in its principles and, for me (and others), understandable in its preoccupation with historical English (internal) colonialism (Day, 2010) and contemporary English individualism, was ultimately a restrictive concept. It limited the land of the imagined and in regard to the relational aspects of national identity had the potential to exclude large sectors of society. For example Bradbury and Andrews (2010) paper exploring notions of Welshness and Britishness identifies that around one third of people in Wales identify as British. Add to this the fact that more Welsh born people live in England than any other home nation population and conversely more English born people live in Wales than the other home nations (Bradbury and Andrews) and it is evident that by othering England in this manner, the Welsh civic identity is a cause of tension for many. Evans (2015) captures the problems inherent to this othering process by noting simply that Wales is closer to England than it cares to acknowledge and one only need to consider the cross border relationships, families, friends, social events and media and entertainment services that serve England and Wales to recognise the complexity of the English/Welsh relationship at the level of public discourse (Bradbury and Andrews, 2010). This leaves one considering which England is it that Wales is othering, is it in reality the ghost of England past?
What I have described here is Wales shaping a new national identity through employing a restricted version of the past in order to build an inclusive present. The problem is that it was a past that limited the regenerative and transformative possibilities by failing to recognise the cultural, social and economic realities of the neoliberal present both internally and externally operating on Wales. A recent comment in the Guardian newspaper (2015) described this process as looking through the rear view mirror when attempting to drive forward. One could conclude that perhaps this lack of realpolitik was grounded in a confusion connected to the small n of nationalism. For ultimately the devolution settlement restrained at the policy level what the civic national identity could practically shape and inform. The civic Welsh identity understood as a national identity by the policy actors could never in actuality be wholly realised at the nationalism with a large N level when tax raising powers, foreign policy, media, international finance and banking and employment legislation were controlled by Westminster or in the case of the media international organisations. (For a thorough reflection on this issue, see Wyn Jones and Scully (2012)).

These realities are spoken of by my interviewees who in reflecting on the change in direction following Leighton Andrews appointment as Education Minister conclude that

The priorities have changed the economics have changed the the you know the election had been and gone the leadership had changed the priorities had changed so it’s (social justice) not gone by any means but it is a kind of empty rhetoric W3

You know that the UK government had a definition of child poverty in terms of financial measures…but because we didn’t have any control over benefit payments and taxation and so forth you know that was a tool that was not at our disposal W1

It makes us different from Scotland because I don’t think they feel that [downtrodden] they probably had much more of an identity because they’ve had so much autonomy W2
This tension between national identity through devolution, autonomy and the rise of transnational capitalism is of course not only a challenge facing Wales. At the wider level Wodak et al (1999) capture my thinking here in their assertion that, for Europe, one of the key challenges of our time is how to balance out the desire for the common globalised economic unit and the rise of national consciousness.

8.6 Wales - childhood wellbeing

The SEL conversation in Wales was developed from a very different model of the child to that operating in England. There is an absence of the deficit discourse and the regulate response (Oerton, 2014). See for example the following quote from W3:

_They’ve always had this notion it seems to me of across the border as childhood as threat and disruption and disorder and that may be a function of you know urbanisation going back who knows what but we’ve never really had that sense of our children as somehow as a threat_ W3
As Drakeford (2010) recognises, in Wales the state was concerned with how it could improve the lives of children through changes in the system rather than focusing on the individual and remedying their perceived deficits. As Andrews (2015) acknowledges, the early years of the Assembly saw children positioned at the heart of the policy process through the introduction of a children’s rights agenda grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989). The child in Wales was understood and viewed through the citizenship and rights agenda and as such was located within a being frame whereby children were recognised as social actors in their own right (Watson et al., 2012). At the policy level this was ‘putting the citizen centre-stage’ (WAG, 2004: 9). The powerful force of this social practice is illuminated by my interviewees’ thoughts.

*I think from the point of view of children there was the United Nations report and the convention of the rights of the child* W1

*At one level as simple as you know who feels it knows it if you want to expertise on the lived experience of childhood go and talk to children* W3

*But it’s actually about taking a proactive approach to ensure that young people are helped to engage. ...because I don’t think the rights agenda is just about young people choosing it’s about them being enabled* W2

*I think the, you know, I see that in a sense, that you know, that young people do have a voice. They can be listened to, they can be taken serious, that they can affect services* W4
At the level of discursive practice the above quotes reveal a transformative, process-driven understanding of the child. The child is ontologically located as having agency, a knowing subject, and as such is a competent, contributory, agent within the SEL conversation. This understanding is reflected in the text which speaks of participation and movement (talk, engagement, voice, listen). This approach reflects the community level, consensual and cooperative, made in Wales, social practice identified in RQ1 and RQ2. Ultimately in contrast to England the child in Wales was connected to the social and political body (Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987) rather than being located in the English, free floating, individually experienced (and managed) body. This Welsh understanding of the child is captured by my interviewees, particularly W2 and W3:

*one of the biggest single differences between the way in which children and young people are understood in the political process in Wales is that they are understood primarily or primarily as citizens* W3

*So they’ve [the Assembly] done, they’ve been a lot more proactive in working with their young people to say are we meeting your needs?* W2

Through discursively positioning the child at the centre of the Assembly’s vision the government constituted (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) a version of childhood that defined how the child should be understood (and where it should be located) whilst also constituting the concept as it repeated and enacted this understanding across the policy field and into the public discourse. I believe this was a version of the child operating in the service of the Welsh civic national identity. My thinking here is that at the social level, through the child’s connectivity to the social and political body, the WAG systems of knowledge shaped the social identity of the child in order that its lived experiences i) reflected the made in Wales discourse ii) perpetuated the made in Wales discourse. To illustrate this I invite the reader to consider the following post devolution education experiences of the Welsh child in contrast
to the English child; the absence of school league tables, the absence of national strategies, localised policy responses, community driven schooling, the removal of Standard Assessment Tests (SATS) between 2002 and 2005, the retention of the further education Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and access to free higher education. I would contend that the Assembly was shaping and making a taken for granted *made in Wales* education experience for children in Wales. An experience that increased the potential viability of the dominant Welsh question of the time; the sustainability of a post devolution, communitarian, identity. The following quotes from W1 and W2 reflect my thinking here as well as recognising one of the structural forces at play:

*[It was about] society being a better place for everybody than for the individuals. But also for society collectively if everybody is making this contribution* W1

*Wales needs to look after its young people better than England to stop them leaving* W2

As the Welsh child was understood (and utilised) as having agency and a voice in the nation building process it was inevitable that this epistemological position directly impacted on the policy and practice of childhood wellbeing in Wales. As W1 acknowledges the thinking and understanding of the child resulted in the Assembly seeking a different methodological approach to the development of wellbeing policy:

*We had to develop er a methodology to assess you know how we could er address this children’s agenda* W1

As I have discussed in the literature review the dominant methodological approach to SEL was and still is the objective list model (OLT) whereby adult experts populate, describe and measure what wellbeing should look like in children (Watson and Emery, 2010). This is
a process that Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) refer to as forming a ‘slippery elision of constructs’ (p. 16) and one that, as I have noted in previous publications, takes little account of children’s lived experiences due to the majoritarian nature of its approach (Watson et al., 2012). For the Assembly, the OLT route was problematic for, by its nature, it reduces the agency of the child, shapes and limits the actions and possibilities of the child and presupposes that the child is lacking in the skills and qualities the adult desires them to have. Moreover it is an objective approach that would, if applied to the young people of Wales, contradict the subjective agent identity so valued to the service of the national identity.

For the first two Assemblies the alternative to the English OLT model was a made in Wales, process driven, localised version of SEL. This model was built on a relational and subjective understanding of the child and sat comfortably with the clear red water social practice in operation. For my interviewees childhood wellbeing, through SEL, is filtered through the red water lens. SEL as a programme is located in the community rather than the classroom and it is to process and transformation that the policy actors turn to rather than the measurement and gathering of individual skills. Again I would argue that this shaping of SEL was in the service of the greater made in Wales’s national identity rather than the morality politics in England of fixing individual deficits:

*I think it’s about enabling young people to discuss their wellbeing*

W2

*It’s [SEL] that feeling of being um secure in one’s place in a family in a community um having a sense of agency and capacity to act independently um having some being author of your own biography as opposed to being a character in somebody else’s script*

W3

*For me it’s [SEL] always about the other things that we should be looking at and looking at how to develop - not only measuring - b- measuring bit for me was, well it’s interesting. But the other side of it is actually there’s a whole set of programmes and things that young people could do that can really help them develop far beyond what er school, the rigid school systems can*

W4
Yet though approaching SEL (and much of education) in this subjective, inclusive and relational manner the Assembly was reliant upon the necessary people being given the necessary time to fulfil this plan, a point succinctly made by W1:

*I think the issue with that agenda mind you again is that that you know particularly from the wellbeing of children. It is a long term agenda. You know and you’re not going to see a real return on that probably for ten fifteen years. You’ve just got to keep the faith W1*

The problem with this was such an investment can only ever be partly guaranteed and even then, only when a favourable climate exists and the government has full autonomy to enact legislation. This was not the case with the Assembly and I would ask the reader to consider once more that perhaps this route was adopted through the Assembly acting as though the big N of nationalism was in place rather than the reality of the small n of devolution in practice. One could conclude that in reality the neoliberal education system emanating from Westminster was always going to ensure that its smaller neighbour was nudged back into line once equality of outcome (rather than the thin version of equality of opportunity) began to dominate the New Labour in Wales’s agenda.

### 8.7 Summary

My findings indicate that the reshaping of national identity (and thereby the reimagining of history and tradition) in England and Wales during the New Labour period was a powerful social force that shaped and drove the SEL communicative event through three particular orders of discourse; the citizen/consumer debate, the social justice/social exclusion discourse and the location and understanding of the child.

At the first level the citizen/consumer discourse directly shaped the land of the imagined that SEL could be thought of and understood in. In England this meant that SEL
was created in the service of the globalised free market. It was one could argue a tool of new managerialism utilised to transform the thinking and doing of the children of the English working classes and ultimately shape governable consumers free from the shackles of an outdated collective memory of public and collective traditions. Of course at the heart of this lies a glowing contradiction for the valued system of knowledge that SEL sold was in fact state driven and monolithic the exact opposite of the free market ‘choice’ thinking it was perpetuating.

Conversely in Wales the SEL communicative event was symptomatic of the citizen shaping, civic, Welsh identity so powerful in the early Assemblies. This was a land of the imagined where the voice of poets and the heavy weight of past defeats spoke loudly. SEL was not a national educational programme in Wales partly because the national education programme, I would contend, was the reshaping of Welsh children to serve a post devolution made in Wales nation. One could conclude that for both England and Wales SEL was a social engineering function albeit one with very different routes and outcomes. One route, England, was in the embrace of the neoliberal economic order whilst the Welsh route was attempting to mitigate the negative forces of the same neoliberal economic order.

The second element to consider is the social justice/social exclusion distinction. This was a commanding discourse at both the level of policy thinking and policy activity. In England much of the SEL discourse was located in and understood through an acceptance of the social exclusion agenda. Through adopting this position the English SEL policymakers could only ever work from a performative, deficit model of the child with a remit to repairing the child in order to be included in the globalised market place. Alternatively the social justice discourse in Wales created an inclusive, non-prescriptive, policy remit ensuring that whatever SEL was in Wales it was not a national handbook of directions for how to enter the middle classes. Although it was perhaps some rather naïve directions for entering a socially
just nirvana. From a Faircloughian perspective the social exclusion/social justice frames were quintessentially how SEL was produced, distributed and consumed across each of the home nations.

Finally how each nation understood and located the child and thereby notions of childhood wellbeing cannot be underestimated. In England the child was worked on through the notion of the individually experienced body, essentially another commodity to be shaped, formed and moved (Foucault, 1995) in preparation for the international marketplace (Dahlstedt et al., 2011). Wellbeing was too often conflated with the absence of economic success and opportunity resulting in a reductionist, individualistic notion of childhood wellbeing (Watson et al., 2012). This was the land of ‘every child for themselves’ where a dose of SEAL was the response to social, economic and cultural anxieties.

In Wales the transformative, citizen-shaping discourse ensured that the child could only ever be understood as a participatory equal. A citizen with agency and one with whom connectedness to the social and political body were as necessary as the individually experienced body. The Assembly recognised in both policy and practice that the nation building discourse required an understanding of childhood wellbeing beyond the docile, limited, version operational in England. The result of this understanding was that by including young people in the SEL conversation the Assembly created, albeit unsuccessfully, a moment in time where SEL was a subjective, relational and contextualised experience.
9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has been the story of two journeys. The first journey is that of the SEL policy discourse operating in England and Wales during the New Labour period. That is the ideologically infused discursive claims to truth and value which underpinned the rhetoric and substance of the SEL conversation. The second journey has been mine. It is both the story of becoming a doctor and a SEL researcher, originally part of the New Labour policy community in both England and Wales, laterally located as a critical education researcher at the Manchester Institute of Education. It is the present outcome of these two journeys, often intertwined, continually evolving, that forms the basis for this conclusion. In attending to the language and rhetoric of SEL education policy this thesis has shone a light on a particularly unreported field of education policy and in doing so has revealed important knowledge (Apple et al., 2011).

I shall start this conclusion by presenting the contribution to knowledge. In doing this I shall be drawing across and speaking to the work of those scholars so key to this thesis, such as Humphrey (2013) Fairclough (2005) and Ecclestone (2007) as well as the theoretical constructions supporting this study in particular the thinking, writing and activism of Apple (2007), Ball (2012) and Gunter (2014). Following this I shall turn to my personal journey and reflect on personal processes and their influence on both the research process, my interpretation and inquiry, my reflexivity. Finally I shall draw together the knowledge and learning developed across both the empirical academic research journey and my personal journey in order to present a series of recommendations for future research in this field.
9.2 Contribution to knowledge

From its inception this thesis due to its unique position of investigating the talk of SEL policy actors, in England and Wales, through the lens of CDA has stretched and challenged the SEL community within which it was conceived. As my literature demonstrates there have been very few critical studies of SEL in England and Wales and those that have been undertaken (Burman, 2008; Humphrey, 2009; Ecclestone, 2007) have tended towards critically unpicking the impact of SEAL (in England) rather than investigating how and why particular discursive forces created the said initiative. Furthermore my literature review identifies an absence of any home international SEL studies in this field.

This unique positioning has seen me having to tread at times a precarious path between the SEL community wherein this study is located and the critical education community whom supported and provided the theoretical and conceptual tools necessary to bring critical theory to the SEL field. I would contend that, as Fairclough (2005) considers discursive practice to be the bridge between text and social practice, this thesis is itself a discursive bridge, one produced and constructed to mediate between the language of SEL and the social practices inherent to and shaping of education policy and national identity. In bringing the eye of critical theory to the language of SEL, I have been told to ‘back off, verbally abused at an SEL conference and received confrontational emails from high profile English SEL practitioners. Conversely I have also been warmly welcomed, listened to rich detailed stories and received much correspondence personally thanking me for critically unpicking and opening new conversations within the SEL community.
9.2.1 Summary of the study

The study had four main aims:

1. To be an interruptive act – to investigate, question and critique the dominant neoliberal discourse that has shaped the SEL conversation in order to reveal injustice and power inequalities;

2. To reveal the lived experiences of the policy actors connected to the SEL conversation in England and Wales;

3. To describe and interpret the relationship between the SEL discourse and a politically charged education system;

4. To explain how SEL was imagined and enacted through New Labour policy actors in England and Wales.

This study is the first in the UK to present a home international analysis of the SEL discourse as well as the first study to utilise critical discourse analysis as an approach for undertaking a critical investigation of the rapidly changing and extremely contentious SEL field (Wigelsworth, 2010). My thesis adds to the existing SEL conversation but offers a new direction for that conversation to take. It examines something that we know, SEL, but examines it differently both through its approach, CDA, and its intention to reveal the forces of power shaping the discourse (Thomson, 2015). As such it presents a unique contribution to the fields of SEL and critical education theory in a number of ways. These can be distinguished as a progression in i) how we understand the relationship between language and political ideology in England and Wales during the New Labour years ii) the complexities and contradictions inherent to policy activity and policy actors in contemporary times iii)
how SEL has been co-opted into the service of the neoliberal marketplace and finally iv) methodological advancement.

9.2.2 The relationship between language and political ideology

Through my analysis of policy actors’ talk and the SEL literature this thesis has explicitly demonstrated and built on Fairclough’s (2000) belief that that, in current times, policy is done in and through ‘discourse driven’ ideas of social change. In both England and Wales, although the policy took different routes, the foundation in both countries was a limited version of social change constructed through a specifically located discursive practice. This discursive practice, neoliberal entrepreneur in England, social democratic citizen in Wales, intimately entwined language, knowledge and power, in the service of the dominant state actors. This dominant discursive practice was consistently repeated by my interviewees who in turn produced and distributed this through both text (SEL programmes) and talk (media, papers, conferences). This process was in England and Wales powerful enough to get inside people’s heads (George, 1999) and my findings, particularly through examining collocation, illuminate this process and the power of governance through the identity forming, limited, language employed.

Further supporting my findings here is what I would term in England the consistent whispers of interdiscursivity and intertextuality. These two forces of discursive practice, grounded in Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence* text, as drawn on by Weare and Gray (2003), and the language he used, placed English SEL in bondage to an atomised free floating neoliberal understanding of the emotions as performativity. This utilisation and repetition of Goleman’s thinking resulted in SEL in England being spoken of and understood mostly in terms of economic aspiration as a political ideology. My thinking here supports and
progresses that of Ball (2007) who, in *Education Plc*, contends that discourses maintain credibility through repetition. This study not only evidences this but locates and reveals the tools through which this occurs.

The power of ideologically driven discourse is particularly illuminated in this study through its revelation of how the collective memory was drawn on in differing ways in England and Wales. My research, shaped by Apple’s (2010) thinking, presents in Wales the lived experiences of a specific, deeply emotive, collective memory being drawn on and utilised in the service of a political project. In addition it also reveals how this collective memory played a powerful role in stranding Wales in an unsustainable position and ultimately providing a space through which the neoliberal advocates could attack what was termed outdated and regressive thinking. Alternatively the notion of the collective memory in England, specifically related to English education, proved to be elusive and for me, this important finding speaks powerfully to the forces of a free floating globalised *Education Inc.* (Ball, 2012).

Throughout this thesis I have drawn heavily on the thinking of Apple (2007) and Ball’s (2008) work particularly in relation to private sector participation in public education, the intentions and activity of the global education marketplace and the opportunities and spaces available to challenge the hegemonic neoliberal, *There Is No Alternative*, modernisation discourse operating across education. As *Global Education Inc* (Ball, 2012) gathers steam (Apple, 2012), this thesis tells the story of a counter hegemonic movement, grounded in national tradition and identity, that for a short period of time presented an alternative democratic and transformative model of education. If, as Apple states, education has become only about jobs (2012) then the actions of the policy actors in Wales clearly demonstrated a different and deeper approach. That this practice could occur in a period of heightened globalisation in a country with limited national powers and bordered by one of the
most neoliberal education systems in Europe is itself a story that demands parity with Apple’s discussions on Porto Alegre in Brazil and other such sites contesting the neoliberal agenda.

Further illuminating the relationship between language and power is this study’s unpicking and illumination of the socio-politically located term ‘evidence’. In investigating the application of this term in the SEL conversation, both through the texts (SEAL) and the talk of the English policy actors my study, building on the work of Du Toit (2012), has illustrated how, in the case of SEL, evidence was never a neutral term but rather a construction and voicing of the neoliberal forces shaping English education at this time. I would strongly contend that for SEL, the term evidence is an ideological function designed to create a normative understanding of contentious activity and thus ensure there is no alternative. Evidence should be approached with great caution.

If this thesis has demonstrated how in England language and political ideology worked in the service of the neoliberal agenda, this study also illuminates how the same forces can operate in the service of a social democratic nation building process. In Wales, the attempted creation of a socially just civic society with a nationalist (with a small n) rhetoric, utilised language as political ideology yet in doing so turned rather than to the globalised economic agenda instead, in an attempt to fix past wounds, utilised an explanatory language of community, collectivism and cooperation framed within a version of Wales tuned into the collective struggles of the 1980s. That this discursive strategy was ultimately defeated by the neoliberal modernisation agenda speaks to me of the dangers of looking backwards as a response to the forces of neoliberalism rather than allowing the imagination to think beyond neoliberalism.
The complexities and contradictions inherent to neoliberal policy activity and actors

The stories of the English and Welsh SEL policy actors form the heart of this thesis and as such, address a clear gap in the SEL literature which has so far focused upon the analysis of in school programme implementation (Humphrey et al., 2010) and through this lens, the experiences of teachers and students. The absence of the policy actors’ voices in current SEL scholarship is, I contend, due in part to two factors that the policy actors themselves highlight as powerful forces in the SEL conversation, namely politics and money. Politics in as much as we have, since the demise of the SEAL programme, seen two governments take office with far less interest in SEL as a universal whole school intervention, it is therefore unsurprisingly of little interest to current education leaders to understand the how and why of a previous regime’s policy. Similarly for many of the key figures involved in the English SEAL programme, they are either still in politically sensitive positions, and therefore reluctant to talk of the recent past, or alternatively have moved into the world of private SEL consultancy where money and financial interests can impede the willingness to speak about previous work. In both cases, drawing the policy actors into the field of SEL scholarship is complicated further by the perceived failure of the English SEAL programme. That this thesis has overcome many of these barriers and directly spoken to and gathered the experiences of key actors in England and Wales is a significant contribution to the field.

In examining the position and experiences of the English and Welsh policy actors my work has been strongly informed by the thinking of Stephen Ball (2010) and his writing on New Labour policy networks. In particular, Ball highlights how policy was developed across ‘on message’ multiple sites and players through a politicised discourse dominated by a paradigm of economic competitiveness. This study starkly illuminates in England the reality
of these sites, specifically the dominance of Southampton, and how they worked together as well as the individual actors’ experiences of developing SEL policy in this period of highly politicised discourse, where language was tightly controlled from the centre and regulated through the new managerial tool of the National Strategies. In particular my findings in England highlight a complex story of contested identity and ownership of SEL, resulting in a clear gap between the rhetoric and the reality of the policy actors interviewed.

In England the corraling of localised SEL initiatives and localised actors through an ideologically driven management tool (National Strategies) and centralised discursive practice resulted in a nationalised SEL programme that due to its limiting frame ultimately isolated and frustrated those very policy actors that produced and distributed the message. However, I also believe that caution is required here for one must also consider that if SEAL had been as successful as those policy actors shaping it believed it would be, would they still have expressed discomfort with the standardised OLT programme that resulted? This gap or contradiction between what the English policy actors said they wanted to do and the actuality of what they did is, I believe, a discernible space worthy of further investigation.

I also wish to draw attention to the experiences of the Welsh policy actors and principally the period when Leighton Andrews became Education Minister. Prior to this the policy actors had, in their own words, worked collaboratively and inclusively as a network of education producers shaping localised, *made in Wales*, policy. As Andrews enters the frame this socially democratic, social justice discourse (the land of Clear Red Water) is judged through a neoliberal standards and measurement frame as a failure and quickly dismantled. Yet, it is evident that the ideology and discourse operating pre-Andrews was not intended to serve a neoliberal education agenda; indeed, this agenda was aggressively refuted by the First Minister, Rhodri Morgan (2002). There is a clear and bold contradiction at the heart of this process for one cannot critique a cat for not being a dog. This thesis therefore poses the
question as to how this judgement of failure was legitimised in Wales and in whose interests this was in.

Finally, I believe it is pertinent to draw from the policy findings one of the key tensions inherent to both the English and Welsh approaches to SEL development and speak to the current research being undertaken by my colleagues on SEL implementation and design at MIE. This study distinguishes that the English top down, control and command policy route left little space for creative, localised and relational forms of SEL practice to be progressed. Alternatively the bottom up, producerist, model developed across Wales through its lack of national control and command processes resulted in a space that was perhaps too vague and open ended for versions of effectiveness and success to be clarified and learnt from. Clearly parallels are to be drawn here with the work currently being undertaken by Humphrey, Wigelsworth and Lendrum (2012; 2015) on the PATHS curriculum and questions of scripted, control and command, models of SEL and implementation generally.

9.2.4 How SEL has been co-opted into the service of the neoliberal marketplace.

This study has sought to understand and investigate how SEL policy was developed and done in England and Wales through a critical analysis of the discourse shaping and driving it. My findings provide rich implications for future research in this field and it is to how we approach the study of SEL and understand it as a worthwhile concept that I now turn with specific reference to the work of Humphrey (2013) and Ecclestone (2011).

I would contend that a key finding of this study is that how we know SEL, understand and speak about it, particularly in England and latterly in Wales, has been powerfully defined and shaped by the US socio-political practice of the early 1990s and specifically the combined forces of the intelligence debate, the rise of risk management and audit culture. All
of these are key performativity components (aspiration, self-management and measurement) of the neoliberal agenda. These forces or components inevitably turned their gaze to the child just as the self-esteem movement was finally waning. What these forces saw, through a neoliberal lens, was a child at risk, one diminished and lacking in the skills and abilities necessary to function within the neoliberal economic sphere. I would contend that this deficit model of the child was in fact a neoliberal necessity and when a fully formed representation of the shaped neoliberal child appeared in Goleman’s, *Emotional Intelligence* it tapped into a national moral panic (Humphrey, 2013) and set fast the mould for how we understand SEL and specifically its purpose; SEL was the inoculation to repair our damaged children.

The above supposition is directly supported by my English interviewees who all bought into and further produced and distributed this deficit, damaged, model of the child albeit through the very English lens of class. In England we saw this diagnosis and intervention strategy enacted through SEAL. Yet vitally in Wales where the neoliberal influence was weak and pushing against a strong social democratic and collective agenda the model of the child presented had indelible rights, operated with agency and most importantly was viewed as a contributing and competent citizen. This finding speaks to the work of Ecclestone (2004) and her thinking on childhood agency. Furthermore I would argue that the outcome of this revelation is that the dominant ideologically shaped version of the child in operation is significant for it dictates the version of SEL presented to or done to the child.

One could argue that the absence of an Objective List Model of SEL in Wales was considerably influenced by how the child was viewed. This is a powerful finding for it directs our thinking to consider that particularly in regard to SEL implementation research, can one simply look at the programme without investigating and understanding the socio-political location and shaping of the programme. Current implementation research may well indicate and evidence which SEL programmes are successful but that does not tell us who has defined
the success, why that particular programme is being delivered nor the model of the child the
programme is intending to shape.

Pursuing my thinking on what one could term the origins of SEL and speaking
directly to the work of Burman, this thesis has presented strong empirical evidence, through
the talk of the English policy actors and the alternative talk of the Welsh policy actors, that
the psychologizing of our inner emotional selves is driven in the service of neoliberal
political ideology whereby rich and complex relational human characteristics are presented
back to the subject as measurable and atomised deficits requiring self-regulation or the SEL
inoculation. Interestingly supporting the thinking of Ecclestone (2012b), this study notes that
this diagnosis avoids difficult questions regarding structural issues, state responsibility or
moral and ethical challenges.

9.2.5 Methodological advancement

The field of social and emotional learning, as the name indicates, places high value on
the social aspects of life and the emotional sphere. Indeed one could argue that the interest in
SEL is in part driven by recognition, as in CDA, that language is socially constructed and
socially embedded. It is therefore somewhat surprising that the research methods applied to
understand and progress this field have so far not approached it through a method that is
grounded in and specifically designed to shine a light on and give voice to the social and
emotional processes and values inherent to the subject. In choosing CDA I was very
conscious of this fit and I would contend that the depth of findings, level of criticality,
illustrations of power and insights to the policy process contained within this thesis point to
the benefits of bringing CDA to the SEL conversation.
At the broader level in utilising Fairclough’s Three Dimensional model, I have presented a systematic approach with a level of depth and rigour often absent in previous CDA studies and in doing so this responds directly to the application critiques of Widdowson (1998), Martin (2000) and others. However I must also acknowledge that in ensuring all dimensions of Fairclough’s framework were systematically pursued, I placed very challenging time and resource pressures on my work. Looking to and across all of the dimensions, ensuring interconnectivity, was greatly enriching for understanding and applying the data yet it was a considerable task both mentally and physically. Moreover, in undertaking this process, one can understand why so many journal articles and book chapters present a thin sliced version of CDA for to give a full and broad picture would require rarely offered publishing space.

Finally a common criticism of CDA is that political and social ideologies are readily projected onto the data rather than “revealed” (Rogers, 2004). Yet as I note in the following section, the actual opposite occurred with this thesis whereby the data shaped and reformed my own political ideologies resulting in me occupying a different political space between the start and end of this thesis.

9.3 Reflexivity

My own journey has been well detailed within this thesis and I have throughout attempted to engage in a level of reflexivity that adds depth and credibility to this study. One of the key and consistent challenges throughout the doing of a thesis, one so concerned with power, language, identity and the emotions, has been the realisation and management of these said forces in regard to my own journey. To illustrate some of the challenges faced here and
how they have influenced the doing of this thesis I wish to draw the reader’s attention to two pertinent factors.

9.3.1 Location

This thesis has been built on a demonstrable belief that Wales is a different country to England. The field work for this thesis was shared equally between England and Wales and much of the early chapters were written jointly in Manchester, England and Caernarfon, Wales. However when it came to the data analysis and findings and discussion the majority of this was done in Wales. With this in mind I raise the question as to whether the process of undertaking the data analysis and writing the findings for this study in Wales could have impacted on my interpretation of the data. I am a strong advocate of the need for physical context to be given greater value within the field of SEL programmes based on the belief that physical context can and does shape our interpretation of the world we operate in. Caernarfon is a town with a very strong Welsh ‘civic’ identity with, at just under 90%, one of the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in the country (Williams, 2009). The considerable time I spent here and the relationships I have in the local community and the wider Welsh community were certainly in my mind an influencing factor yet not in the way one may imagine. My response was in fact to consciously dig deeper into the complexities of Welsh identity and this led me to the writing of Williams (1985) and Aughey et al (2011) both of whom offered a much more complex and nuanced reflection of Wales and Welsh identity.
9.3.2 Language

This study has demonstrated how the words we speak are grounded and often in the use of a myriad of deeper and broader discourses. The language used for this study was English and that by its nature poses questions for a thesis concerned with language and power and investigating these factors in two countries with two different languages. English is the dominant language in Wales yet this is far from straightforward with certain districts in Wales demonstrating higher levels of Welsh language use than English whilst other districts demonstrate mixed usage (Lasagabaster et al., 2007). I do not speak Welsh, although I am attempting to learn, so unless I had bought in an interpreter there was no an option for me as an independent singular researcher to conduct a bilingual study. This is an unfortunate but realistic position as one could contend that if I had conducted my interviews with those Welsh policy actors who spoke Welsh as their first language I may well have uncovered a different version of the story presented. I feel it is important to note that for my Welsh speaking interviewees they had to mentally translate what I was asking and their responses and there is no doubt that certain content will be lost in translation. Finally it would be naïve for this study to not recognise that there is a power struggle in Wales between the use of English and its impact on the Welsh language and wider notions of Welsh identity.

9.4 Resistance and positionality

A direct outcome of undertaking this thesis has been a marked change in my positionality. This thesis is a discourse of resistance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), challenging both the commodification (Timimi, 2011) and governance (Dahlstedt et al., 2010) of children’s social and emotional states and the processes whereby the market place and
‘common sense’ has captured the SEL discourse. However my understanding of the shape of this resistance and the complexities have grown markedly as I have understood my data and seen it reveal powerful stories. I now have a greater understanding of the complexities of how policy is formed and the contingent human emotions connected to this process. In England I look far more gently and with greater empathy upon the actions of the English policy makers. Crucially in Wales I see a different perspective to the policy story from when I started. Whereas previously I had been of a mind that the social democratic foundations laid by the early assembly were attacked by the neoliberal forces operating within the education marketplace I now can see that the social democratic positioning of Wales connected to a ‘frozen’ political collective memory was in fact a failure and weakness of Welsh policymaking and one that encouraged the critical attention of the neoliberal forces. The transformative elements of this process can be best captured in a recent conversation about SEL in Wales with my supervisor who at the end of the conversation stated that looking back to the start of my Doctoral studies he would never envisioned I would have been able to critically deconstruct Welsh SEL activity in the manner that I now pursue.

9.5 Recommendations for future research

9.5.1 SEL - the imagination and the gaze

This thesis has illuminated the dominance of a particular performative (Ball, 2008) version of US neoliberal thinking on the English SEL imagination and the power this thinking has had in shaping the English SEAL programme. Through unpicking the intertextuality, interdiscursivity and the broader discursive practice of measurement and risk
management this study has demonstrated how SEL in England was, once government gaze was placed on it, limited as to how it could be understood and enacted. I would contend that a key challenge for future SEL research is for the SEL community to investigate how SEL could look different? In answer to this I propose at this level the following tasks.

The gaze of SEL professionals and practitioners needs to critically focus on UK and European based initiatives. It needs to engage with and support locally based SEL initiatives and for the imagination to be open to forms of SEL that are not built on the OLT model and defined through measurement and commodification of the emotions. To free SEL from the constraints it has found itself in my study recommends that educational research explore understandings of SEL that are contextual, subjective and relational. In essence I encourage the SEL community to locate their understanding and application of SEL within the communities they are serving be that a metropolitan centre in England or a rural community in Wales. In undertaking this activity the SEL community would be addressing and challenging the English centralised, control and command, discourse, one working in the service of a neoliberal education system (Apple, 2007) whilst also building on the specific collaborative and children’s rights strengths of the Welsh experience. In pursuing this task I have been working with the EU North of England Health partnership, Cumbria University, Leeds College, Tallinn University and the University of La Laguna on a four site pilot SEL programme that is coproduced with young people (aged 16-19), located in the communities in which they reside and reflects their lived experiences. This project theorises SEL as a tool of community progression and transformation (Ball, 2008; Apple 2009) rather than a tool of management and it is to this thinking that I direct the SEL community.
9.5.2 SEL - implementation research

My findings from both England and Wales indicate that SEL has been located and in the service of a particular politicised discourse. In revealing these forces and demonstrating how they have shaped what we know as SEL I would contend that policy makers, practitioners and researchers need to ask deeper critical questions of the SEL models presented and in whose service they are operating in. SEL implementation research is a particularly growing field at present (Humphrey, 2013) as the SEL community investigates issues of programme fidelity, dosage and reach. This study poses two key recommendations for future implementation research. Firstly that before implementation activity begins important questions need asking regarding, why is this programme (and not others) on the table? Whose interests does this programme serve? And whose voices and values are contained and reproduced within it? Secondly, in my call for co-produced localised models of SEL to be encouraged, that remove the model from the constraints of the OLT approach, the implementation field will need to develop different models for the assessment of implementation than that currently offered by implementation science which tends to rely on interventions being heavily prescribed such that one can assess fidelity levels etc – these are unlikely and I would contend unnecessary in a localised, from the ground up model.

I encourage those working on SEL implementation research to investigate the discursive and social practice shaping the programmes they are investigating and move beyond evidencing and measuring the effectiveness of the text (model) presented. This thesis invites SEL implementation researchers to build on the thinking of Ball et al (2012) and add greater depth, texture and thickness to both the purpose and creative process of their investigations.
This study has demonstrated the valuable voice a diverse range of policymakers have to contribute towards the contemporary SEL conversation. However through allowing a politicised model of SEL to dominate the English and Welsh agenda the voices of those creating and producing the model are often lost as the political master’s change. This loss of knowledge and experience diminishes the SEL field and I believe this multitude of voices need drawing into an open and critical conversation. My own experiences as a critical secretary (Apple, 2010) in building this thesis have highlighted many of the tensions inherent to developing a wide ranging, critical, conversation yet as SEL advocates it strikes me as somewhat ironic that a community so focused on the social and emotional development of others is at times parochial and fearful of challenge to the dominant order. If we are to take SEL into new imaginative spaces those with policy experience and knowledge systems need to be creatively engaged with and encouraged to share. As a research community tasked with developing SEL the stronger we can a shine a light into the messy and contested interactions of policy activity and policymakers the greater our understanding and resources become (Ball, 2008). To this end I would contend that this studies use of CDA as both approach and theory provides a credible framework for building stronger relationships between policy actors and researchers as well as an enabling tool for understanding how policy makers construct an understanding of their activity. My thinking here and in particular the usefulness of CDA in building collaborative conversations is developed and explored in my contribution to a special issue of Education Policy Analysis Archives and my chapter in a forthcoming edited book *Discourse Analysis, A Third Generation of Policy Research.*
9.6 Closing statement

This thesis presents an important contribution to the SEL conversation. Furthermore, through the application of CDA, it also provides a credible methodological approach through which a critical contribution to the SEL conversation can be progressed. I started this research in 2010 as the New Labour era came to a close and have completed it in 2016 with a Conservative majority government in power. Yet as the recent high profile policy activity regarding character education (Ecclestone, 2012b) and children’s mental health (The Guardian, 2015) has demonstrated, although the discourse has changed, the content or solution is still located in versions of the SEL OLT deficit model. It is essentially old wine in new bottles, much as I have argued Self Esteem and SEL were. If we are indeed witnessing a new political crisis, or moral panic, regarding children’s mental health, this study has shown that for a previous political crisis, namely behaviour and achievement (in England), the SEAL solution administered did not work. Why therefore should anything be different this time when using the same thinking and understanding?
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## 11 Appendices

### 11.1 Appendix 1: Welsh and UK education policy comparative timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First official welsh medium schools</td>
<td>1940s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944 Education Act - tripartite system grammar, secondary modern and technical schools, made way for comprehensives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of Welsh Office</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster transfers responsibility for Welsh primary and secondary schools to Welsh Office</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster transfers responsibility for Welsh primary and secondary schools to Welsh Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83% of secondary pupils in England and Wales are in comprehensives (Ball, page 70)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83% of secondary pupils in England and Wales are in comprehensives (Ball, page 70)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Reform Act (introduction of grant maintained schools, league tables, national curriculum, key stages)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair promises electoral and legislative devolution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour party briefing documents lists 47 education related policies developed by New Labour since 1997 … (Ball, p 86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Assembly for Wales (legislative) created (Welsh office disbanded and powers transferred to NAW)</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 First elections held; the National Assembly starts work; Government of Wales Act 1998 comes into force</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of Wales Office - ‘Wales’ voice in Westminster, Westminster’s voice in</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of Wales Office - ‘Wales’ voice in Westminster, Westminster’s voice in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wales Jane Davidson appointed as first Education Minister</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League tables abolished in Wales</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England the white paper <em>Schools - achieving success</em> published</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wales <em>The Learning Country</em> published</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wales <em>Clear Red Water</em></td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales adopts UNHCR as basis of children’s policy</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor in Wales</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leighton Andrews appointed as Minister for Children, Education &amp; Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wales schooling still fully comprehensive</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>National vote on extended devolution powers Wales</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Welsh banding of secondary schools published, union opposition</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.2 Appendix 2: England and Wales – 2012 map of population density
11.3 Appendix 3: My SEL journey
11.4 Appendix 4: The knowledge, skills and understanding developed by the SEAL resource

Self-awareness

Self-awareness enables children to have some understanding of themselves. They know how they learn, how they relate to others, what they are thinking and what they are feeling. They use this understanding to organise themselves and plan their learning. (Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)

Knowing myself

- I know when and how I learn most effectively.
- I can take responsibility for my actions and learning.
- I feel good about the things I do well, and accept myself for who and what I am.
- I can recognise when I find something hard to achieve.

Understanding my feelings

- I can identify, recognise and express a range of feelings.
- I know that feelings, thoughts and behaviour are linked.
- I can recognise when I am becoming overwhelmed by my feelings.
- I know that it is OK to have any feeling, but not OK to behave in any way I feel like.

Managing feelings

In managing feelings, children use a range of strategies to recognise and accept their feelings. They can use this to regulate their learning and behaviour – for example managing anxiety or anger, or demonstrating resilience in the face of difficulty. (Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)

Managing how I express my feelings

- I can stop and think before acting.
- I can express a range of feelings in ways that do not hurt myself or other people.
- I understand that the way I express my feelings can change the way other people feel.
- I can adapt the way I express my feelings to suit particular situations or people.
Managing the way I am feeling

- I can calm myself down when I choose to.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my worries and other uncomfortable feelings.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my anger.
- I understand that changing the way I think about people and events changes the way I feel about them.
- I can change the way I feel by reflecting on my experiences and reviewing the way I think about them.
- I know that I can seek support from other people when I feel angry, worried or sad.
- I know what makes me feel good and know how to enhance these comfortable feelings.

Motivation

Motivation enables learners to take an active and enthusiastic part in learning. Intrinsically motivated learners recognise and derive pleasure from learning. Motivation enables learners to set themselves goals and work towards them, to focus and concentrate on learning, to persist when learning is difficult and to develop independence, resourcefulness and personal organisation. (Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)

Setting goals and planning to meet them

- I can set a challenge or goal, thinking ahead and considering the consequences for others and myself.
- I can break a long-term plan into smaller achievable steps, plan to overcome obstacles, set success criteria and celebrate when I achieve them.

Persistence and resilience

- I can choose when and where to direct my attention, concentrate and resist distractions for increasing periods of time.
- I know and can overcome some barriers to my learning such as feelings of boredom and frustration and know when to keep trying or try something different.
- I can bounce back after a disappointment or when I have made a mistake or been unsuccessful.
**Evaluation and review**

- I know how to evaluate my learning and use this to improve future performance.

**Empathy**

Being able to empathise involves understanding others; anticipating and predicting their likely thoughts, feelings and perceptions. It involves seeing things from another’s point of view and modifying one’s own response, if appropriate, in the light of this understanding. (Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)

**Understanding the feelings of others**

- I can recognise the feelings of others.
- I know that all people have feelings but understand that they might experience and show their feelings in different ways or in different circumstances.
- I can understand another person’s point of view and understand how they might be feeling.

**Valuing and supporting others**

- I value and respect the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values of other people.
- I can be supportive to others and try to help them when they want it.
- I know that my actions affect other people and can make them feel better or worse.

**Social skills**

Social skills enable children to relate to others, take an active part in a group, communicate with different audiences, negotiate, resolve differences and support the learning of others. (Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years – Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)

**Belonging to a community**

- I feel that I belong to and am valued in my class, school and community.
- I understand and accept my rights and responsibilities in school, and know how I can take responsibility for making the school a safe and fair place for everyone.
**Friendships and other relationships**

- I know how to be friendly – I can look and sound friendly, be a good listener, give and receive compliments and do kind things for other people.
- I recognise ‘put-downs’ and know how they affect people, so I try not to use them.
- I can make, sustain and break friendships without hurting others.

**Working together**

- I can work well in a group, cooperating with others to achieve a joint outcome.
- I can tell you what helps a group to work well together.

**Resolving conflicts**

- I can resolve conflicts to ensure that everyone feels positive about the outcome.

**Standing up for myself**

- I can be assertive when appropriate.

**Making wise choices**

- I can solve problems by thinking of all the options, identifying advantages and disadvantages, choosing a solution and evaluating it later on.
- I can make a wise choice with work or behaviour.
11.5 Appendix 5: First email for English interviews sent 24/05/11

Dear

I hope you don't mind me contacting you but a mutual friend of ours, XXXX, gave me the nod!

My name is Carl Emery and I am a writer and lecturer specialising in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). In this capacity I have for the past three years been working for the Welsh Assembly Government on researching and developing a national emotional wellbeing framework for Wales. Further to this with colleagues from Bristol University I have a book due out at Christmas entitled, a critical reflection on Childhood Wellbeing in the UK (Policy Press), a thorough review of the rise of wellbeing in school based education.

In order to add depth to my understanding of this field I am currently undertaking a PhD at Manchester University, the title of this is;

_The New Labour discourse of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) across schools in England and Wales as a universal intervention; a critical discourse analysis._

I am now at the stage where I shall be starting to interview the key voices and practitioners across the field and would love the opportunity to hear your involvement in this area. My interest is particularly in how programmes such as SEAL were developed and the discourse and conversations that were taking place at this time. I am planning on starting these interviews in September and sound out what people such as yourself think the key issues and debates were. Would it be possible to come and see you, lunch is on me!

I do hope you feel able to contribute to this research and please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best Wishes

Carl
### 11.6 Appendix 6: Interview Schedule

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in English Education**

- What do you understand by the term social and emotional learning? How do you talk about it?

- How has English/Welsh Educational policy developed SEL, what have been the key documents?

- What influences have been driving SEL in Education in E/W?

- National interests and identities

- What are the issues SEL is responding to?

- Understanding of the child

- What, in your opinion, is SEL hoping to achieve in E/W?

- Who do you think have been the key voices in the SEL conversation in E/W?

- Why do you think this debate has gathered such momentum?

- Where do you think the policy is going now and why?

- Is there anything you want to tell me about SEL in E/W that we may have missed?
11.7 Appendix 7: CDA - The coding process

Examples of analysing the interview transcripts. The following pictures are of one interview being colour coded prior to statements being cut out and placed in boxes.
Appendix 8: Transcript from interview with E4

- OK. Tape recorder’s on.
- Ok. My name’s XXXX. I’m XX years old and I live in XXXX. That’s all I’m going to tell you.
- Yeah. Nothing else … so, first question, XXXX, what do you understand by the term social and emotional wellbeing?
- … in what context inaudible (0.26) that question?
- I suppose with your hat on as XXXX
- Right.
- How would XXXX explain social and emotional wellbeing?
- Well, I suppose context. I was always rather diverse talking on wellbeing.
- Mmmm
- In terms, just looking at it in terms of the history. Why was I immersed in social and emotional wellbeing? I think because we come from a context where we … um think that understanding what’s going on emotionally is the key … and tsst my understanding of wellbeing, really, is that tsst … it’s having fluidity of emotional states. That’s a simple place to start. So, … tsst clearly if something happens to me tsst that is tragic, I will be sad and grieve. If something happens to me that is wonderful, I will be joyful
- Yeh
- And enjoy it … um … so I will experience life as about moving between a range of different emotional states, I won’t get stuck in any one. That’s um depression or false joy
- Yeah, yeah.
- Um, if there is such a thing. Um, so it’s really inaudible (1.47) being able to experience the world … as it is happening around me
- In many different ways. And of course, and what I think one … so what what what am I trying to deal with when I describe it in that way, I suppose it is the naïveté in thinking wellbeing
is about happy clappy inaudible (2.10). So in all of these discussions one is wary of being tarred with the sort of new agey brush.

- Yeh, yeh ... I’m really interested in, why did social and emotional wellbeing appear

- OK

- Because you must have seen that, you know, when XXXX was first, you know XXXX for instance

- Yuh

- Is it, I can’t remember

- Also, actually, do, do you also remember there’s a ... I had a bit of a set to with Guy Claxton

- Oh yeah yeah

- Because I quoted XXXX

- Yeh

- As saying ‘feel good, learn good’

- Yes, yeh

- And of course, Guy Claxton said it’s not like that, because actually you learn when you’re challenged, and you feel ‘this is really difficult’ and you’re uncomfortable and you work towards inaudible (3.07) comfortable, which is of course my point about

- Yuh

- Emotionally safe - This is hard and I feel uncomfortable, this is easy and I feel comfortable ... and of course what’s also not wellbeing is ‘This is hard, I’m giving up’ ... um ... ... so sort of not knowing that there’s another emotional state you can get to by working through it

- Yeh

- So a lot of people step out of discomfort and working hard

- Yeh

- They don’t embrace that this is a difficulty I can be in
• Yeh

• So ... I mean I'm thinking about Cameron and greater wellbeing

• Mmmm

• So I think a lot of the ... that sense from The New Economics Foundation

• Yeah

• That there is, I would suggest, suspect it came from their wellbeing indicators

• Yeh

• The need to find - which also is sort of part of what we're dealing with as well which is the need to find a different measure

• Mmmm

• For GDP

• Yuh, yuh

• Right, and in a sense of wellbeing captured ... ... I don't know inaudible (4.13) now talking about wellbeing?

• Yes, oh yeah

• Saying wellbeing is what happens, it what happens

• And I suppose actually the influence of Seligman

• Yeah

• You know positive psychology and that came ... that came as a wave, as you know my initial position was against

• Mmm ...

• Yeah
• I think it’s about texture

• How do you think English Educational Policy has developed this?

• Has developed the wellbeing thing?

• Well, not so much the wellbeing, the … let’s call it the emotional literacy, you know, how has that been developed in education?

• How did it emerge?

• Mmmm

• I mean, conversations with Peter Sharp … around why Southampton became interested in emotional lit, why - emotional literacy, at the same time as XXXX formed without having any contact initially

• Absolu- yeah, how did that happen?

• And so, and actually I don’t know whether, because I mean, I definitely … um XXXX formation predated the publication but not by very long of Goleman’s book on emotional intelligence

• Yeh

• Um … because we had our first meetings in 1994.

• Mmmm

• And that inaudible (6.08) in the context of education. And then there was - so that was 94, 95.Goleman probably came out in 95

• It was yeah

• … and then the first conference Peter Sharp came to was in 97 … … so what was happening at the time … well I, I’d known … for us the um … well, not the trigger, what we sort of jumped on was you know we were in the dog days of the Major regime

• Yeah

• The sense, the sense of social corrosion and society falling apart inaudible (6.46) specific about it, and a sense that New Labour rode really, a sense that society, its fabric, needed to be rebuilt, particularly in more deprived communities
• Yuh

• So there’s that element, isn’t there? This is a new regime that’s coming into power that needs to remake society

• Mmmm

• ... um ...

• Because society is?

• Yuh. I think that would be the sort of - so how does that then shape? So what was one of the first, the first - 97 arrives ... and one of the first announcements that I remember that sort of indicated the direction of travel was Healthy Living Centres, I think they were called Healthy Living Centres, Tessa Jowell?

• Yeh. Yeh.

• And Tessa Jowell was one of our sort of original supporters

• Right

• ... and of course the Healthy Living Centres, that evolved into um ... the Healthy Schools Programme ... and that was very clearly identified with Estelle Morris and Tessa Jowell

• That’s right, yeah

• ... and they were the people in the room. Not always concentrating very hard inaudible (7.58) but they were in the room

• Yup yup

• And I think Estelle- and certainly I mean when I was talking to my colleague Marilyn she said, you know ‘Weren’t we lucky to have Estelle Morris?’

• Mmmm

• Now I first heard Estelle Morris speak when they- a few weeks after the election The Gulbenkian launched a report on its parenting programme

• I know that. I know it, yeah

• And ... um and she came and did the launch
• Mmmm

• And she talked about what the government were going to do

• Yeah

• And how inaudible (8.31) she was going to be at the centre of it ... um

• Yeah. Because conflict resolution was mentioned in that report, and we used to reference that report

• OK ... so I think it was because we had Estelle Morris ... That things began to move in that direction

• So she was quite a key player

• I imagine so. Imagine you know somebody who, because Da- even David Blunkett, Da - I’m sure David Blunkett’s instincts were sort of anti-soft stuff you know, I mean that’s what his records say ... but what he was keen on was citizenship

• Mmmm

• So and there was an instinctual understanding that citizenship and PSHE were sort of conjoined at the hip basically

• Absolutely

• And then there was an endless debate about whether PSHE should be statutory as well as citizenship

• Yep

• That’s another thing

• I remember that one well, yeah, I do, yeah

• ... So citizenship was again, it was on that retexture inaudible (9.32)

• So the whole

• Rebuild society, we give people an awareness in school that they are citizens and they belong
• Yeh ... So really what we’re identifying is a citizenship agenda and the er ... tssst rebuilding society ag-

• Yuh. Rema- remaking its fabric

• Yeah, remaking its fabric yeah, and do you think it is fair to say that there were government ministers or civil servants at the time who saw the emotional literacy or emotional intelligence model as a response to that?

• ... Well I think it was included in the PSHE discussions

• Yuh

• John Ford was the

• Yuh

PHONE TONE: HELLO XXXX, SPEAKING, OH RIGHT - I WOULD - COULD I TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT IN AN HOUR? WOULD THAT BE POSSIBLE? YES. OK THANK YOU VERY MUCH CHEERS, OK, BYE (10.38)

• Okay ...

• Lets move on with this. The next question ties into this: what influences do you think were driving this?

• ... ... In terms of models?

• Mmmm

• ... ... I’m trying to think about it, um ... ... I mean I think that Simon Ritchie would be a good person to talk to ... inaudible (11.07) your list of people to talk to?

• Simon Ritchie?

• Yeah ...No. He inaudible He had a spell in education (11.12)

• OK. ...

• ... I mean isn’t it - rather like the discussion we were having earlier around think tanks
Mmmm

And ideas ... if there are enough .. tsst people saying the same thing

Yuh critical mass

At a certain point the government thinks it better pay some attention to it

Yes ... Especially when it’s the right people saying it, yeah

... and so there were just ... so clearly there were a lot of people saying we need more attention to parity in education tsst um and then there were groups like the Sowelu associates and the Jenny Moseleys and that who were saying you know this is another important part of education we’ve been working in schools ... so I think the government inaudible (12.02) appeared, and I mean, don’t know whether, I, it may be that just the fact that we had a conference called The XXXX in 1998 and then that it got observed and actually interestingly um and I recall, um ... at that 1998 conference we were asked to work with SELIG to run a conference on teacher health and wellbeing

Right. OK

Which as a strand in the emotional literacy

Yeah

No no in the Healthy Schools Programme so that was by the Department of Education and Health, so the fact that we were seen as the people to do it hadn’t really thought about this and um must have indicated that the conference itself

Yuh

Was seen as important thing, for civil servants to take note of

Yeah yeah

So you don’t whether ever whether this comes from them. But I remember John Hall would introduce me to other civil servants

Mmmm

... and say ‘they’re in this emotional literacy stuff which we’re hoping we can include in PSHE’

Right
So it’s sort, it’s the hoo- hoover aspect of um policy making

So, XXXX was very quickly, I mean from my own memory, you were very quickly on the agenda and on the radar

That was the Princess Diana thing

Right. Tell me more about that

LAUGHS. ... so um ... we um.. So Suzie Orbach and Andrew Samuels had been meeting in a Chinese Restaurant in Swiss Cottage for a number of months discussing how we would set up this organisation and who were all the powerful people we knew, they knew, anyway, that we could link with

Yeah

So we then got the, you know, the Tessa Jowells the Patricia Hewitts and people signed up for it ... so we had a list of people who supported ... and then ... tsst I um, my online book on XXX was published, there was a paragraph in The Guardian Profile of me

Right

And about how I was setting up XXX emotional literacy ... And I may be compressing this but I think that someone noticed that at the same time that someone noticed Princess Diana going into Suzie’s office so suddenly it became interesting

Mmmm

Because of the link to Princess Diana and who is this woman who’s American, half American woman, with a racy past trying to influence the future of this country through the wife of the next monarch, with eating disorders ...

Yeah, it’s quite a mixture isn’t it

So there were 87 press contacts we were on radio shows and it was all this exciting new thing I mean we didn’t really know what we were doing inaudible (15.13) um ... and so inaudible (15.16) and then, and so inaudible (15.20) we were on the agenda in the way that we were talking about you know get something on the agenda

Yep ...

Mainly implications for funding and inaudible else it just meant that they wrote about it were assumed to be ... part of the - I always remember the funny story um of a Dutch
journalist ringing up just before the 97 election, ... and he said er ‘I’ve been reading er ... press clippings to write about this election, and I hear that the Labour people have a secret weapon XXXX

LAUGH

• ... ... We were described as the group therapy for politicians

• Right. OK. I like that.

• Um, and in fact we went up to the party conference in 97

• Mmmm

• And in fact we were, our focus, we hadn’t really narrowed our focus on education to make a case. We we had a paper on Welfare to Work But ... anyway, the reality is of all of these things but I think there’s lots of elements we gave a sort of focus for it which made it easier for people to take it on ...

• So then?

• So and then that and then what happened next ...quite a gap between ... inaudible (17.15) in terms of years. The focus then was on Healthy Schools and the emotional, there was that emotional as- well I think the first focus I remember around education was around the curriculum review ... and Simon at The Gulbenkian was very focussed on getting emotional literacy into the curriculum ... um we had lots of meetings around that with people within the civil service ... ... so you will have to sort out the time schedule ... and then, so we were on the PSHE review ... um ... I remember trying to argue ... that their should be an emotional social thread through all subjects ... and was told very firmly this was not ... part of the ministerial brief therefore we couldn’t talk about it

LAUGHS

• This is one of those things I find very perplexing, I mean I, I think you do have to slightly empathise with politicians who ... they’re sitting there um ... ... trying to um deal with all these interests groups and all these lobby groups really, and then trying to make sense of it all ...

• So when you sat on the SEAL committee ...

• So, the, PSHE first, then of course there was a committee around Katherine’s work

• That’s right, yeah ... So you, so when you
And then it seemed for a while as though nothing was ever going to happen

Right ... *This was 2003*

Seemed to me as if it had been established/published, and they weren’t going to do anything about it ... ... and um the civil servant got very cross with me for saying, I wrote about it ... I wanted to write about it

Hmmm

The report. It hadn’t been published yet and we weren’t initially invited onto the SEAL advisory group and Peter Sharp insisted that we were on it

Right ...

There was a big table as there always is, in a hotel room, and Jean Gross was there already commissioned to do it

Yuh

So it was an advisory group about ... support this thing and the colours and everything was in place

That must have been an exciting time? You know, did you sense a real change?

I wasn’t that excited. Because it was so far from what we had been

Mmmm

Proposing

Right

I um I mean I had to sort of ... I mean it it doesn’t ... seem to me that programmes are necessary

Mmmm

That if you think ‘OK’ - um I mean I started, I started *inaudible* (20.42). There’s another element to this ... the first paper I ever wrote was for um a conference around values

OK
• There was a big thing around values ... in education

• Hmmm. I remember. That totally dropped off, didn’t it? Yeah

• *Inaudible* (21.07) there must have been a case of someone met somebody you know *inaudible* (21.10) so she had been asked to give a big, to do research on whether there were such things as common values

• Right

• So did the Bangladeshi girl and the polish boy have the same values and she concluded that they had ... ... and I um ... wrote a paper for that, I don't know how I made the link but anyway the importance of emotional literacy to learning about values, so I think, if we talk the language of values it's sort of saying, emotional literacy really is about understanding what your values are or understanding what you need to do to live by them

• Yeah, yup

• ... ... Um ... so that was going on and then certainly that value strand was part of the PSHE debate

• Yuh

• ... so I think what I'm trying to say is that an awful lot happened before ... anyone started talking about SEBS

• Mmmmm

• And my impression of where SEBS came from ... was that Tony Blair had been ... on, you know to some housing estate

• Yuh

• And felt ‘We need something else’

• Yeh, yeh

• And ... you know because we've done all this stuff about PSHE, we've done all this stuff about behaviour and it doesn’t seem to have made a blind bit of difference to us or to those kids burning that car, or whatever it is

• Yuh
• And some civil servant - I mean this is pure imaginative guesswork, but probably triggered by something that somebody said to me, had said ‘Well there is this thing called emotional literacy, shall we look into that one?’ ... so the starting point was you know, ‘what can we do to ensure that Tony Blair doesn’t have to go into a housing estate and he sees burning cars

• How can we give him an answer to those questions? Yeah

• ... So, one of my major critiques, criticisms of the material, which I expressed many times in the meetings ... was that all these stories were prescriptive

• Mmmm

• And there’s one in particular, where a girl is very excited about going on a trip and because she gets excited something happens and everybody falls over, and the moral is you’re not meant to get excited

• Mmmm

• You know, effectively.

• Yeh. Yeh

• Um, whereas ... inaudible (24.01) containable emotion - Where is the exuberance?

• Yeh. Exactly.

• Where is the joy? Where is the excitement? Where is the thrill?

• Where do we feel

• Mmmm

• You know

• Mmnn, yeah, absolutely alive

• Exactly

• Yeah

• I remember reading another
• No. Another um document about behaviour, and I remember my jaw dropping, you know. How do you um decide that a kid is not behaving properly, if they refuse to comply with your instructions, and you go Huh

• Mmmmm

• Why? And you think all that Winnicott stuff about compliance

• Mmmmm

• It’s basically pathology

• Yeh,

• *inaudible* ... (24.42) so u, ... and you know I don’t know how much that ... I mean I cer- it certainly got a little bit discussed but in the discussion *inaudible* (24.54) ‘oh I understand’ and people started nodding at me ... and I don’t think ... and I’d say ‘Look, I’ve spent the whole weekend reading this, this pink box and I could have been reading Anna Karenina’, but I keep reading this wretched narrative

POLITE LAUGH (25.16)

• ... So

• So what do you think it was trying to achieve, What do you think SEAL was trying to achieve?

• Oh it was another attempt to get kids to behave in the way you wanted them to behave

• Yeah, yeah

• Mmmmm

• You were clearly ... an element of that - how did that sit with you?

• ... ... ... Well, one is always trying to be constructive ...

• Yuh

• And ... I sort of vaguely believe that um ... I think the most important thing about SEAL, or SEBS, whatever, sort of it gave them permission to do things around this area.
• Right, yup

• In the same way we talk about this government saying well, you know ‘schools have freedom’ they maybe don’t but they say that they do

• Yeah

• And you think ‘that’s great’

• Mmmm. Yeah

• You think well … SEAL said to schools ‘This is important, you should make time for it … and you can pretty much do it your way’

• Mmmm

• The instructions were

• Yuh

• ‘But here are some materials you can use anyway … no-one’s going to be examined on this’

• Yeh

• So … my hope was and my possibly naive belief in retrospect is … that as a result schools were able to do things they wouldn’t have been able to do before

• This opened the door?

• And that given that schools like packages and need boxes and like to be told how to do it …

• Yeh

• Um It might have been nicer if it had been … … better, the materials um but at least it was good that there was something. And schools seemed to like it I suppose, but I don’t, of course I’m not an education person so I can’t um … … … I can’t really comment in too much detail but I think you know … I mean, you know, the bottom line you know from my perspective, you know schools were able to work with us because they had money for SEAL …

• Yeah

• Um … so you know from that perspective - but you know not that many did LAUGHS
• At this time who do you think were the key voices in this?

• I mean I always suspect that the voices are people we don’t know

• Right

• I mean we don’t see or hear.

• Yeah

• That may be um slightly too Machiavellian a picture ... but I don’t you see, I don’t think, I don’t think XXXX, I thin- well no I think that I mean Jean Gross was the key voice. I mean at that point that she was leading it, she was leading it

• Yeh, yeh

• Um

• Yeah

• Yuh. XXXX definitely fitted in the... But of course inaudible (28.33) again she talks about again you know we need a lot more evidence-based practice

• Mmmm

• Um ... I mean interestingly of course she’s not, she’s not ... at the forefront of those discussions in the way that XXXX was, which is interesting in itself

• Yeah

• It is her baby really

• Mmmm

• Um ... I mean she designed it, I think

• You see that’s an interesting one

• Right

• Oh
• Mmmm ... and I was very curious about that

• Because I, my memory is when XXXX had to write some ... secondary materials that she sort of basically felt that she shouldn’t be doing it

• Right OK

• ... I would be surprised if that’s right, that... um I mean clearly at a certain point lots of people did, so ... after Jean

• Yeah

• Um ... ... Actually I inaudible (29.38) she was an advisor for Westminster Council and I went to a conference and she said ‘These are great materials, I should know that, I wrote most of them’

• Right

• And I thought ‘I’ve haven’t met you before’

• Yeh I mean you’ve picked up on an interesting point there, there must be people that we don’t know

• When you asked the question I was thinking more about sort of ‘This is a good thing to do’ I mean the advisors and ministers

• Yeh. That’s what I’m thinking, I wonder who ... ... was Adonis around at the time?

• ... ... um ... I think he was around from the beginning actually so, I don’t

• I remember being surprised I got a note from Adonis once - I mean we used to send out our Newsletter so

• Yeah

• In the days before e newsletters became dominant. And I got a thank you letter from Adonis once

• Oh right
• It didn’t say anything more than that. I’m trying of to think Putnam’s role in all this might have been ... Putnam, obviously a very close friend of Blunkett around citizenship ... and if you think about it my sense of you know, well, there’s um ... the galloping Lord

• Mmmm

• And um, and he was on our advisory group so inaudible (31.08)

• Yeah yeah

• ... It’s always difficult to say because clearly there’s a patchwork of people who influence something that accounts for the shape and colour and look of it

• Absolutely yeah, yeah

• And so inaudible (31.26) never quite say ‘Well’ because there is nobody who would say I wouldn’t have done it like that, because no-one would ...

• Yeah, yeah

• Another amusing story I remember from the PSHE advisory group ... and so, but also around this question of authorship, so it’s like January and we’re in the cellar at Westminster

• Yuh

• And um ... all the SEBS people are in absolute rage ... and they said you know wha- we’ve put months and months of work into this and it’s now completely different, what happened?

• Yeah

• And um the civil servant who, I think he was the new, XXXX said ‘Oh well David Blunkett and Tony Blair rewrote it over Christmas’

• OK

LAUGHS

• So that says - a lot, yeah

• Now I’m not sh, I’m not saying that any minister’s finger is on the SEBS materials and SEBS, and the happy ending was that or whatever inaudible (32.25) ... all the things that we might about you know about wellbeing life is messy and untidy and life is rough and life is raw and all that sort of stuff and actually that’s inaudible (32.36)
• Absolutely, that would be - what you’ve just described there

• Yuh

• And um you know Tony Blair read it in bed one night and said ‘No, no, no’ *inaudible* (32.48)

• I’m not saying that happened

• Yeah, yeah

• But I’m saying it could have happened, and therefore we can’t know

• Yeah, yeah

• RECORDING ENDS
11.9 Appendix 9: Applying Fairclough’s Model

## Applying Fairclough’s three dimensional model to the research questions

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