Waters, T. (2010). Story Links: Using Therapeutic Storywriting with Parents and Pupils at Risk of Exclusion. Chapter in: Ficksman, M. and Adelizzi, J. (eds) *The Clinical Practice of Educational Therapy*. New York: Routledge. p201-214.

# Abstract

This paper explores the *Story Links* parent partnership model of intervention which supports pupils at risk of exclusion due to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It considers whether a therapeutic teaching model which uses the context of joint story-making, and where the parent is supported to use story metaphor think about their child’s emotional issues, can be used to integrate emotional and academic support for these pupils. The theoretical background draws on Bowlby’s concept of attachment, Bion’s theory of containment in order to facilitate thinking, and Schore’s idea of sharing of metaphor in order to facilitate attachment. The way in which such a therapeutic teaching approach can be implemented within an educational context is illustrated through work with an eight-year old pupil and his parent over a ten week period. The case example, drawn from a wider research project, shows how *Story Links* sessions helped the parent to regain the adult position in relation to her son and also overcame the pupil’s reluctance to read. The relation of such a therapeutic teaching intervention to the special educational needs requirements of an inclusive mainstream school is discussed, as is its place within current UK special educational needs policy. This model of intervention, which considers the emotional issues and relationships embedded in the learning process is akin to the practice of educational therapy in the U.S. as well as in 11 others countries.

**Key words**: attachment; attachment object; exclusion; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESDs); Special Educational Needs (SEN); psychodynamic; potential space, containment, therapeutic teaching; Story Links