

Inclusion or exclusion across a range of educational settings: The lived experiences of students, parents and practitioners.

**Lynne Sharon Kendall
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Abstract

This submission comprises seven papers and a connecting document that have utilised the voices of 75 individuals to capture the lived experiences from children, parents, students and practitioners in relation to inclusive practices and barriers to inclusion across a range of educational phases in England. The connecting document provides context and an overview of the work, which has been carried out over an eight year period, exploring the connecting themes and methodological approaches.

The work presented within this submission examines two research objectives. The first explores the lived experiences of individuals who have or are associated with a disability and/or special educational needs, across a range of education settings, identifying the influence that these experiences can have upon an individual. The second sets out to examine inclusive practices and any barriers to inclusion within educational settings. Whilst a range of inclusive practices across settings were identified, the seven papers also identified barriers to inclusion. These barriers included, the lack of sufficient training received by practitioners across the range of special educational needs/ disabilities within their College training or Initial Teacher Training courses. This training was recognised as essential prior to entering the workplace. Similarly, the need for continuous professional development within the workplace has also been identified, in order to support a range of needs within education settings.

In capturing the 'voice' and lived experiences of these individuals, a qualitative, interpretive paradigm was adopted, with data being collected through semi-structured interviews from purposive samples. This research method was used within all of the papers. The seven papers within this submission have all been based on small scale studies, however, they all add richness to the area of inclusive practices within a range of education settings and have identified issues that need to be addressed in order for the settings to become fully inclusive.

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In memory of my parents, Charles Anthony and Irene Byrne, who recognised the importance of education.

To my Grandchildren, Jacob, Evelyn and the future generation. I hope that I have been a good role model. Love you xxx

Contents

Abstract	p.2
Acknowledgements	p.3
Glossary of terms	p.5
1. Introduction	p.6
2. Research Objectives	p.8
3. Autobiographical context for the portfolio of evidence	p.10
4. Chronological description of the submission and Development of the work	p.12
5. Methodological Approaches	p.23
6. Connecting Themes and Links to the Research Objectives	p.32
7. Critical reflection of my development as a researcher	p.35
8. Conclusion and recommendations	p.37
9. Current and future research agenda	p.39
10. References	p.41
Appendix 1	
List of publications with links	p.49

Glossary of terms

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs/disability
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
HE	Higher Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ADHD	Attention Hyperactivity Disorder
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Conditions
TA	Teaching Assistant
DS	Down syndrome

1. Introduction

This submission for PhD by publication is based on seven papers, published in international peer reviewed journals over an eight-year period between 2010 and 2018. However, the journey really started in 1975 when I was in my first year of study at teacher training college. I was on a placement at a nursery that was run by a charitable organisation called Mencap, who support children with learning disabilities. I had no previous experience of working with young children who had learning disabilities and was apprehensive about the placement. However, my concerns were unfounded. Working with the children was a privilege and I gained valuable experience in supporting children with learning disabilities. Every member of staff ensured that the children were supported to reach their full educational potential. This positive nursery experience motivated me to work in the area of Special Educational Needs/disability (SEND) which has shaped my whole career.

The accompanying commentary synthesises the relevant contribution that this research has made to existing knowledge within the field of education and special educational needs /disability (SEND).

The term 'Inclusion' and 'Inclusive practice' has been identified as being broadly used within education (Florian and Black Hawkins 2011), leading to differing practices within a range of educational settings (Wilde and Avramidis 2011). However, Glazzard (2014:40) acknowledges that 'the purpose of inclusion is to provide all learners with equality of educational opportunity and this right is guaranteed through equality legislation, placing a statutory duty on schools and other educational settings to make reasonable adjustments to break down barriers to participation and achievement.'

Current legislation within England such as the Equality Act (2010) and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2014) acknowledge that children and young people with a range of special educational needs/disability (SEND) should have their needs met within mainstream education settings (if that is the preference of the parent), across the range of phases from nursery settings through to secondary education. The Children and Families Act (2014. Part 3) also recognises the importance of involving children or young people and their families in decision making (Devarakonda and Powley 2016) and the benefits of working in partnership with parents since this can have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of the child (Johnston 2009; Lendrum et al 2015).

Similarly, the Equality Act (2010) requires that Higher Education (HE) institutions actively promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities with anticipatory adjustments made to support inclusive practice. However, despite legislation designed to support inclusion across a range of educational settings, in practice, this does not always happen with individuals experiencing a number of differing barriers (Elcock 2014; Morina Diez et al 2015). The subsequent educational experiences, particularly in terms of low self-esteem and poor academic achievement (Eisenberg and Schneider 2007; Goode 2007) can thus be affected negatively, often commencing within the primary school but with an ongoing and deleterious impact on the individual student up to and including their experience in Higher Education (HE) settings (Gibson and Kendall 2010).

All of the papers within this submission are closely linked and have sought to explore the lived experiences of individuals who have or are associated with a disability and/or special educational needs issues, across a range of education settings within England. The work overall, utilises the voices of 75 individuals; children, parents, students and practitioners to offer a unique exploration of a range of issues related to inclusive practice and barriers to full inclusion. The nature of the research population chosen for the studies allows for an in-depth analysis from various perspectives which both adds to and builds on current research in the field. All of the papers have been cited within a range of subsequent academic works and utilised by others, indicating the significance of the work. For instance, the findings from paper 2 (Kendall and Taylor 2016) has been cited within a final report commissioned by the National Independent Safeguarding Board, Wales (Forrester et al 2017). This report, examined the extent and nature of home education, the adequacy of current service provision and strategies to ensure that children, who were home educated in Wales, were safe and well. A further example is that of paper 3 (Kendall 2016) which has been recommended as relevant reading in supporting Masters level studies, within a text aimed at teacher practitioners (Cremin and Burnett 2018).

2. Research Objectives

This work presented within this submission sets out to explore the following research objectives;

- RO1: to explore the lived experiences of individuals who have or are associated with a disability and/or special educational needs, across a range of education settings.

Papers 1-7 focused on the experiences of individuals who either had a disability or SEN themselves, were parents who had a child/children with a disability or SEN or worked as a practitioner in supporting individuals with a range of needs within educational settings.

- RO2: to investigate inclusive practice and barriers within educational settings

Papers 1-7 identified a range of inclusive practice within education settings in England, from early years, primary, secondary and HE. However, the 7 papers also recognised barriers to full inclusion, particularly the need for practitioners to receive sufficient training within the area of special educational needs/disability, in order to support individuals prior to commencement within the workplace. Ideally, this should be within Further or Higher Education. Similarly, the need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) within the workplace has also been identified in order to support a range of needs within educational settings.

Throughout this commentary, each paper is referenced with a number in order of publication e.g. paper 1. My contribution to the two joint authored papers is explained within the appendices.

Table 1: Chronological list of refereed articles

Paper	Reference	No of citations
1	Gibson, S. and Kendall, L. (2010) Stories from school: dyslexia and learners' voices on factors impacting on achievement. <i>Support for Learning: British Journal of Learning Support</i> , Vol 25 (4) pp. 187-193	67
2	Kendall, L. and Taylor, E. (2016) 'We can't make him fit into the system': Parental reflections on the reasons why home education is the only option for their child who has special educational needs, <i>Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education</i> , Vol. 44, (3), pp: 297-310	16

3	Kendall, L. (2016) 'The teacher said I'm thick!' Experiences of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder within a school setting. <i>Support for Learning</i> , Vol. 31, (2), pp.122-137	9
4	Kendall, L. (2016) Higher education and disability: Exploring student Experiences, <i>Cogent Education</i> , Vol. 3, (1), pp. 1-12	18
5	Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting students with disabilities within a UK university: Lecturer perspectives, <i>Innovations in Education and Teaching International</i> , Vol. 55, (6), pp. 694-703	8
6	Kendall, L. (2019) Supporting children with Down syndrome within mainstream education settings: parental reflections, <i>Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education</i> , Vol. 47, (2), pp.1-13	2
7	Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting all children to reach their potential: practitioner perspectives on creating an inclusive school environment. <i>Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education</i> , published online 2018.	1

3. Autobiographical context for the portfolio of evidence

My career has focused on the support of others in a range of educational settings. My philosophical stance has always been inclusive, ensuring that all individuals have access to equal opportunities in all aspects of education, work place and within society. I started my career in the school sector where I had a wide range of experience within primary and special schools, working across all key stages, within a language unit and as an outreach support worker. Part of this role as an outreach worker, was working within mainstream schools in order to support inclusive practice, liaising with head teachers and other members of the school staff, to deliver personalised programmes for children who had a diagnosis of dyslexia.

My main priority when working with all children was to raise their self-esteem and for them to feel safe and valued, either within a class environment or on a one to one basis. As Varma (1993) identifies, negative learning experiences can have a profound effect on a child. If children have a negative view of themselves, this can impact on educational achievement (Dowling 2000). It is part of the role of the teacher to ensure that all children are included and afforded the opportunity to reach their full learning potential (Avramidis et al 2002; Hodkinson 2016; Lambe 2011; Kendall 2018). The influence of early negative educational experiences on the individual and subsequent academic achievement is explored within paper one.

During my teaching career, I attended courses that would help me gain the skills required to support the children with a range of differing needs. However, when I undertook an MA in SEN this was a significant learning point where I started to engage with the literature more, developing my knowledge and understanding. My dissertation focus was on supporting parents who have children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This interest in ADHD comes from a personal perspective and was the subject matter for my first book chapter and also my third paper within this submission. Whilst interested in all areas of SEN and inclusion (which is reflected within my research) my expertise lies within the areas of Dyslexia, ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

In 2003, I was afforded the opportunity to change my career path, from school settings to Higher Education. I was invited to participate in the development of a new HEFCE/QTS degree pathway in Special Needs at Liverpool Hope University and I was appointed a senior lecturer in Special Needs. During this period, I engaged with academia and in 2007, presented for the first time, a joint paper with colleagues from the university at the annual Conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) whilst also presenting at local and international conferences e.g. Athens and Berlin (see CV).

In 2008, I commenced work at Liverpool John Moores University as a senior lecturer in Education Studies and Special and Inclusive Needs and subsequently became the programme leader for the course. In 2011, I re-wrote and validated, a new degree programme, developing modules and subsequent content that reflected inclusion for all within education and society. As evidence of the impact of my subject work based in the curriculum, in 2016, the programme was awarded the LJMU Teaching and Learning Excellence Award. Alongside my teaching at LJMU, I have continued to research and publish peer reviewed papers, gathering the 'voice' of individuals and their lived experiences of inclusion or exclusion within the education system in England across a range of settings, contributing to the knowledge within this field.

Importantly, my passion for supporting equal opportunities for all within the education system, has underpinned my own practice and I hope, has also had a positive influence on the many individuals that I have worked with.

4. Chronological description of the submission and development of the work

This section of the submission for the PhD by publication outlines the chronological development of the submission of seven papers. The first two papers were co-authored and the subsequent five papers sole-authored. The order of the papers is based on the dates they were published. Paper 6 was published online in 2018 before its full publication in 2019, hence it looks out of order in Table 1. All the research adopted a qualitative approach as the focus was on individual's experiences of education settings within England. In order to capture the essence of these individuals' perceptions, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, face-to-face or via telephone. Overall, the papers have sought to identify inclusive practice and any barriers to participation. All of the papers have been peer reviewed prior to acceptance within educational journals.

Paper 1: Gibson, S. and Kendall, L. (2010) Stories from school: dyslexia and learners' voices on factors impacting on achievement. Support for Learning: British Journal of Learning Support, Vol 25, (4) pp. 187-193.

This paper emerged from a Higher Education Academy (HEFCE) funded cross-university research project (2009 -2011), which focused on transitions and access to Higher Education for students with disabilities. Data from the project identified the issues experienced by students with dyslexia and this paper emerged from the voices of four students and their lived experiences of primary and secondary education. During the semi-structured face-to-face interviews, the students shared a wealth of information about their school experience. Whilst there were some positive comments, the negative experiences emerged as the overall message. Students identified lack of support, negative teacher attitudes and low expectations particularly when they transferred to secondary school, finding themselves placed in the lower ability sets. As a consequence of this practice, subject choice for qualifications was restricted, some of the students were not allowed to take formal qualifications in science or modern foreign languages, encouraged instead to do more vocational subjects. These experiences had a profound impact upon the individuals, particularly in relation to their self-esteem. Consequently their negative self-perception impacted on their academic achievement, an issue also identified within current research (Lithari 2018). In terms of their relationships with their peers, whilst not experiencing physical bullying, they had experienced verbal abuse from within their peer groups.

These students had not received a formal diagnosis of dyslexia until they left school and entered Further or Higher Education. However, on reviewing the findings, it was evident that each of these students had exhibited difficulties throughout their primary and secondary education that were 'typical' of a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia. Literature acknowledges the importance of an early identification of dyslexia, to ensure that appropriate support is put in place early on in the child's education. Thus possibly negating further difficulties as the child progresses through the education system (Farrugia and O'Keefe 2012), as had been experienced by the participants in this research. This paper identified the need for further research around the training within Initial Teacher Training (ITT) particularly in relation to supporting individuals with a wide range of needs. Furthermore, this research also highlighted the need for continuing professional development for teachers, relating specifically to inclusion and inclusive practice. This is still an ongoing issue and has been identified within current research by Kendall (2018).

Previous research at the time had identified that there was a lack of research on the educational experiences of people who have disabilities and the impact on academic success or failure (Shah et al., 2004; Pollak 2005) with a gap in the voice of the students themselves (Goode, 2007). Therefore, this paper (and subsequent papers within this submission) added to the limited literature that was available, giving a 'voice' to the student and their lived experiences of primary and secondary education.

Findings from this research were disseminated in May 2010 as a joint presentation with the co-author at the 12th International Conference on Education, Athens Institute for Education and Research.

Paper 2: Kendall, L. and Taylor, E. (2016) 'We can't make him fit into the system': parental reflections on the reasons why home education is the only option for their child who has special educational needs. Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, Vol 44, (3), pp. 297-310.

This research and subsequent paper was a response to the findings of the Badman Report (2009) which raised the profile of home education. This report was commissioned by the then New Labour Government to produce a report for the UK government on home education and safeguarding, following high profile cases regarding child protection and welfare of children educated at home (Bloom 2009; Shepherd 2010). Amongst the many recommendations from this report was that all home schooled children were to be placed

upon a compulsory register and for this cohort of children to be visited regularly by the relevant authorities, often without parental supervision, raising many objections from home educators (Badman 2009). Following access to an online support forum for parents who home educated within England, seven parents who had children with special educational needs/disability (SEND) agreed to participate in research for this paper. Semi-structured telephone interviews were used to collect the data.

The findings within this paper were timely and added to the limited research (Rothermel 2003; Arora 2006; Parsons and Lewis 2010) that was already available around the home education of children with identified needs (special educational needs/disability). Parsons and Lewis (2010: 68) acknowledge that home schooling children with special educational needs, is an 'under reported and little researched area'. This paper gathers the 'voice' and the lived experiences of the parent, identifying why they chose to withdraw their child from state education in England and elect to home school. For this research the range of needs varied with six children identified with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) with three of these children also having a comorbidity of conditions. One child was diagnosed with dyspraxia and hyper mobility and one child was dyslexic. I would argue that at the time the research for this paper was undertaken, there was limited previous research that sought to gain parental perspectives around home schooling and this paper has contributed to this knowledge.

The parents in this study did have expectations that their child would attend a mainstream school however, in reality the experience was a negative one. Rogers (2007) suggests that parents who have children with special needs assume that their child will be accepted and included within the mainstream school environment; in reality this rarely happens. The decision to home educate was a difficult decision but as the health and well-being of their children declined, they felt that they had no other choice. It was evident within this research that staff were not prepared to engage with parent partnership and there was an unwillingness to listen to the parents on the best way to support and work with their child. Indeed, the parents in this study felt that the schools did not want to include and support their children.

This paper identified a lack of understanding about special needs and particularly in the area of ASC from all practitioners, including head teachers, resulting in the children not

receiving an education that met their needs. Training within this area (continuing professional development) was also necessary for all staff particularly for the Teaching Assistants (TAs) who worked alongside the children, concurring with the findings of Symes and Humphrey (2011). Finally, it was clearly evidenced within this paper that the school environment had a negative impact upon the children, with their social and emotional needs unmet, resulting in stress and anxiety. These research findings were disseminated in September 2011 as a joint presentation with the co-author, at the British Education Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference, Institute of Education, London.

Paper 3: Kendall, L. (2016) 'The teacher said I'm thick!' Experiences of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder within a school setting. *Support for Learning*, Vol 31, (2), pp.122-137.

This paper emerged from attendance at a conference, focusing on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). One of the speakers was a young adult who talked about her experience of having ADHD and how this had impacted negatively on her educational achievement. Whilst there is a wealth of research conducted around ADHD and education (Soppitt 2012; Mautone et al, 2011; Ohan et al, 2011), there was limited work that was from the perspectives of individuals themselves. Therefore, this paper sought to elicit the 'voice' of children and young people who have ADHD and their experiences within a school setting adding to the knowledge within this area. As Brady (2014) acknowledges, within the UK, the diagnosed cases of ADHD continue to rise but the views of children who have been diagnosed with ADHD has largely been neglected within research, policy and practice. Research was gathered via semi-structured face to face interviews with twelve participants from an ADHD support group in the North West of England.

Receiving a diagnosis of ADHD was considered important by the majority of the participants, giving them a reason as to why they exhibited certain 'behaviours' and as Kendall (2010) acknowledges, a diagnosis is the first step to effective management of the condition. This diagnosis enabled the participants to access support from external agencies, to obtain medication and develop strategies to help manage and support the many difficulties that they experienced (Shattell et al 2008).

This paper identified a number of areas for concern that impacted negatively upon the pupil's self-esteem and subsequent learning. Support was not consistent from all teachers,

with some members of staff adopting a positive approach towards the participants, which was perceived as being supportive, whilst other teachers viewed ADHD in a negative way, with issues of bullying, lack of support and shouting at some of the participants within the classroom. It was evidenced within this study, that in order to support the children and young people who had ADHD, teaching staff (indeed all staff within an educational setting) needed to be more informed about the impact that this condition can have upon the individual. There are many challenges that they may experience, particularly in terms of the inability to concentrate over prolonged periods of time within the classroom and the support/strategies that can be implemented. As in papers one and two, this paper identified a need for teachers to receive adequate training around the disability (Wheeler et al 2008). Ideally, teacher training providers need to deliver comprehensive information about ADHD (Webster and Blatchford 2014; Ellis and Todd 2014). Within school settings, continuing professional development (CPD) relating to meeting the needs of pupils with ADHD could help provide positive support strategies. As Kendall (2016) has identified, there appears to be little progress in this area and if the social and educational outcomes of individuals with ADHD are to be positive ones, this is an area that needs to be addressed urgently.

Paper 4: Kendall, L. (2016) Higher education and disability: Exploring student experiences, Cogent Education, Vol 3, (1), pp.1-12.

This paper sought to elicit the 'voice' of students with a range of identified disabilities within a UK university and their experiences of inclusive practice and possible barriers to full participation. Research was gathered via face-to-face semi-structured interviews with thirteen students from three differing deaneries within the university. Twelve participants had declared prior to entry to university that they had a disability and one participant began the process of disability assessment half way through their first year of study.

Three of the participants were reluctant to inform tutors and fellow students that they had a disability due to perceived associated stigma. This is an issue that has previously been discussed within literature, e.g. Liasidou (2014) and Knott and Taylor (2014). However, this reluctance to disclose can make it very difficult to individualise support. All of the participants viewed the support service within the university as a positive resource. Each of the participants had a learning support plan (LSP) (terminology was pertinent to that particular institution and may vary across differing university settings and are known as Individual Learning Support Plans within my own institution (ILSP)). Whilst they were

considered useful, they were viewed as being too generalised in terms of particular disabilities and needed to be tailored to meet the needs of each individual.

This paper identified that despite relevant legislation designed to ensure non-discriminatory practice within HE, students with a disability still continue to experience a range of barriers to learning. Whilst some of the participants acknowledged that there were some lecturers who were helpful and supportive in meeting their needs, this was not consistent with all lecturers. Similar to the findings of other studies conducted within the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland (Redpath et al 2013; Goode 2007) this research highlighted that participants continually had to inform staff, especially lecturers that they had a disability and required support. There were further examples given of what was considered as poor practice within the university by the participants, such as lecture notes not being available for the students prior to the lecture and students being asked to read out loud within the session. As Madriaga (2007) acknowledges, this can cause stress and anxiety for the student, particularly if they have dyslexia. An issue raised by a number of the participants was the lack of, or limited knowledge that the lecturers had about specific disabilities and this paper identifies a need for staff training which should help in ensuring inclusive practice. Each of the participants recognised their own particular strengths in terms of differing types of assessment and again, some of the lecturers were willing to make reasonable adjustments with the assessments but this was not consistent across the university. Contrary to the findings of Lopez et al (2015) who discuss the many exam related barriers, this research identified that the support provided for exam provision was considered by the participants as being helpful and more than adequate. Similarly, five of the participants considered alternative room provision for the exams as a positive means of support, contradicting the findings of Liasidou (2014) who considers the practice of allocating separate rooms for students with disabilities as stigmatising and segregating practice. This paper contributes to the current literature on the experiences of students with a range of disabilities within HE. It is hoped that findings from this research will influence future policy development that ensures inclusive practice across departments within universities. This research has also informed my own practice within the programme. As programme leader for my course, I ensure that when Individual Learning Plans (ILSP) are sent to me, I disseminate to personal tutors and the wider team of the Education Studies and Inclusion programme (with student permission). During team meetings, recent ILSP's are discussed in order to clarify the reasonable adjustments that have been identified. I ensure that

guidance and support is given to members of the team as required and fully support relevant staff training.

Paper 5: Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting students with disabilities within a UK university: Lecturer perspectives, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, Vol 55, (6), pp. 694-703.

Following on and developing the previous research, this paper gathered lecturer's perceptions and expectations in supporting students with disabilities. Data was collected from 20 lecturers from one university using semi-structured, face-to-face interviews.

Within the UK, the Equality Act (2010) states that anticipatory reasonable adjustments should be made for students with disabilities. However, it is not clearly defined as to what these adjustments should be although literature identifies a number of possibilities (Elcock 2014; Riddell and Weedon 2014) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE 2015) provides examples of good practice. Possibly as a result of a lack of precise guidance on inclusive practices, support for students with disabilities and additional needs can vary across institutions (Hall 2007; Hughes et al 2016). Concurring with the findings of Grace and Gravestock (2009), the participants in this study were committed to implementing inclusive practices that would be beneficial for all students, including those with a range of disabilities. However, this paper has identified that there were difficulties and issues in making this happen in practice, especially as more students with a range of identified disabilities enter HE and increasing cohort sizes. Participants acknowledged that making adequate reasonable adjustments was an emotive area particularly in terms of what they needed to do and how they could do it and identified the need for further training within the area of disabilities.

A reluctance on the part of students to disclose a disability prior to entry into HE or to inform tutors was identified in paper 4. Some of the reasons to not disclose were identified as a fear of influencing the application process in a negative way, (Vickerman and Blundell 2010) and the associated 'stigma' with a disability (Habib et al 2012). Further reasons were identified and discussed within the literature (Liasidou 2014; Madriaga 2007). However, participants acknowledged that this reluctance to disclose meant that it was difficult to manage appropriate support for that particular individual. Similar to the findings of Knott and Taylor (2014) and Mortimore (2013), participants suggested that there needed to be

more of an emphasis on encouraging students to disclose, preferably prior to entry and stated that ideally, this process could begin at recruitment fairs or university open days.

As in paper 4, the findings of this paper has identified that the learning support plans (LSP) were considered to be too generic and did not provide the information needed about what would be considered as 'reasonable adjustments' for individual students, adding to pressure on the staff. Participants did express concerns around the designated writing support tutors that worked and supported students who had a LSP. There were concerns by the participants that there was a great variation by the support tutors in terms of their approaches and degree of support. Couzens et al (2015) acknowledges writing support tutors within HE, however, there is limited literature that discusses their role. This paper adds to the body of knowledge within this area. Cameron and Nunkoosing (2012) suggest that there is limited research on lecturers' experiences of accommodating a wide range of differing needs and disabilities within HE. This paper is important in contributing to this area and has explored the concerns and issues encountered by staff from their perspective, identifying a number of barriers to inclusive practice which need to be addressed.

Paper 6: Kendall, L. (2019) Supporting children with Down syndrome within mainstream education settings: parental reflections, *Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, Vol 47, (2), pp.1-13.

This paper draws upon data gathered from five parents who have children with Down syndrome (DS) educated within a mainstream education setting. This study is significant in that, the parent's views about the education of their child has been sought in terms of their perspectives of practices within the settings that are viewed as inclusive or otherwise, adding to current literature. Data was gathered through four face-to-face semi-structured interviews and one telephone interview.

Literature acknowledges that for children with DS, if they are in an inclusive mainstream setting they fare better in terms of academic achievement, language development and social interaction (Turner et al 2008). However, it is recognised that inclusion is a complex area (Lightfoot and Bond 2013) and there are many recognised barriers to the successful inclusion of children with DS. This paper identified that the participants considered a positive attitude of staff towards their children important. Good practice was identified as, staff working in partnership with the parents and regular communication between the parents

and the staff, an area also considered important by Johnston (2009). Participants acknowledged that staff recognised that as parents, they had expert knowledge in supporting their children, also discussed by Lendrum et al (2015). The willingness for staff within settings to learn Makaton, an augmentative communication system derived from British Sign Language to support individuals with language difficulties (Rose and Howley 2007) and then introduce this form of communication to other children within the class and across the school, was viewed as inclusive practice. This not only supported the communication method used at home, but also enabled the children to socially interact and communicate with others within the setting.

One participant had experienced negative issues when her child was due to transition from primary to mainstream secondary school, particularly the negative attitudes from staff. However, this was not identified as a barrier to inclusion by the other participants, concurring with previous research by Briggs (2005) and Byrnes (2012), who suggest that transition can be effective, if schools work with the parents and provide relevant support.

Early intervention is recognised within literature as important in supporting children with DS (Paige-Smith and Rix 2006; Roberts et al, 2007). Findings from this study identified that whilst the participants considered Portage services as important in supporting early intervention, access to this service was dependent upon adequate funding being available within individual authorities. Similarly, participants identified a need for more speech and language therapists, conceding that this again was probably due to lack of sufficient funding. These current findings concur with previous literature (Hodkinson 2010) suggesting that whilst parents recognise the importance of these services, there is still an issue around funding within certain local authorities. The Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) raised a number of concerns with the participants, particularly when pupils were transferring from the old statement of needs to the current EHCP. It was assumed by the participants that during this transfer, the provision would automatically be the same with the EHCP. This was not the case, with some of the support being withdrawn from the child. Again, lack of funding was cited as the reason to withdraw some of the current provision. The process of completing the EHCP also took longer than the recommended six months and this was an issue for children who had complex needs. Currently there is limited research as to the effectiveness of the EHCP and any possible issues that have arisen in terms of transfer from the statement of needs to the EHCP. This paper is important in that

it is illustrative of parent's perspectives of the policy and the implications this has for their children's education.

Paper 7: Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting all children to reach their potential: practitioner perspectives on creating an inclusive school environment. *Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, published online 2018.

This final paper is significant in that due to the practitioner focus, this study offers an original viewpoint to supporting inclusive practices and identifying barriers to participation for individuals who have a range of disabilities and needs within a mainstream education setting. Data was gathered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with fourteen members of teaching and support staff within one mainstream primary school. This school was chosen as it was identified by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) as being a highly inclusive school, with all staff working together, valuing each child as an individual and their uniqueness respected.

This paper offered insight into the inclusive practices used within the setting. Findings identified that, there was a whole school approach to inclusion with all staff working collaboratively within the school and with a range of outside agencies. This is a recommendation for any schools wishing to develop their inclusive practice. Findings also identified collaborative working between teaching staff and Teaching assistants (TAs). The planning of the weekly delivery of the curriculum was a joint collaboration and in terms of classroom practice, the TAs were not solely deployed to work with children with SEN but worked across the attainment range. This method of working has been previously identified as positive classroom practice (Webster and Blatchford 2013). Similarly, the importance of parent partnership was acknowledged by the practitioners who identified that parents who have children with SEN or additional needs, are often more knowledgeable than staff in addressing the needs of the child concurring with previous research by Lendrum et al (2015).

Practitioners identified a number of issues that they considered barriers to full inclusion including the National Curriculum (NC) and testing at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Whilst this was an area of concern for staff within one school and further research could be conducted across a range of primary school settings, this paper adds to the limited research on the impact that the NC and testing can have on children. Lack of sufficient funding from

the local authority (LA) was also considered to be a barrier especially in terms of employing additional staff and purchasing specific resources that would support the children with SEN within the classroom. As identified within previous papers within this PhD submission, there was insufficient pre-service training within the participants' college or university courses, resulting in staff feeling unprepared in meeting the needs of all children with additional needs within the classroom. However, subject to funding, continuing professional development (CPD) and training were an integral part of the development of all the practitioners within the setting. The findings of this paper will contribute to current literature that identifies inclusive practice and barriers to participation within educational settings.

5. Methodological Approaches

Cresswell (2013:15) opines that individuals (even if they are not aware of it) bring their own 'beliefs and philosophical assumptions' to their research. Furthermore, these philosophical assumptions are important and underlie qualitative research, 'shaping how the researcher formulates the problem, the research questions to study and how the researcher seeks information to answer the questions' (*ibid*). Two of these assumptions that are pertinent to social sciences and discussed within literature are the ontological and epistemological assumptions. In simplistic terms, ontology questions the nature of reality, the nature of existence, how we view the world (Crotty 2015; Blaikie 2007). As Creswell (2013) acknowledges, researchers and the individuals being studied, embrace multiple realities. Epistemology is a theory of knowledge, 'what it is we can claim to know' (King and Horrocks 2010:8). Creswell (2013) further explains that the researcher's relationship with the participants requires the researcher to get as close as possible in order to elicit the individual views, gathering knowledge through the subjective experiences of people. Baskarada and Koronios (2018) identify that in social sciences, both the ontological and epistemological viewpoint of the researcher impacts upon the methodological choices used within the research. I consider myself a practitioner researcher and I have drawn upon a range of authors including Creswell and Bryman to develop my research understanding. Some of the key ideas that I have adopted will be discussed in this chapter.

In seeking to capture individual's perceptions, feelings and experiences of education settings, the methodological approach used within all of my research adopts a qualitative, interpretive paradigm with the chosen research tool being semi-structured interviews. Locke et al (2010:184) suggest that the purpose of interpretive research is 'to understand the setting for social action from the perspective of the participants'. In other words, interpretive research focuses on attempting to understand an individual's experiences of a given area and, importantly, what it means for them (King and Horrocks 2010).

By adopting an interpretive approach, I was able to collate detailed narratives from a wide range of participants, including children, adults, parents and education practitioners about their lived experiences of the education system in England across a range of differing settings. Whilst there are a number of methods that can be utilised to gather relevant data including, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research (Silverman 2006), literature

identifies that studies categorised as interpretive use a qualitative method to gather relevant data (Locke et al 2010; King and Horrocks 2010). However, Crotty (2015:15) advises that 'whatever research we engage in, it is possible for either qualitative methods or quantitative methods, or both, to serve our purposes without this being problematic'.

Creswell (2009:20) suggests that in determining the type of research method used, there needs to be consideration given to 'the research problem, or issue being studied, the personal experiences of the researcher and the audience for whom the researcher writes'. For each study (and working collaboratively with two co-authors), the merits of the differing research methods were considered in order to ensure an approach that would be most suitable for gathering rich data that expressed individuals' views and their personal lived experiences of education, allowing their 'voice' to be heard. With this in mind, a qualitative approach was deemed to be the most appropriate research method for each study. Qualitative research has many important features, most notably that the data collected from individuals is often descriptive but extensive and capable of providing rich material for analysis (Wellington 2000). Furthermore, Yilmaz (2013:313) identifies that qualitative research allows the respondents to describe their thoughts and feelings in their own words. Importantly, 'people can elucidate how they make sense of the world around them and their experiences through interviews'.

Within qualitative research, there are a number of approaches that can be utilised including, Ethnography, Grounded theory, Case studies, Narrative research and Phenomenological research (Creswell 2013; Locke et al 2010). Initially for papers 2-7, a phenomenological approach to the research was considered and in simplistic terms this approach has an emphasis on looking closely at the lived experiences of individuals, through multiple, in-depth interviews (King and Horrocks 2010). This approach to social science methodology and phenomenological research is discussed in depth by Van Manen (2016). Reflecting upon this approach, the number of participants for each study was an unknown quantity and there was no guarantee that potential participants would be willing to undertake three or more in depth interviews. The research approach overall has been influenced by the phenomenological approach in terms of gaining insight into the lived experiences of individuals and their education but has not embraced the whole approach. Creswell (2013:69) suggests that the new researcher needs to consider and fully understand one approach to qualitative enquiry, however, Creswell further acknowledges that the

researcher should then try different approaches and importantly, 'combining different ways of conducting qualitative research'.

Within research, there are a range of differing sampling techniques that can be used, and I needed to reflect upon what would be the most appropriate technique for the kind of research that I was going to undertake. After consideration, I adopted a purposive sampling method which was considered appropriate for the type of small scale, qualitative research I was undertaking (this applied to all of the research studies within this submission). Importantly, this method also allowed me to select the samples for each piece of research because they had knowledge and relevant experience about the topic being investigated. (Bryman 2016; Cohen et al 2018). As Denscombe (2014:41) identifies, purposive sampling is a way of 'selecting people most likely to provide quality information and valuable insights on the research topic'. In terms of sample size, Robson (2002) acknowledges that if semi-structured interviews are used to gather data but produces only a small amount of information, then a larger number of participants would be required. However, interviews that yield in depth data require fewer participants. Similarly, Creswell (2013:157) also stresses the importance of 'collecting extensive details about each individual studied' and that the selection of a large number of participants is more typical within quantitative research (Creswell 2009). Whilst the sample size of some of the papers were small e.g. papers 1, 2 and 6, I would argue that they provided rich and in-depth information about the participants lived experiences of the education system, particularly the views from the 'hard to access and hidden population' groups such as the home schooling participants.

For each study, there was a reflection upon the method of data collection that would be the most suitable. As a qualitative approach was adopted and the 'voice' of the participants, their feelings, attitudes, beliefs and lived experiences was considered, my own reflexivity led me to conclude that, semi structured interviews as a method of data collection would be the most appropriate. Carling (2009) identifies that interviews are considered as standard procedure when carrying out research within a range of differing fields in order to elicit relevant information from participants. Furthermore, research interviews also encourage participants to discuss their own experiences and knowledge of events (Roulston 2018) therefore giving 'voice' to the participants. This method of data collection also provides rich data, amenable to content analysis and therefore, likely to reveal patterns or themes that

would not be revealed if questionnaires were used (Opie 2004; Trier-Bieniek 2012; Bryman 2016).

There are many differing types of interviews and Robson (2011) distinguishes between the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, further suggesting that each type of interview is fit for a specific purpose. Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for each study within this submission, as I considered that this format would provide more depth and be more likely to capture the lived experiences in the responses that I gained. Semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility, with questions being omitted or added during the interview or questions being given in a differing order. This method also enabled me to follow up responses and ideas that occurred during the interviews with the participants, thus hopefully resulting in the collation of rich and informative data. This method of data collection can also provide additional information for the researcher by the participant's facial expressions, tone, body language etc. This was important to me as a researcher because it allowed me to ask further questions or probe for further clarification and information. However, Bryman (2016) stresses that the interviewer needs to be responsive and aware of the participant's non-verbal responses. The body language of the participant may indicate that a particular line of questioning is making them anxious and the researcher needs to end that line of enquiry. As my interview skills improved and developed over time, I was able to pick up on non-verbal responses and act accordingly.

From the commencement of the interview process for every research project, I felt that it was important for participants to feel at ease and for me as the researcher, to develop a rapport right from the beginning of the interview. I was also mindful of issues discussed by Bryman (2016) in terms of ensuring that there was a right balance in developing a rapport that would not impact upon the interview process. Too much rapport could result in the participant responding to the questions in order to please the interviewer, giving responses that may not be their experience but what they think the interviewer would like to hear. Equally however, a lack of rapport may result in the participant withdrawing from the interview. King and Horrocks (2010) suggest that rapport is not about ingratiating yourself with the participant but rather, rapport is about developing trust and enabling the participant to feel comfortable in discussing issues with the interviewer. The purpose of interviewing participants is about gaining their personal accounts of a particular subject matter and to accomplish this, there must be an establishment of a good rapport (Berg and Lune 2012).

Within interpretive research and all other forms of enquiry, Locke et al (2010:184) identify that there must be a 'trustworthiness of data' and there should not be a threat to the validity and reliability of the given research. Marshall and Rossman (2011:39) acknowledge that there is much debate as to 'what should constitute criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry', however, they do emphasise the importance of conducting qualitative research rigorously and ethically based on solid methodological practice. I have ensured throughout the research for this submission that each study adheres to these principles and I have always strived to truthfully represent the 'voices' of my participants.

Similarly, Cohen et al (2018:517) advise that, 'the biases and values of the interviewer should not be revealed, the interviewer must be neutral and avoid being judgemental'. As I am passionate about my subject I was very aware that I needed to manage my state and remain interested but not get personally involved as there is always the danger of bias by individual researchers, particularly if they have strong views around the topic that they are researching (Bell, 2014). Furthermore, Morse (2015) identifies that there may be unconscious bias that may be evident in the question and design. I was aware that my own personal and practitioner lens could influence the interviews and reflected upon this throughout the research process and was careful to maintain my interviewer stance at all times. As Somekh and Lewin (2011:321) acknowledge. 'Researchers either need to eradicate bias or understand it through a process of reflexivity and account for it in reporting their work.'

In order to avoid personal bias, I have developed a number of ethical approaches during the interview. I have learnt to sit back, to pause, and to allow people to talk. I record the sessions so that I can maintain eye contact with the participants and observe their body language. A strategy I have adopted is to reflect on the questions and their responses straight after the interview before transcribing to help avoid bias.

Semi-structured telephone interviews were also used to gather data for the research on home education from seven participants (five were interviewed by myself and two participants interviewed by the co-author of the paper) (paper 2). Data was also gathered from one participant for the research on supporting children with Down syndrome (DS) via a telephone interview (paper 6). Whilst telephone interviews have been considered to be second rated within qualitative research and not commonly used with this form of research

(Bryman 2016), there are strengths to this method of data collection (Cohen et al 2018). Telephone interviews were utilised for a number of reasons. Due to the geographical locations of the participants (paper 2) who were located in differing areas of England and within the North West region (paper 6), it was not possible for me to meet for face-to-face interviews. This was due to time constraints and the prohibitive cost of travel, concurring with the research by Holt (2010:114), who acknowledges that this method of interviewing is, 'a practical option for participants who are geographically dispersed'. Furthermore, Cachia and Millward (2011) suggest that due to time constraints for participants, they are more inclined to partake in telephone interviews rather than face-to-face interviews.

Telephone interviews were considered by all parties (myself and the respondents) as an appropriate alternative to face to face interviews. King and Horrocks (2010) suggest that in terms of scheduling interviews, the researcher should inform the participants about the duration of the interview. Whilst the approximate duration of the interview was given on the participant information sheet, at the commencement of each interview I reiterated an approximate time scale for the duration of the interview (between forty minutes to one hour). This worked well with the participant from paper 6, however, I was totally unprepared for the response from all of the home educating parents (paper 2). Each participant responded to this information by stating that they may have to end the interview at any time without warning due to the need to respond to their child/children straight away and the telephone conversation would be terminated immediately. Participants assured me that I was more than welcome to re-schedule the interview if required. In reality, the interviews continued between one and two hours. Furthermore, King and Horrocks (2010:82) advise that interviewers 'should encourage participants to arrange to take the phone call in as private a location as possible.' However, I would argue that as home educators, participants required greater flexibility in terms of being able to move around their home and supervise their children. For this research, there had to be a pragmatic approach to getting data, dealing with the situation in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations.

Overall, using this method of data collection for the seven published papers, I interviewed 65 participants using face-to-face interviews and 6 telephone interviews. Thus, a total of 71 interviews were conducted by myself in the data gathering for the articles in this submission and 4 participants were interviewed by the co-authors of the joint publications. For all of the

interviews, I followed an interview protocol as recommended by Creswell (2009) and Cohen et al (2018). All of the interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and parental permission for paper 3. Audio recording interviews is recommended as it not only preserves the raw data but also allows the interviewer to focus on the question and answer process rather than concentrating on writing handwritten notes (O’Leary 2017; Clough and Nutbrown 2012). If needed, I was able to handwrite notes pertinent to the interview when the participant had left. I did not take notes during the interviews and concur with Marshall and Rossman (2011) who identify that sometimes the taking of notes within an interview can inhibit or impact upon the participants.

The recording of the interviews allowed me to reflect upon the interview during the transcription period and I was able to replay the recordings in order to ensure that what was transcribed was accurate and where necessary, the transcripts could be improved (Silverman 2006). Whilst the process of transcribing the interviews verbatim was time consuming, I was also able to include additional information within the transcripts such as intonation, pauses and other non-verbal clues as discussed by Robson (2011:478) who suggests that this process may help to ‘clarify how a particular utterance should be coded’. The transcription process also enabled me to familiarise myself with the data prior to the stage of data analysis and enabled me to commence the process of identifying key themes. Following transcription of the interviews, a thematic data analysis approach was used to analyse the data (Cohen et al 2018; Braun and Clarke 2006). As Braun and Clarke (2006:78) acknowledge, ‘thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data.’ Each transcript was read and reread and then extracts from the data were manually colour coded across the range of data, with similar extracts being given the same colour code. I then collated the colour-coded data and started the process of identifying themes or subthemes. This process was conducted over a period of time with the themes being reviewed and refined as identified by Braun and Clark (2006) in their six phases of analysis. The codes and themes emerged from the interaction with the data and were not predetermined (Robson 2011).

Prior to the commencement of research element of each study, I responded to the university’s research ethics protocol procedures and BERA guidelines, ensuring that all research was approved. As Denscombe (2014:307) identifies, the role of the ethics

committee is to consider any potential risks that may occur to participants when carrying out a proposed piece of research, whether these risks have been considered by the researcher and the precautions to be taken to minimise any risk. Importantly, the well-being of participants should be at the fore throughout any research. O'Leary (2017) acknowledges that for a study to be ethical, the researcher should ensure that the emotional, physical and mental welfare of participants must be protected. These ethical concerns should be considered from the outset of a research study, through to the final report (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The process of initially completing the ethics form for each study was important to me as a researcher because, it made me consider any possible issues that may arise from the interview process with the sample groups, who were discussing their own, lived experiences around certain topics pertaining to education e.g. emotional distress and anxiety. I adhered to the ethical principles discussed widely within literature throughout the whole research process, from the commencement of the studies to the publication of findings.

Participants were informed as to the purpose of the research and completed the relevant consent forms. All participants agreed that any data collated could be used within publications. From the outset of each interview process I assured participants that all information would be confidential and that participants would remain anonymous, with pseudonyms being used for all of the studies. I also made clear to all the participants that they could refuse to answer questions that they may not be comfortable with or could withdraw from the research at any time (Silverman 2006). This was particularly pertinent for paper 3 as the participants were under the age of 18 years (Creswell 2009). When interviewing participants for paper 3, I acknowledged the guidelines set out by Robson (2011) (based on the 'Guidelines for Research' by the National Children's Bureau 2006) that identifies the main issues to consider when involving children and young people in research. This includes obtaining permission to interview the children and young people, initially from the 'gatekeeper' and then obtaining parental consent and assent/consent forms from the participants. All the information about the research was written in an appropriate format for them to comprehend and enabled them to make an informed decision as to whether they wished to partake in the study. Similarly, Lambert and Glacken (2011) also provided useful guidelines when undertaking the interview process with children and young people. In light of these guidelines, I reflected upon the previous interviews conducted with adults for papers 1 and 2 and ensured that the process was more appropriate to the age of

the participants e.g. using child-friendly language, shorter, more simplistic sentences and where necessary, asking the participant if they understood the question that was asked.

Prior to commencement of the interviews, participants (and parents for paper 3) were asked if they required a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. For those who asked for the transcript, this was sent to them electronically. The majority of the participants who had requested a transcript sent an e-mail acknowledging that there were no issues. Only one participant identified an error within the transcript and this was rectified immediately, indicating the reliability of the transcription.

6. Connecting Themes and Links to the Research Objectives

This research led to an interest in the overarching theme of students with disabilities and their inclusion in the education system at school and HE level. I wanted to investigate not only their experiences but parental views and practitioners' perspectives on the extent to which the education system(s) was responsive to their needs. Whilst findings from the research papers identified barriers that impacted upon individuals across the range of education settings, importantly, there also emerged from these papers examples of a range of inclusive practices that support the individual to reach their full educational potential. This chapter outlines the connecting themes that have emerged within the 7 papers; training, partnership and inclusive practice.

Training

Throughout the 7 papers, the theme of a lack of training for staff in the area of SEND was evident across the range of institutions investigated; schools, colleges and universities. In schools the research found that early diagnosis of dyslexia was important and staff were insufficiently trained to identify this need and provide appropriate support (Paper 1). Findings also discovered a lack of training on ASC by teachers and others staff had meant that parents had no choice but to withdraw their children from the mainstream education system and home-school them (Paper 2). Even with a school rated as inclusive, training emerged as a key theme, this was from pre-service education to CPD throughout the career (Paper 7). Alongside the institutions, specific issues were also raised about knowledge of specific conditions. The research found the need for specific training on dyslexia, ADHD and ASC within both ITT and CPD (Papers 1, 2 & 3). All papers indicated that this is a complex area that needs to be investigated further in terms of what would work to enhance the training of all individuals working in these fields.

Training for SEND is not a new area of study and these 7 papers all indicate that there has been little progress into the development of both ITT and CPD around the educational aspects of SEND. The House of Commons Education Committee (2019) report focuses on special educational needs and disabilities. The report states "The system is only as strong as the professionals who make up the system and we want to see greater support provided to them" (House of Commons Education Committee (2019:17). This research has shown

that this need for training is as great as ever and I hope that there is some positive movement from this report to enable all individuals to be supported in a way that suits them.

Partnership

Partnership was the second theme emerging from the research. The importance of staff working in partnership with outside agencies was identified as a key factor in supporting individuals with SEND. This research found 2 key services which were speech and language support and portage. In paper 6, the speech and language therapist would leave a scheme of work for the school to deliver. Hence supporting the staff to continue with the development work outside of the formal sessions. Paper 7, evidences that staff feel working with experts from outside agencies supports them in doing their job. Specialists were found to be extremely useful to the school and its community.

Importantly the need for schools and staff to engage in parent partnership (Papers 6 & 7) was identified. However, this is not always a positive experience as Paper 2 highlighted parents feeling that the school did not want to work with them. Schools have to drive this partnership if it is to work and engagement with parents has been found to be critical. Paper 6, found that one school had asked a parent with a child who had DS to deliver a talk to all members of staff to raise awareness of the approaches to supporting children with DS. Staff in Paper 7, emphasised the importance of working with parents in supporting their children. This school had an open-door policy and invited members of the family to partake in activities alongside the children. Literature has identified the important of working in partnership with parents and my research has found that effective partnerships can have a positive impact of the experiences and educational outcomes of the child.

Inclusive practice

Inclusive practice was the third and final key theme which can be both positive and negative and relates to differing practices within a range of education settings. A theme across the papers was about the willingness and ability of the educational institutions to ensure that all individuals were supported to reach their full potential. Paper 7, found that it was the willingness for all staff within the setting to engage with a range of inclusive practice that supported the educational and emotional needs of the children. On the other-hand negative responses from teachers can stigmatise pupils and negatively impact upon their self-esteem and subsequent learning (Castens and Overbey 2009) (as identified within papers1,

2 and 3). Paper 1 identified the impact that the school environment had upon the participants who were dyslexic, particularly in terms of their self-esteem and a failure to address their academic needs. Whilst Paper 2 highlighted that the educational needs of the child with SEN were not being addressed by the setting and the staff.

Paper 4, found that there was reluctance for some students to identify with being disabled as well as non-disclosure of a disability, partly due to the perceived associated stigma. Whilst there were a number of positive practices and resources that supported the students such as, the nature of level of student support services, there were also identified barriers to inclusive practice. Some barriers were identified as, staff being unaware of the student's disability and unwillingness for staff to make reasonable adjustments. The non-disclosure of a disability by students, makes it difficult for lecturers to provide adequate support for those individuals. Whilst participants in this study were amenable to making 'reasonable adjustments', it was unclear as to what these adjustments should be.

7. Critical reflection of my development as a researcher

Undertaking a PhD by publication has been a long journey and at times not an easy process, however, in terms of my development as a researcher, I have acquired many skills in terms of reading, writing and working with research participants. Reflecting on my early academic career, the first two papers were co-authored and the experiences of collaborative research and writing, helped to develop the essential skills required to research and publish. Following the publication of the first paper, I naively assumed that the peer review process for subsequent papers would be straightforward. Whilst the research for the second paper was a collaborative process in terms of interviewing and collating data, I undertook the task of writing up the findings of the research. After submission of the paper for the peer review process, I was not prepared for the amendments that were required in order for the paper to be accepted. Reflecting back on this experience as an early career researcher, I realised that the reviewer feedback was not dismissive of my work but rather the opposite and the comments were helpful and supportive in developing my writing and research skills. I have also peer-reviewed submissions to journals, a process that Holt (2013) considers as being important to any researcher. When I peer-review articles, I remember the reviewer comments made on my own articles and how constructive and positive feedback is important. I guide the author on what is good about the work and also offer helpful suggestions on how to improve aspects of their work. I hope that my comments will support and develop the writing skills of early career researchers.

As my confidence and expertise increased, I began to write and publish independently. At the commencement of my research journey, the whole process of undertaking research was difficult. From deciding on an appropriate methodology for the research, gaining access to 'gatekeepers' and participants, structuring interview questions, interviewing, collating relevant data and then writing and publishing a paper. However, the more skills I gained, the more I enjoyed the whole process and I look forward to future and further research.

My development as a researcher has certainly impacted upon and benefited my own practice within HE, particularly after researching for papers 1, 4 and 5. I am more aware of the possible issues and barriers that can be experienced by students who have a range of seen and unseen disabilities. As noted by Morina Diez et al (2015) these barriers can be

physical barriers in terms of access, curriculum barriers and attitudinal barriers towards disability. I reflect more on my own practice, ensuring that all students I work with are fully supported and not disadvantaged in any way. In terms of inclusive practice, I liaise with the student support services in identifying reasonable adjustments for individuals. Lecture notes are given in advance to all the cohort for differing modules. Paper documents given to the students during the lectures are printed on a range of differing coloured paper and in differing font sizes, in order to support individuals who have dyslexia. Students may record my sessions and for the students who have an Individual learning support plan (ILSP) alternative assessments are considered.

I am a practitioner-researcher and the nature of my teaching offers opportunities to engage in research informed learning, where I share my findings and discuss and reflect on the research with students. This is a symbiotic relationship in the sense that students help to inform and shape how I see the research and challenges me to consider it through different lenses. In this way, the learning space in the classroom informs my research. This research informed teaching and learning applies to each of the seven papers within this submission.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

This submission has been based on 7 studies, with research objectives being centred around how differing educational settings can include and support people with a wide range of needs, in summary, 'Inclusion for all'. Linking to research objective 1: to explore the lived experiences of individuals who have or are associated with a disability and/or special educational needs, across a range of education settings, the papers set out to gather the 'voice' of individuals and their lived experiences across a range of educational settings.

Linking to research objective 2: to investigate inclusive practice and barriers with educational settings, findings from the studies acknowledge inclusive practices within the settings. However, despite current and relevant legislation in place for individuals with a range of additional needs, aspects of my research has identified that there are still barriers and issues to full inclusion, with education settings failing to meet the needs of individuals who have SEN and/or disabilities. These barriers have been identified as primarily attitudinal barriers from differing practitioners within the education system and importantly, a lack of knowledge about the range of SEN/disabilities, largely due to insufficient training either within college, initial teacher training or training (continuing professional development). In terms of the influence of my work, I would argue that the 7 published journal articles have contributed to the field of education and SEN/disabilities by identifying inclusive practices and importantly identifying the barriers to inclusion from the perspectives of a range of individuals giving voice to their lived experiences. The published work has not only been cited by other researchers, but paper 3 has also been recommended as relevant reading in a book aimed at teachers who are undertaking master's level study (Cremin, T. and Burnett, C. (2018) (4th Ed) *Learning to teach in the Primary School*, London, Routledge publishers). Paper 2 has also been cited on a number of occasions within a commissioned report on safeguarding (Forrester, D. Maxwell, N. Slater, T. and Doughty, J. (2017) *An evidence based review of the risks to children and young people who are educated at home, Final Report*, Commissioned by the National Independent Safeguarding Board, Wales).

This research has found indicated some key recommendations that could help the sector develop its ability to support all individuals within a range of educational settings.

- For all students studying to work in the educational setting to receive an additional 2 hours training every week for the period of their programme. This training needs to focus on how to support a wide range of SEND in the appropriate sector.
- In terms of CPD, all staff within education to undertake a mandatory 1 day SEND training each year based on a 5 year development plan.
- All schools should be supported to work in partnership both with their parents and with the appropriate outside agencies.
- Educational settings to identify areas of inclusive practice and use this information to produce and disseminate a development plan. This will need monitoring and evaluating to ensure that there is an impact for all individuals.

9. Current and future research agenda

Universities are required by law to ensure that students with a disability are not treated less favourably than their non-disabled counterparts with 'reasonable adjustments' made to ensure parity for all students. Within my current institution, when potential or current students identify that they have an additional need or disability, they are referred in the first instance to the student support services. In 2016/17, funding provided by the DSA for students with a disability or additional need changed and this funding is now provided by HEI support.

Following ethical approval, I am about to commence a qualitative study that seeks to provide an understanding of the precise role of the university student support services within the given institution. This research may identify any possible barriers to this support, particularly in light of recent changes to funding. Data will be collated through semi-structured interviews with 7 participants (the central services department) who work within this organisation and have given informed consent to be interviewed. Findings may be used to provide recommendations for future policy and practice within LJMU. I also intend to disseminate my findings at the LJMU teaching and learning conference.

There are potential areas of research interest that follow on from my previous work. Firstly, paper 3 discussed the experiences of children who had been diagnosed as having ADHD and the impact this had upon their life experiences, particularly within a school setting. I am interested in conducting further research around ADHD but from an adult perspective, with participants who did not receive a diagnosis of ADHD in childhood. Certainly, the existing literature discusses the consequences of academic failure for some individuals who have ADHD that can lead to subsequent occupational failure within adulthood (Daley and Birchwood 2010). Access to appropriate participants would be via 'the gatekeeper' at the ADHD foundation. This research would use narrative research to collect the 'stories from individuals about their lived and told experiences' (Cresswell 2013:71). The primary source of data collection would be through interviews. This research would add to the limited current literature that focuses on the lived experiences of adults who have had a late diagnosis of ADHD. I intend to deliver findings from this study within a relevant conference.

Findings from papers 7, 2 and 5 identified that there was a need for improved training (pre-service) around a range of disabilities and needs within education settings, particularly for teaching staff. If there is to be successful inclusion for all, adequate training should be delivered for all teacher-training courses, within universities. The next stage in relation to this topic is to conduct research within my own institution using the methods discussed below, with the aim of possibly identifying any areas for improvement within the given pre-service training. Moving from my comfort zone of small-scale research, this could extend to being a larger research project with other researchers. The focus of this study would be initially, to identify current SEN and disability training within a number of universities within the North West of England. A qualitative approach to this research has been considered appropriate to collate data. Initially, semi-structured questionnaires would be considered with an invitation to be interviewed at a later date, using semi-structured interviews.

10. References

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Appendix 1

1. Publication list with links

Gibson, S. and Kendall, L. (2010) Stories from school: dyslexia and learners' voices on factors impacting on achievement. Support for Learning: British Journal of Learning Support, Vol 25 (4) pp. 187-193	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9604.2010.01465.x
Kendall, L. and Taylor, E. (2016) 'We can't make him fit into the system': Parental reflections on the reasons why home education is the only option for their child who has special educational needs, Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, Vol. 44, (3), pp: 297-310	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03004279.2014.974647
Kendall, L. (2016) 'The teacher said I'm thick!' Experiences of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder within a school setting. Support for Learning, Vol. 31, (2), pp.122-137	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14679604/31/2
Kendall, L. (2016) Higher education and disability: Exploring student Experiences, Cogent Education, Vol. 3, (1), pp. 1-12	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1256142
Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting students with disabilities within a UK university: Lecturer perspectives, Innovations in Education and Teaching	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14703297.2017.1299630

International, Vol. 55, (6), pp. 694-703	
Kendall, L. (2019) Supporting children with Down syndrome within mainstream education settings: parental reflections, Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, Vol. 47, (2), pp.1-13	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03004279.2017.1412488
Kendall, L. (2018) Supporting all children to reach their potential: practitioner perspectives on creating an inclusive school environment. Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, published online 2018.	https://tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03004279.2018.1520278

