To Teach or Not to Teach? A study of Dyslexia in Teacher Education

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

Disability legislation and the widening of participation to a greater diversity of students requires that universities meet the needs of a growing number of students disclosing dyslexia. Previous research has shown that support for these students is often minimal, and, at best, relies on generic minimal guidelines advised by Disability Services. In addition, negative attitudes towards these students have been identified in the literature. This attitude was particularly prominent in relation to students with dyslexia in teacher education.

This case study, conducted in a Scottish university, used semi-structured interviews of students, academic staff, disability support staff, head teachers in schools and documentation and data, to ascertain how the institution supported students with dyslexia in teacher education. Data were collected and analysed using an interpretivist approach where data is analysed inductively through interpretation of the data.

Findings suggest that there were examples of an inclusive culture. This included a university wide admissions policy that did not discriminate against dyslexic students on application and entry to teaching, and the establishment of clear lines of responsibility and communication between Disability Services and academic staff regarding student adjustments. It was recognized by academic staff that students with dyslexia were able to use creative strategies in order to overcome the barriers created by dyslexia. However, a fully inclusive ethos was hampered by a belief that students with dyslexia may be unfit to
practise as teachers as a result of dyslexia. This was despite the lack of clear evidence that this was the case. The institution therefore needs to look beyond the legal requirements of disability provision by challenging negative cultures. This study suggests that this can be facilitated by the provision of meaningful staff development that promotes equality and diversity and by listening to the voices of the students themselves.
DECLARATION

The work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree.

Signed .......................................................... (candidate)

Date..............................................................................

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations.

Signed .......................................................... (candidate)

Date..............................................................................

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed .......................................................... (candidate)

Date..............................................................................
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADSHE</td>
<td>Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>Additional Support for Learning Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education Degree</td>
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<td>DDA</td>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act</td>
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<td>DED</td>
<td>Disability Equality Duty</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Disability Rights Commission</td>
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<td>DSA</td>
<td>Disabled Student Allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTCS</td>
<td>General Teaching Council for Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistics Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMIE</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENDA</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Disability Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEFC</td>
<td>Scottish Higher Education Funding Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEC</td>
<td>Scottish Teacher Education Committee</td>
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The term “students with dyslexia” and “dyslexic students” will be used interchangeably to refer to students with dyslexia. The term “disabled students” will also be used. This is in accordance with the advice concerning inclusive language provided by the UK Government Office of Disability Services Department of Work and Pensions (2010).
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Project

During the last eight years of my career I worked as a lecturer and latterly a Programme Director within the higher education sector in Scotland, with a remit for social equality and inclusion across a range of programmes in Initial Teacher Education and postgraduate Masters Programmes. In addition, I was appointed Disability Support Officer for the School of Education. In this role I was the initial point of contact for students with a disability within the school. I was responsible for co-ordinating support for staff and students, disseminating information on student recommendations, advising on support issues and identifying training and staff development needs with regard to disability issues.

At the instigation of Sir Jackie Stewart, who approached the Scottish Government with concerns over the level and quality of the coverage of dyslexia in teacher education, the Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC) was charged with implementing a two year action plan for inclusive education to include specific targets related to dyslexia and to developing a broad approach to the principles of inclusive education within teacher education.

This resulted in a paper issued by STEC entitled Inclusive Education within Scottish Education (2008). In this paper the seven Scottish Universities were fully committed to implementing a Framework for inclusive education which would provide clear guidance and support for student teachers and teachers throughout their careers. STEC had also emphasized the importance of universities continuing to “refine and enhance” support and provision for their own students with dyslexia in teacher education and to encourage students with dyslexia to enter the teaching profession, thus increasing positive role models. Moreover, they made the point that universities should model best practice in supporting student teachers with dyslexia so that they can model these skills in the
Further funding to take the Framework forward to include students with dyslexia in teacher education was granted by the Scottish Government in 2011.

I was appointed, along with a senior manager, as the representative from my own university to contribute towards the development of a Framework for Inclusion for teacher education within Scottish universities. I worked as a key member of the team of lecturers from across the universities in planning, implementing and embedding the Framework and delivering staff development for staff within the universities. (Evidence for this is provided in the Professional Development Portfolio in Chapter 8). As a result of this collaboration, The National Framework for Inclusion was launched at a national conference by the Cabinet Secretary for Education for Scotland in April 2009 and the associated web resource was launched in January 2010.

The review of the literature for the current study revealed that dyslexia in teacher education is an under-researched area (Griffiths, 2011). Although dyslexia is the most prevalent disability within higher education and it is illegal to discriminate against students with a disability (Disability Discrimination Act, 2005; Equality Act, 2010), negative attitudes still exist towards students with dyslexia, particularly in relation to teacher education (Meager and Hurstfield, 2005; Riddell, Tinklin and Wilson, 2005; Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Goode, 2007; Pumfrey, 2008; Griffin and Pollack, 2009; Pavey, Meehan and Waugh, 2010).

Given the paucity of studies, I felt that the inclusion of students with dyslexia in teacher education was a worthy area of study for my professional doctorate. It would also allow me to build on my previous involvement in the field of dyslexia and would contribute towards instilling best practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education. Most
importantly, I hope that this study will contribute to the development of new knowledge within this important field of research.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter has outlined the background and rationale for my area of research. Chapter 2 identifies the conceptual framework of the project through a substantial literature review. The focus, scope, aims and outcomes of the study are discussed. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology employed in the study and the justification of an interpretivist approach using a case study method. Chapter 4 addresses the findings, analysis and discussion related to the perceptions of the lecturers in the study and the discussion is followed by a summary of conclusions and implications for practice. Chapters 5 and 6 follow in the same vein by addressing the findings, analysis and discussion relating to student perceptions and the views of other informants. Chapter 7 outlines the final Summary and Conclusions of the study including the implications for professional practice, the contribution to professional knowledge and the limitations of the study. Chapter 8 contains a Personal Development Portfolio which reflects on my career to date and my educational journey through the research process. Appendices relating to the study are contained in Chapter 9.

The literature review follows this introductory chapter.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

2.1 Focus of the Review

The focus of this literature review is dyslexia in teacher education and it will provide the conceptual framework for this doctoral thesis. The key research question posed in this study is “How far has a Scottish University implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the barriers, challenges, strengths and enablers for inclusive practice?” This key question was addressed through the analysis of four sub questions:

1. How do students with dyslexia in teacher education perceive the attitudes of staff and the support they receive within their programmes of study?
2. What are the attitudes and perceptions of staff towards students with dyslexia in teacher education?
3. What are the particular challenges of school placements for student teachers with dyslexia?
4. To what extent does university disability policy and practice support student teachers with dyslexia?

As can be seen in Appendix 1, these were not the original research questions. These were modified as the research progressed. Questions 1 and 2 in Appendix 1 were combined to form RQ 1.

2.2 Scope of the Review

The scope of the literature review includes the background to dyslexia in higher education including the legislation and policy context of social inclusion and human rights and the implications for universities of increasing numbers of students with dyslexia gaining places in higher and teacher education. A major focus of this literature review is how dyslexia is perceived and supported in teacher education and the barriers and challenges for students with dyslexia. An in-depth consideration of the causes of
dyslexia was beyond the scope or the aims of the study therefore this has only been briefly evaluated. Key sections conclude with a brief summary.

2.3 The Aims of the Study

This literature review has provided a springboard for the aims and outcomes of my own research. The aims of the study are:

1. To analyse how far inclusive policy and practice within a Scottish university supports students with dyslexia in teacher education.
2. To identify the barriers, challenges and enablers for students with dyslexia in teacher education.
3. To provide insight and guidance to higher education institutions, the Scottish Government and the General Teaching Council for Scotland on how inclusive policy and practice is impacting on students with dyslexia on initial teacher education programmes in order to help shape future policy and practice.
4. To provide a “voice” for students with dyslexia and lecturers in teacher education in Scotland through drawing on their personal experiences of dyslexia.

2.4 The Outcomes of the Study

The major outcome of this study will be to raise awareness of the barriers and challenges which dyslexic students face in higher and teacher education for all those with a stake in teacher education including students, universities, local authorities, schools, the Scottish Government and to facilitate change in policy and practice for students with dyslexia. This will be achieved through the writing and dissemination of a case study report for each of the key stakeholders after completion of the thesis. A further outcome of this research has been the recognition that a biopsychosocial model of disability is important in understanding how biological, psychological and social factors impact on students with dyslexia and in helping them understand and cope with their disability. This will be
addressed in the literature review which follows and will be returned to in my conclusions.

2.5 The Background to Social Inclusion and Dyslexia in Higher Education

2.5.1 What Is Dyslexia?

A history of dyslexia and its causes is beyond the scope of this literature review but a brief synopsis of the present position regarding dyslexia will be provided here. The most recent causal factor implicated in dyslexia is the phonological deficit theory which proposes that people with dyslexia lack phonological awareness or have an ability to process sounds in language (Snowling, 2000; Frost et al., 2009). Although this is still regarded as the major cause of dyslexia, other causal factors have been identified, implicating magnocellular neuronal systems in the brain as being responsible for affecting visual and temporal elements of speech and reading (Stein, 2007). Furthermore, it is thought that these areas of the brain may be inter-linked, ultimately affecting literacy and co-ordination (Smith-Spark and Fisk, 2007; Nicholson and Fawcett, 2008). Manifestations of these difficulties in people with dyslexia are considered to be inefficient short term memory resulting in difficulty in following instructions and memorising and maintaining verbal information in long-term memory. According to Mortimore (2008) there has been a shift away from opposing theories to consideration that there are strong connections between them and that further research may reveal how they interconnect.

Definitions of dyslexia in the UK appear to be unclear and controversial, and, in some cases disputed, particularly in the field of education (Elliott and Place 2004; Ho 2004; Rice and Brooks, 2004; Elliott, 2005; Elliott and Gibbs, 2008). At present there is still no single conclusive definition of dyslexia (Bell, 2010). According to Mortimore (2008), Pumfrey and Reason’s (1991) list of accepted definitions of dyslexia has now increased to over forty and there is considerable disagreement amongst these definitions.
Mortimore concludes that this situation is unhelpful for professionals, parents and people with dyslexia (p.50).

A further cause of confusion around the definition of dyslexia is that the term “specific learning difficulty” has been used interchangeably with dyslexia (Pumfrey and Reason, 1991) and includes dyslexia as a specific difficulty along with dyspraxia, dyscalculia (difficulty with numbers) speech and language difficulties and attention deficit disorder (ADD) (Mortimore, 2008). Reid (2003) alerts us to the fact that dyslexia is now viewed as a continuum from mild to severe and there is a wide variety of severity within individuals. Although usually associated with literacy difficulties, there are other factors within this spectrum such as underlying differences in information processing.

A working definition has been proposed by The Scottish Government in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including Dyslexia Scotland (2008).

“Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities that are effective for the majority of learners. These difficulties may not be typical of an individual's performance in other areas” (no page).

A further dimension to dyslexia is described by the British Dyslexia Association.

“It is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed and the automatic development of skills that are unexpected in relation to an individual’s cognitive abilities.”(British Dyslexia Association, 2007, p.5.).

A major criticism of such definitions is that they are non specific and that the focus is on reading ability and there is no reference to other areas of difficulty that can be a feature of dyslexia including writing, speech, short term memory and co-ordination difficulties
(Macdonald, 2009). This was a finding in Macdonald’s own study in which he sought to understand dyslexia as a sociological issue through the analysis of the narratives of adults diagnosed with dyslexia. The majority of participants within the study identified problems with organisational skills, speech and short term memory difficulties and they claimed that these symptoms were as troublesome as their literacy difficulties. In Erskine and Seymour’s study of developmental dyslexia in adulthood they point out that it has long been recognised that the core of difficulties persist despite the effects of maturation and support for learning (Erskine and Seymour, 2005). This view is supported by several other studies (Bartlett and Moody, 2000; McLoughlin, Leather and Stringer, 2002; Hatcher and Snowling 2004; Rose, 2009). Mortimore and Crozier (2006) propose that, although students with dyslexia may have compensated for earlier difficulties to enable them to enter university, students remained disadvantaged at university by poor note-taking and difficulties with reading and written expression. However, the BDA advises that the effects can be lessened by appropriate intervention, including the application of information technology and supportive tutoring and counselling (BDA, 2008). These findings therefore have major implications for how universities support dyslexic students in higher education.

Bell (2010) cautions that the uncertainty over the definition of dyslexia can be confusing for employers, particularly if they associate it with reading difficulties as reading is seen as a key requirement for occupations in the 21st century. This suggests that the elimination of the association of dyslexia with only reading difficulty would also be a useful way forward for students with dyslexia in higher education in order to reduce stigma around dyslexia and reading ability.
2.5.2 The Legislative and Policy Context

2.5.3 Models of Disability

The medical model of disability or individual deficit model portrayed disability as a medical problem that needed to be assessed and remediated by professionals within the field of medicine (Finkelstein, 2005).

Over the past thirty years, doctrines that traditionally informed educational policy such as psychology, sociology and medicine have been replaced by “values” which are embodied in the concept of social justice. These values embody “a philosophy of acceptance” where all are valued equally and treated with respect (Carrington and Elkins, 2005, p.6). The term was borne out of the human rights agenda, which began in North America in the 1960s and has been legitimised by subsequent human rights legislation such as the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, UNICEF (1987). Social justice has been defined by Bell (cited in Adam and Bell, 2007) as a view of society “where resources are evenly distributed and where all members of society are seen to be physically and psychologically secure” (p.1). Thomas and Loxley (2007) argue that social justice should be considered a fitting framework for education in the 21st Century. The term social inclusion is used interchangeably with social justice and starts with the belief that education is a basic human right and leads to a more just society (Booth et al., 2006). This is endorsed by Mittler (2000) and Ainscow (2007) who support the view that social exclusion is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability and that reform and restructuring is required within educational environments in order to break down barriers to inclusion. This stance is referred to as a social model of inclusion. In the United Kingdom, as a result of New Labour’s social policy concerning the rights of all to be educated in a mainstream setting, the social model of inclusion replaced the medical model (Chapman, 2005).

In 2012, the UK Government, as part of its Welfare Reform Bill, announced that it had rejected the social model of disability in favour of a biopsychosocial model (Inclusion London, 2012). This model has its roots in medicine where a “holistic” approach to
patient care was advocated. This allowed for a greater understanding of the patient and their illness by considering the biological, psychological and social factors and their complex interactions (Engels, 1980). The World Health Organisation (2001) developed an International Classification of Functioning (ICF) based on this model, which claims to offer a different framework for thinking about disability which borrows from both the social and medical model and blends biological, individual and social perspectives (Accessing Safety Initiative, 2010). Opponents of this model claim that “it is a right wing model led by profit and the market” and will undermine the rights of disabled people and reduce their right to financial support (Jolly, 2012, p.1).

2.5.4 The Evolving Concept of Inclusion

The term inclusion was initially concerned with the rights of all children to be educated in mainstream education and this was viewed as the route to equality (Glazzard, 2013, p.183). Topping and Boyle (2013, p.52) have defined inclusion as “something to do with people and society valuing diversity”. The term is not without contention as it is a dynamic term that is evolving, developing and changing and therefore lacks clarity as a definition (Clough, 2006; Sikes et al., 2007; Smith, 2007). Thomas and Loxley (2007) claim that it has become a “buzzword” that is devoid of meaning and is therefore misunderstood. Glazzard (2013) argues that, as a result of the uncertainty over the conception of the term inclusion, practitioners’ own understanding of inclusion ultimately affects the way that inclusion is translated into policy and practice. Dunne (2009), in her critique of discourses on inclusion, argues that the neo-liberal values of present UK Government have encouraged exclusion rather than inclusion through encouraging a “normalising, hegemonic discourse” (p.44). The emphasis on educational standards by recent and current governments in the UK has widened the achievement gap between learners with and without SEN (Special Educational Needs) and has marginalised these learners and has reinforced injustice and discrimination (Glazzard, 2013).

Some researchers are of the opinion that the incompatibility between the inclusion and standards agenda can be reconciled. Lloyd (2008) has argued that this can be overcome
by broadening the notions of success and achievement. Ainscow et al., (2006), through their research on how inclusive cultures can contribute to the standards agenda, asserted that inclusion can create greater reflection in educators that can ultimately lead to pedagogical change.

Much of the impetus for social inclusion in education has been the result of international legislation including UNESCO (1993) the Salamanca Statement (1994) and, more recently, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). The setting up of the European Higher Education Agreement (2010) has also influenced recent policy and has emphasized the importance of international cooperation in higher education in improving quality and innovation in teaching by promoting active citizenship and ethical values and developing individuals and societies.

Despite these differing perspectives on disability, it is suggested by a number of researchers that disablism or unwitting discrimination against those with disabilities exists, despite disability policy and legislation and a medical model of inclusion is still alive and well (Holloway, 2001; Fuller et al., 2004; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Madriaga, 2007; Mortimore, 2012). The language of Special Educational Needs, for example in terms of labelling, is still used within education, thus emphasizing the medical model of disability (Skidmore, 2004; Thomas and Loxley, 2007; Dunne, 2009). Booth et al. (2006) remind us that values are “both historically and culturally located” and that people articulate different values, and often view inclusion in a narrow sense, particularly when they consider the implications for practice (p.3). This is even more problematic with a hidden disability like dyslexia. For some academics in universities “dyslexia appears to be invisible” due to lack of experience and understanding of the disability (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011, p.342).
2.5.5 The Scottish Dimension

Scotland’s legislation and policies on social inclusion are distinctive to other parts of the United Kingdom. A study conducted by Morgan (2012) claimed that differences in the emphasis placed on values within society was shaped by cultural and political change and that countries that had undergone the devolution process had placed a greater emphasis on values and rights within education. This is a useful theory which could explain some of the differences in policy for disabled people in England and Scotland. Moreover, Booth et al. (p.3) emphasize that the “market led” policy changes in education in England since the late 1990s in the name of educational “improvement” are more marked than in other countries, including the United States. In England, the process of providing a “statement” of a young person with learning disabilities through the vehicle of a Record of Needs is still the norm. The statement of a Record of Needs is a legal document, drawn up by an educational psychologist and entitles those with disabilities to additional resources and perpetuates the language of SEN rather than inclusion (Glazzard, 2013).

In Scotland, the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scottish Executive, 2005) led to the dismantling of the Record of Needs and recommended the term “Additional Support Needs” in place of the label “learning difficulties” to reflect the social model of inclusion. The Act gave parents more rights in relation to assessment of needs and school placement, but more importantly made it mandatory that young people themselves needed to be consulted regarding their needs. However, a report by the Scottish Government (2009) highlighted that, despite the ASL Act, there were still significant issues with communication between parents, young people and the local authority services. A report published by the Organisation of Economic and Co-operative Development (2007) reviewed national policies in Education and highlighted that there were still significant gaps in equality within the Scottish education system, indicating that policy and legislation is no guarantee to full inclusion within society.
2.5.6 The Background to Dyslexia in Higher Education

The Report of the National Working Party, Dyslexia in Higher Education Policy and Practice (Singleton, 1999) defined dyslexia as a complex neurological condition affecting 4% per cent of the population, mainly compromising the acquisition of written language and its usage, memory and organisational skills. Further research (Fitzgibbon and O’Conner, 2002) estimated that as much as 10% of the adult population is affected by dyslexia. The British Dyslexia Association (2008) has estimated that there are six million adults in the UK who have dyslexia and that 4% of the population are termed severely dyslexic. Bell (2010) asserts that this is a fitting reason why it should be an educational priority.

As a result of social policy on inclusion, the concept of “learning difficulty” has changed (Special Educational Needs Disability Act, 2001; Disability Discrimination Act, 2005; Equality Act, 2010; Public Sector Equality Duty, 2011). The label of dyslexia is used interchangeably with the term specific learning difficulty but labels suggesting impairment have been rejected by proponents of the social model of inclusion and new models have emerged which have given way to the term “learning difference” and the focus has been on identifying disabling barriers within the environment (Riddick, 2000; Macdonald, 2009). Mortimore (2008) defines the debates around the medical model of dyslexia and suggests that, within the medical model, dyslexia is seen as a “series of symptoms underpinned by biological deficits which can be diagnosed and treated” (p.57), leading to a view that people with dyslexia are vulnerable victims who will be labelled and stigmatised. However, these studies have highlighted that, with a “hidden or unseen disability” such as dyslexia “psycho-medical labelling” can be beneficial. This view is supported by Riddick and English (2006), who suggest that although negative connotations of dyslexia stem from a literacy based society, “specific support and adjustments cannot be made until a biological difference is diagnosed” (p.206). Riddick and English are therefore suggesting that we need to recognise that dyslexia is constructed socially but that it is also a medical condition. The positives of labelling are
that it offers a diagnosis and availability of appropriate intervention and it has the potential to ensure better resources as a result of further research, funding and legislation and this view has been supported by Macdonald (2009). The views of these researchers therefore seem to support the biopsychosocial model of disability described previously. This, therefore, has implications for universities in supporting those with dyslexia in higher education. It requires a major shift from the belief that the student with dyslexia is impaired as a result of their disability to a more holistic approach that recognizes the complex interactions of the biological, psychological and social factors in understanding disability (Dowling, 2005).

Shakespeare (2006, p. 2) rejects the social model of inclusion and sees it as “an attempt to construct an alternative which neither reduces disability to an individual medical problem nor rejects the limitation of bodily limitation and difference”. Moreover, he sees the United Kingdom’s model of inclusion as being particularly problematic as it is too dogmatic compared with other countries where there is less of a polarity between the social and medical model.

2.5.7 The Way Forward

The polarization of these two juxtaposing views is viewed as unhelpful. A social model of inclusion that is too dogmatic could deny students appropriate support and lead to further alienation and discrimination (Macdonald, 2009). Reflecting the biopsychosocial model of inclusion discussed above, an approach that is gaining increasing momentum in European sociology is the analysis of individual perceptions relating to peoples’ experiences, interactions and interpretations of disability (Bertaux, 2003). This approach would allow people with dyslexia to tell first-hand their own stories of how dyslexia has affected them. Ferrie et al. (2001), in their qualitative multi-case study of perceptions of teachers with learning disabilities, made the point that there was a dearth of personal narratives or insider perceptions regarding the experiences and attitudes of those with
disabilities. A more recent narrative, life-history study by Glazzard and Dale (2013) powerfully illustrated how dyslexia shaped the self-concept, self-esteem and resilience of each of the participants in the study. This, therefore, suggests a way forward that recognises the need for a socially constructed view of disability that does not reject biological factors affecting disability. This also has implications for the importance of this approach for future qualitative studies in research concerning those with disabilities such as dyslexia. It also has implications for giving marginalized groups such as students with dyslexia a “voice” (Glazzard and Dale, 2013). They claim that such an approach could be used to raise educators’ awareness of dyslexia through a process of reflection, where they could examine their own practices in relation to students with dyslexia. Trowler (2010) suggests that, insider research that focuses on the experience of specific groups that have been previously unrepresented or disempowered, can benefit from such an approach.

### 2.6 Disability in Higher Education

Legislation on equity and social inclusion has had a considerable impact on higher education, and, in the UK, an increasing number of young people with disabilities are applying for and gaining places within this sector (Mortimore, 2012). In law, universities are bound by the Equality Act (2010). It is illegal to discriminate against any student who has a disability and it is the responsibility of the university to make reasonable adjustments for all students who have declared a disability. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2005) has been extended in three stages since its inception in 1995. Part 4 of the DDA (1995) (as amended, 2002) made it unlawful to treat students less favourably in admissions and universities were required to make reasonable adjustments to provision where disabled students would otherwise be disadvantaged, including pedagogy, the curriculum and assessment.
The Disability Equality Duty (2006) was an amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and has placed significant new duties on public sector bodies requiring a shift away from a reactive approach to tackling discrimination to a proactive, whole institution response. It calls for the elimination of unlawful discrimination, promotion of equality and the treatment of disabled people more favourably where necessary to meet their needs. As a result of new legislation, the Equality Act (2010) replaced the DDA (2005) and the DED was updated and referred to as the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011). The Duty also extends to all Government agencies. Students undertaking placements outside the university as part of their studies are entitled to be treated under the legality of the Public Sector Equality Duty. For this reason, universities need to ensure that placement providers are aware of their duties outlined in this Act before students begin their placements. The importance of this is highlighted by the Disability Rights Commission (2007) in their report on maintaining standards and promoting equality in higher education. They emphasise the need to plan for disabled students and that sufficient information is shared with work placement providers. Local authority schools therefore need to ensure that they are able to support students with a disability on placement.

Previous studies have claimed that obtaining full equality in higher education was difficult to achieve (Borland and James, 1989; Holloway, 2001; Fuller et al., 2004; Madriaga, 2007). During the 2009/10 academic year 175,155 students declared a disability within higher education in the United Kingdom (HESA, 2011). Moreover, there has been a rise over the years in the number of students declaring a disability, which currently stands at 7.5% of the student population (Disability Alliance, 2011). However the Government’s Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) acknowledges that the number of disabled students remains low in higher education given the number of people with disabilities in the UK is 1.3 million and it is likely that the above increase is due to HEIs creating a more inclusive environment in which students feel they can declare a disability and better recording systems, rather than a substantial increase in participation. This
appears to indicate that, despite the increase in students declaring a disability there is still an under representation of disabled students in higher education.

Riddell et al. (2005) suggest that there is resistance to inclusion of students with a disability and the idea of “widening access” to students who may not have entered university in the past. The potential of the disability legislation to protect the rights of those with disabilities in the UK has also been questioned by Healey (2003, p.26) who has defined disability legislation as a Trojan horse that can lead to greater stigmatisation of disabled students by reinforcing a sense of failure through the labelling of students with disabilities. He claims that the learning experiences of all students should be the subject of greater negotiation. Difference needs to be recognised as a positive for higher education adding to the “lifeblood of the institution” and this can only be achieved through a flexible approach and innovative ways of approaching the curriculum, learning and teaching (Riddell et al. 2006, p.4).

In addition to the disability legislation, managerialist policies in the form of disability monitoring and evaluation have been introduced into universities with the aim of widening access and raising attainment as a result of New Labour’s public sector policies. According to Trowler (2010), organisational structures within universities have been adapted to suit management forms of control but he believes that UK higher education has not succumbed fully to this management ideology. One such approach is the compliance with the Disability Act (2006) in which progress for students with disabilities is demonstrated in relation to specific targets. There is ongoing debate whether tools such as quality assurance, audits and target setting are compatible with social justice goals (Clark, Gewirtz and McLoughlin, 2000). Supporters of these policies claim that effective public services can only be obtained through the identification of specific goals and targets while critics are of the opinion that the focus on accountability limits the creativity of those involved (Power, 1997; Riddell et al.; 2007). The process of quality assurance
needs to take account of the whole institution otherwise it will become a pointless exercise, as, according to Mortimore (2012) “institutions need to be able to monitor the extent to which their practice embodies their inclusive mission statements” (p.1).

Universities are required to publish, implement and monitor a Disability Equality Scheme that demonstrates how the duties of the Equality Act (2010) are being met. This involves the collection of evidence from various sources including disabled staff and students in order to measure how the legislation is impacting on policies, procedures and practices. Hurst (2007) cautions against universities assessing the impact of every single policy within an institution. He proposes that, as the major function of a university is teaching, learning and research, policies that impact on these areas should be afforded the highest priority. Furthermore, he contends that it is questionable whether legislation has made a great deal of difference as there is ample evidence to show that disabled people still encounter disadvantage and discrimination in many areas of their lives. He suggests that the initial and continuing professional development of staff is the most important factor in addressing fully inclusive provision within the university sector. This view is supported by Tinklin, et al. (2004) who have identified in their study that there are still significant gaps between policy and practice. They claimed that barriers still remain for full participation of students with a disability in higher education and that teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation and staff development are the areas in most need of attention. More recently Budge, (2010) has challenged universities to make “sophisticated, whole-of organisation responses” and not just change at a superficial level (p. 5).

2.6.1 The Widening Access Agenda
A further key driver for change in higher education regarding disability has been the increasing focus given to the widening access agenda by government in the United Kingdom. Recent analysis concerning disabled students and higher education has shown
that the proportion of applicants accepted and enrolled in higher education who declare a
disability or are in receipt of the Disabled Students’ Allowance has increased over time
(Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2009). This report showed that the
proportion of accepted applicants who declared a disability rose by 19% between 2001
and 2007. Although this appears encouraging, it is unclear whether this is due to more
students declaring a disability, institutions recording a disability or to an actual increase
in numbers of disabled students (p.1). A further interesting statistic from this report is
that disabled students tend to have lower qualifications on entry than those without
disabilities and they are more likely to have entered higher education through non-
traditional routes. This also applies to teacher education in Scotland, where students
without the required grades for entry, can apply through the “access” route. These
students undergo a teaching qualification within the further education sector and can use
this qualification as an entry to study teacher education (Scottish Wider Access
Programme, 2010). International evidence suggests that students from lower socio
economic groups and those with disabilities do not necessarily have lower rates of
success than those of the majority (Thomas and Quinn, 2006). The fact that these
students have entered higher education without the range of skills that may have been
expected in the past for study at university level means that universities must support
these students if they are to succeed in their studies and to ensure that university retention
rates are at an acceptable level (MacDonald and Strata 2001; Mortimore and Crozier,
2006; Jones, 2008). Offering non-traditional students access to higher education is not an
end in itself but is only the beginning of support that should be available throughout their
studies (Bamber and Tett, 2001; Tinto, 2008).

2.7 Brief Summary

This section has outlined current definitions of dyslexia and has explored the legislative
and policy context regarding social inclusion and the polarization between social and
medical models and how this impacts on dyslexia in higher education. A new model that
takes account of biological, social and psychological aspects of disability has also been
considered. Social inclusion policy in Scotland and England are compared and finally, the widening access agenda is discussed.

2.8 Implications of Dyslexia for Higher and Teacher Education

2.8.1 Definitions of Disability

A wide definition of disability is used in the legislation and includes students with mobility, visual or hearing impairments, students with dyslexia or medical definitions such as epilepsy and mental health difficulties. The latter are referred to as “unseen” difficulties as the manifestations of disability are not as obvious as in physical disabilities. The definition of disability under the Equality Act (2010) defines a person who has a disability as having a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform day-to-day activities.

2.8.2 Disclosure of Dyslexia

According to the Equality Act (2010) institutions have a duty to anticipate the needs of disabled students generally whether an individual student chooses to disclose or not. For some students this may mean that there is no need for them to disclose their disability as their courses are fully accessible to all students and no adjustments are therefore necessary. However, the reasonable adjustments advice according to the DDA (2005) and the Equality Act (2010) is that higher education institutions and employers are made aware of a student’s disability in order to make specific adjustments (Disability Rights Commission, 2007). Furthermore, students should be advised that they can declare their disability at any time during their programmes. For some students the labelling process is helpful and is significant in improving self-concept (Riddick, 1995; Glazzard, 2010).

However, for some students, declaring that they have an unseen disability such as dyslexia is problematic. Watson (2002) proposed that people with disabilities often did not feel that their disability was part of their own self-concept due to the negative connotations related to their disability. Riddick (2000) points out that labelling is not a
unitary concept and that there can be negative and positive outcomes of labelling. Although declaring dyslexia can be positive for some students in terms of obtaining better resources and support it may also perpetuate a medical model of disability and not address the environmental factors contributing to barriers to inclusion. Riddell and Weedon (2006) suggest that some students with dyslexia resent being categorised as disabled and may distance themselves from other disability labels such as sensory and physical impairment.

2.8.3 The Prevalence of Dyslexia

It is clear that an ever-increasing number of young people with dyslexia are applying for places in higher education (Pumfrey 2008; HESA 2011) and it is the most commonly declared disability (Goode, 2007; Griffiths, 2007; Griffin and Pollack, 2009; Pavey Meehan and Waugh, 2010). These figures have continued to rise and HESA 2011 identified that this increased from 8370 to 32,665 between 1999 and 2011. Exact data pertaining to students with dyslexia are difficult to obtain due to the manner in which the Higher Education Statistics Agency categorises dyslexia “within a general category of specific learning difficulty and non disclosure” (Griffiths, 2011 p.6). The Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) report (2009) showed that the unseen disabilities including dyslexia, accounted for 70% of the total of declared disabilities. In addition, 61% of students with dyslexia were in receipt of the Disability Support Allowance. These figures do not take account of the number of students who may have similar difficulties who remain undiagnosed and may decide not to declare their dyslexia to the university (Mortimore and Crozier 2006, Brunswick, 2012). However, in terms of the student population these numbers are still fairly low and constitute only 4.3% of all students in higher education (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2012

2.8.4 Perceptions of Academic Staff Towards Students with Dyslexia

Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) point out that there has been a dearth of studies concerning the attitudes of teaching staff in universities towards students with dyslexia.
The report of the National Working Party on Dyslexia in Higher Education (Singleton, 1999) highlighted that forty three per cent of students with dyslexia were identified for the first time as a student in higher education. This almost doubled between 1996 and 1999 and is continuing to increase year by year (Tinklin et al., 2004; Hargreaves, 2007) and in 2010/2011 1.3% of the student population was known to have been identified with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia (HESA, 2011). Students with dyslexia are encouraged to disclose dyslexia throughout their programme of studies and this may account for the large increase in students declaring dyslexia. However, there is no cause for complacency as negative attitudes from peers and lecturers affected some students' decision not to declare their dyslexia as they fear stigma and discrimination (Olney and Brockelman, 2003). Students who are unwilling to declare, risk failure in their studies and this may lead to students not completing the course through expulsion or drop out (Konur, 2006).

A number of studies have investigated staff attitudes towards students with dyslexia in higher education from the perceptions of students themselves. A key finding was that academic staff had a lack understanding of dyslexia and had received little training in dyslexia (Holloway, 2001; Morgan, 2001; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Hanafin et al., 2007). This has ultimately led to communication difficulties between academics and students who were often afraid of approaching staff for fear of a less than sympathetic approach. Other studies have shown that staff could be patronising and rude towards students with dyslexia (Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Hanafin et al., 2007; Madriaga, 2007).

Cameron and Nunkoosing’s study (2011) had the aim of exploring lecturers’ experiences and perceptions of dyslexia using a constructivist grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006). They concluded in their findings that lecturers’ own personal experience of students with dyslexia was a powerful indicator of how much they knew about dyslexia and how likely they were to offer provision and support for dyslexic students. For
lecturers who did not have that experience they were less likely to offer individualised support. This concurs with the findings of Tinklin and Hall (1999) that experience of students with dyslexia was more of an influence on how lecturers supported students with dyslexia than training and policy within the institution. This message, therefore, has implications for ensuring that academic staff are able to share the experiences of students with dyslexia in higher education through giving students a greater “voice”. This may be a more powerful way of raising staff awareness of dyslexia than more traditional forms of staff development (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011).

Kirwan and Leather (2011) warn that we are at a point in time where support for students with dyslexia is under threat in the United Kingdom due to pressures on university funding. Furthermore, they claim that there is a “generally negative climate for dyslexic students” and a general misunderstanding over what dyslexia means and a misconception that it cannot be accurately diagnosed (p.33).

### 2.8.5 Dyslexia and Teacher Education

Early studies which examined whether students with dyslexia could become effective teachers highlighted that academics were sceptical that teaching should be a career goal for students with dyslexia (Morgan and Rooney, 1997). They recognised that there were some academics who equated extra time in exams for students with dyslexia to be unfair and that they should be able to write essays etc. under the same conditions as everyone else. A more recent study by Leyser et al. (2007), of students with disabilities in teacher education over a ten year period in Israel, concluded that initial concerns about “fairness” to other students when students with dyslexia were given extra support in examinations were now giving way to more willingness of faculties in the university to provide accommodations for students with disability in teacher education. Lecturers were spending more time in providing support for students such as preparing lecture notes in advance and assistance with preparation for exams.
Morgan and Rooney (1997) concluded that, far from dyslexia being a barrier to teaching, it was in fact an advantage for teaching in that teachers who have the benefit of understanding their own strengths and weaknesses as learners are more sympathetic and patient as teachers. Given support, they can be equipped with strategies to address their areas of difficulty such as tapping into their own individual learning styles and utilising these in their own teaching. This view has been supported by French and Herrington (2008) who, in their analysis of their experience of operating discussion/action groups with dyslexic students in higher education, suggested that it is essential for academics to realize that students with dyslexia are still learning about their own dyslexia and that academics and teachers can learn about teaching and learning from them. Riddick (2003) recognizes that not all teachers with dyslexia will be outstanding teachers as they will have a range of competencies and skills like any other teacher but that teachers with dyslexia were more liable to become effective teachers if they possessed coping strategies. However, some students with dyslexia may have accumulated unhelpful coping strategies often as a result of low self-esteem and high anxiety (Carroll and Iles, 2006) and support for these students is crucial if they are to succeed. In addition, they may need counselling to prevent continuation of such disadvantage. Brunswick (2012) advises that focusing on socio-emotional aspects of dyslexia is an important aspect of support and allows students to comprehend their own experiences.

Griffiths (2011), in her study of the placement experiences of students with dyslexia on teacher training programmes, concluded in her findings that student teachers with dyslexia have strengths which often go unrecognised but that they also face difficulties which should be addressed through appropriate support mechanisms.

The Scottish Teachers’ Education Committee (STEC) emphasized the importance of universities continuing to “refine and enhance” support and provision for their own
students with dyslexia and to encourage student teachers with dyslexia to enter the profession, thus increasing positive role models. Moreover, they make the point that universities should model best practice in supporting student teachers with dyslexia so that students can model these skills in the classroom and universities were urged to “practise what they preach” in terms of inclusive practice so that all students have a positive approach to inclusion in their teaching (STEC, 2008, p.8).

2.8.6 Fitness to Practise

The Disability Rights Commission’s formal investigation into maintaining standards and promoting equality recommended that existing health standards across teaching, nursing and social work be repealed as these standards did not reflect the DDA (1995) and that it undermined disability equality (DRC, 2007). Sin et al. (2009) have defined “fitness standards” to mean the “formal regulation and policies, practice and procedures operated by higher education institutions, employers, qualification bodies and other organisations that affect an individual’s ability to qualify, register and work in a number of public sector professional occupations” (p.2). These standards are overseen by a number of regulatory bodies such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland and all qualified social workers, nurses and teachers in England, Scotland and Wales are required to register with these professional regulatory bodies. Fitness to practise standards in relation to health and disability were repealed for Teaching and Social Work in Scotland but have remained for nurses and midwives across the UK. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (2009) defines fitness to practise as “having the skills, knowledge and good character to do your job” (p.8). Furthermore they investigate all allegations of misconduct and lack of competence, questioning fitness to practise. They emphasize that its main purpose is to safeguard the health and well being of the public. The DRC (2007) points out that this aspect of their role became increasingly prominent following high profile cases involving professionals such as Beverley Allitt or Harold Shipman. Moreover, this resulted in an increased focus on regulation within health and social work. The authors of this report also recognize that these anxieties are understandable as health, social work and
educational professionals have contact with children and vulnerable people. Dyslexia, epilepsy and mental health were frequently mentioned as a risk to public health. However, the DRC also claim that “there was no evidence that the use of generalised health standards is an effective way of assessing and managing risk” (p.31).

There is evidence that changes to registration and fitness to practise in Nursing and Medicine are imminent as the General Medical Council has rejected the case for student registration and is looking at ways of allowing medical students to engage with and promote professionalism. The NMC plan to implement a quasi-registration in the form of student indexing but they are now also emphasizing a greater focus on individual competencies rather than health and fitness to practise standards. Social Care regulators are the only health and social professionals in the UK to register students (Boak et al., 2012). A report by the Health and Care Professionals Council (2012) has recommended that, although a register of social workers recommending “fitness to practise” still exists, this should eventually be phased out and responsibility should largely be with education providers, including owning and managing the potential risks, through students being made aware of their obligations under the council’s standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Boak et al. (2010) considered student fitness to practise and student registration internationally, including the United States, Canada, South Africa and the Republic of Ireland. It was clear from this review that student registration as a means of regulatory bodies intervening in respect of fitness to practise was not commonplace among health and social care providers and the majority devolve responsibility for assuring student fitness to practise to education providers.

A framework of professional standards based on a set of competencies for teachers and student teachers is used to assess student teachers and registered teachers in Scotland (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2006a; 2006b). A new set of standards for teachers will come into effect in August, 2013. In response to the DRC’s
recommendations the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2012) has published a guide for universities for supporting the learning of student teachers with disabilities. They emphasize that competence standards still need to apply but that these should not have a negative impact on disabled students or newly qualified disabled teachers.

Students with dyslexia applying for a place at a Scottish university will have the opportunity to declare their disability at interview or to be assessed for dyslexia at any point during their programmes. The DDA, (2005) amended the previous academic standards justification clause for discrimination which allowed an academic provider to invoke “an academic, medical or other standard applied for on behalf of an education provider for the purpose of determining whether or not a person had a particular level of competence or ability” (no page). This amendment has ensured that universities have genuine competence standards that are applied to all students.

These competencies based on performance are used to assess student entry to teacher education and to assess their performance throughout their studies. The competencies are based on values and beliefs, professional knowledge and understanding and professional skills and abilities (General Teaching Council Scotland, 2006a and 2006b). The GTCS, (2012) state that “it is a requirement to ensure that competence standards being applied such as the standards in social work, education, and the standard for initial teacher education do not negatively impact on disabled students or newly qualified practitioners” (no page).

It is emphasized that reasonable adjustments do not need to be made to competence standards themselves, but in order to comply with the disability legislation, reasonable adjustments must be made to the assessment of competence standards.
Although Scotland was the first country in the UK to reject “fitness to practise” relating to health and disability in teaching and social work, England and Wales have now followed suit, with the recent introduction of new teaching standards, reflecting a competency based approach. In April, 2012, the Teaching Agency replaced the Teaching Development Agency, as the regulatory body for teaching in England. This has subsequently been replaced by the National College of Teaching and Leadership (2013). These standards are now used by Initial Teacher Training providers to assess whether trainee teachers can be recommended for Qualified Teacher status. However, students are still required to pass a skills test in literacy, numeracy and information technology and this can cause considerable angst amongst dyslexic students. It is interesting that, as a result of the review of Teacher Education (2010) in Scotland, tests of literacy and numeracy are being compulsorily introduced into teacher education (The Scottish Government, 2012). This has been linked to a raft of changes that purports to raise professional standards in teaching. This would seem to reflect the continuation of the tensions between maintaining standards and equity for disabled students and could represent a backward step in equality for student teachers with dyslexia (DRC 2007).

The Scottish Government (2012) stress that students with dyslexia will receive support in order to achieve these aims and that they can re-take the tests a number of times if they are initially unsuccessful. A pilot for this approach has been used in one university in Scotland where assessments of literacy and numeracy have been introduced during students’ programmes of study and students are allowed to re-take these tests until they reach a competent standard (Scottish Government, 2011). It remains to be seen whether these tests may prevent students with dyslexia from applying for teacher education programmes. Similarly, in Wales, revised professional standards for education practitioners were developed in 2011, but these are less prescriptive than the teaching standards in England regarding literacy (Welsh Government, 2011).

There is a dearth of information on fitness to practise standards in teaching both in Europe and internationally. In the United States, students on teacher education
programmes are protected from discrimination by the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). Universities cannot discriminate against disabled students in recruitment, application, testing, interviewing or decision making. In addition, admissions committees cannot treat standard tests taken with the aid or accommodations or adjustments to be considered of less value than those taken under normal circumstances (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). In England, as well as the requirement of high standards in literacy there is also a requirement to “develop a clear understanding of synthetic phonics” (Department of Education, 2011, no page). Given that the major cause of dyslexia is recognised as inability to process phonological input from language, this could cause considerable difficulty for dyslexic students. Riddick contends that in England and Wales the inclusion of literacy standards has led to “a particular focus on dyslexic applicants and a questioning of their suitability to teach” (Riddick, 2006 p.203). This was also the view of Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) who argued that ITE providers face the challenge of maintaining standards and “maintaining the integrity of the programme” (p.33). However, an over-reliance on the model of the teacher as a “competent craftsperson” has been challenged by Riddick and English (2006) who maintain that this model dominates other recognised characteristics of being a good teacher such as the charismatic individual and the reflective practitioner. Teachers with dyslexia developed their own coping strategies such as the use of spell-checkers and other technologies to allow them to support pupils with literacy. Furthermore, they claim that there is no conclusive research that links teachers’ own standards of literacy with those of their pupils but that the view that this is the case seems to proliferate within the education community. Moore (2004) proposes that these dominant discourses on teaching “have a nasty habit of getting in the way of teacher development ... heaping too much responsibility for educational consequences on the individual teacher” (p.3).

The DRC (2007) recognised that discrimination against disabled students still exists in the teaching and social work sectors in Scottish universities despite the removal of these fitness to practise standards and the existing disability legislation. This report also
recognised that there were particular barriers for students with dyslexia in nursing and teaching.

It is clear that a re-think of regulatory frameworks for fitness to practice is taking place both nationally and internationally and that, within the professions, there is a desire to maintain standards within a culture which also promotes equality. However, removal of “fitness to practise” standards is no guarantee that disabled students in teacher education will be free from discrimination and negative attitudes (DRC, 2007). According to Weedon (undated) “the notion of “fitness to practise” has been discarded as anachronistic and discriminatory; however, it clearly continues to exist in people’s minds, reinforcing the idea of disability as individual defect and the disabled individual as unworthy of full social inclusion” (p.13). Literature concerning professionalism accepts that the capability to become a professional develops over the course of a student’s education, through experience and learning alongside a developing knowledge (Kaser and Muscari, 2000; Wear and Castellani, 2000; Hilton and Slotnick, 2005). These studies also suggest that the best way forward would be for disabled students to develop the competencies relating to their profession during their programmes of study, with appropriate adjustments in order that they may achieve them. Stanley et al. (2007) concluded from their qualitative study on disclosure of disability within health, social work and teacher education, that investment in training for managers is desirable so that they understand their role in implementing the Disability legislation and they call for increased visibility of disabled professionals in the workplace. The DRC recognizes that these professions need to be regulated to protect the public but that health and fitness standards are a red herring and that what is needed is good management, supervision, communication and prompt action when problems occur. People with a disability have a wealth of skills and experience that are of value to the workplace and this can only enrich the professions (DRC, 2007). Carroll (2011) makes a clear link between equality, diversity and student wellbeing. She claims that it is essential that universities do not solely focus on the legal requirements but that they should be “working more pro-actively
to promote equality of opportunity and challenging negative cultures” (p.33). Moreover, she claims that this should result in greater wellbeing for students and staff.

2.8.7 The Literacy Standards Debate

The conflict between the inclusion agenda and the standards agenda with particular emphasis on students with dyslexia was the focus of Riddick’s study and, as discussed earlier, she maintains that the raising of high literacy standards as a target for school improvement has had a detrimental effect on student teachers with dyslexia and has further questioned their suitability for a career in teaching and teacher educators are under pressure to fulfil the requirements of both the inclusion and standards agenda (Riddick and English, 2006). Student teachers with dyslexia are therefore reluctant to disclose their disability (Bielby et al., 2007; Beverton et al., 2008). In relation to dyslexic student teachers, Heller (1998) advises that, as with any other student teacher, we cannot be sure that they will succeed but we need to be prepared to take the risk.

2.8.8 Literacy Standards in Schools

Evidence that literacy standards in the United Kingdom were below those of some other European Countries (Beard, 1998) resulted in the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy being adopted in England in 1998 and the Early Intervention programme in Scotland (1997) with the aim of raising literacy standards in primary school pupils and improving standards in the teaching of literacy. Evaluations of these programmes have shown that there are no clear outcomes which demonstrate that literacy standards improved as a result of these interventions (Wyse, 2003; Fraser 1997). Fraser’s evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme concluded that the strategies themselves in relation to raising literacy standards do not lead to specific attainments in reading but that other factors are just as important for successful results. These are high quality preschool education; reduced class sizes; positive relationships and involvement with parents
and family support programmes. Fraser also notes that individual teachers make a difference no matter the scheme in place to teach literacy. This implies that it is the overall quality of teaching that is important for the literacy success of pupils and not a narrow focus on the teaching of literacy skills.

2.8.9 Literacy Standards in Higher Education

Moral panic over literacy standards amongst university students is a recurring theme in higher education and has been emphasized in news articles since the late 1980s and concerns have been expressed by the public, government agencies and employers, as well as university staff (Street, 1999; Crowley, 2003). Moral panic has been defined by Cohen (1987) as concern that “the values and principles which society upholds which may be in jeopardy” (p.9). This is amplified by the media sensationalising an event and its consequences. A study of the standards of academic writing in UK higher education prompted by increasing national concern about the erosion of standards in areas such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and language structure, concluded that there was no significant difference in frequent errors made by students over a thirty year period (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004). The study concluded that there were limitations in examining student writing from a deficit approach and that universities should shift from a deficit to a developmental stance. Moreover she claims that academic writing needs to be taught in universities and a “whole institution” policy on student writing needs to be adopted and embedded in the culture of the university. This suggests that this approach would not only be of benefit to students with dyslexia but would be advantageous for all students. Skillen and Mahoney (1997) made the point that, although there is the premise in universities that students are equipped with the generic skills of literacy to enable them to study at university, in fact these skills are new to the average student on university entry. A Cambridge Assessment study in 2005 reported in the Telegraph newspaper found that students had a better grasp of grammar and punctuation than they had a decade previously (Paton, 2008). This article also highlighted that another study conducted in 2008 found that half the teenagers surveyed failed to spot the difference between
Standard English grammar and colloquial language. The report concluded that, for many young people, their daily use of English is in new media where non-standard grammatical constructs are more acceptable. This is ultimately leading to lack of awareness and use of more standard grammatical structures. This article suggests that language is an evolving concept that may change over time and that society may need to adapt to such change.

2.8.10 Difficulties of Students with Dyslexia in Higher Education

A number of studies have recognised that students with dyslexia encounter a range of problems with their studies in higher education (Fuller et al., 2004; Hall and Healey, 2004; Carroll and Iles, 2006; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Hanafin et al., 2007; Smith-Spark and Fisk, 2007). Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) have identified and summarised the key areas of difficulty for dyslexic students in post 16 education. These include difficulties with the writing and organisation of assignments; reading speed and comprehension; exams and assessment methods; working memory; spelling; concentration; keeping up with notes in lectures; handwriting; organisation of time; numeracy; phonological processing; stress and anxiety; listening and using the library. Due to these difficulties, some students with dyslexia have severe problems within their studies and “the success of students with dyslexia is clearly hard won” (Mortimore and Crozier, 2006, p.257). An additional problem that has been highlighted in previous research is that many students with dyslexia have difficulty with the transition between school, further education and higher education and they were unprepared for the amount of independent and self-directed learning that was required in higher education (Brunswick, 2012). Although Brunswick (2012) has suggested that students with dyslexia are more likely than others to withdraw from their programmes of study, McKendree and Snowling (2011) have shown that these students are just as likely as others to pass their first year exams as students without dyslexia of the same sex and age. They conclude that, with support, these students can achieve their goals.
It could be argued that all students may experience some of these difficulties on their programmes of study at some point. Mortimore and Crozier’s study (2006) compared a sample of students with and without dyslexia and some of the latter group did indicate that they had some of these difficulties but these rates were considerably lower than for the dyslexic group.

A further difficulty experienced by students with dyslexia is learning through listening due to difficulties associated with phonological processing (Taylor et al., 2009). These researchers point out that the majority of teaching at university is auditory and involves listening and understanding through lectures. They call for more use of pictorial and experiential learning materials that may be beneficial for both dyslexic and non-dyslexic students. The use of computers for assessment and planning purposes is therefore beneficial for students with dyslexia (Williams et al., 2006). Students may be asked to give a presentation as part of their assessment of course work. This can present difficulties for some students with dyslexia (Reid, 2004). This indicates that, although dyslexia is perceived as a difficulty with written language, other areas of language such as speech can also be affected therefore students with dyslexia need opportunities to learn and be assessed in different modalities, including the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modes (Reid, 2004).

It can be inferred from these studies that the conventional provision made by institutions for students with dyslexia such as extra time in examinations, although useful, is inadequate in supporting the spectrum of needs of dyslexic students. A range of inclusive teaching strategies are required such as study skills development incorporating group work, presentations, critical thinking and essay writing. This is consistent with the proposals Morris makes in her paper on supporting the wellbeing of students with mental health difficulties in universities (2011).
2.9 Brief Summary

This section critiqued the implications of dyslexia for teacher and higher education. This included a consideration of the prevalence of dyslexia in higher education. The attitudes of academic staff towards students with dyslexia were examined including attitudes and issues concerning dyslexia and teacher education. Fitness to practise and the impact of the increasing call for high literacy standards in teacher education were key issues explored. The section concluded with a consideration of the difficulties experienced by students with dyslexia in higher and teacher education.

2.10 Supporting Students with Dyslexia in Higher and Teacher Education

2.10.1 Assessment of Dyslexia in Higher Education

Students with dyslexia entering university may have had dyslexia assessed at school. These students will have had special exam provision in the form of readers, scribes, transcriptions and extra time or the opportunity to use relevant computer software including exam questions in digital format (Scottish Qualifications Authority, 2010). Similar support arrangements are implemented for dyslexic students at university once they have been assessed although digitised exam papers have, as yet, not been adopted practice in universities. A student who wishes to be assessed for dyslexia at a Scottish university will need to undergo specific diagnostic assessments. This is also the norm in England and Wales. A diagnosis of dyslexia can be given by a psychologist or educational professional, usually a member of the university’s disability support services. A discrepancy model is still used, where IQ is measured against general abilities, although other factors are also considered such as sampling of writing and spelling as well as family history in order to provide a more holistic view of students’ strengths and weaknesses. Batteries of tests to identify dyslexia have been criticised as they can be unduly long and take hours to complete. They are therefore considered unsuitable on humanitarian grounds. In addition, the assessments may not be valid as they can be affected by student fatigue, boredom and anxiety (Farmer et al., 2002). The efficacy of using IQ as a legitimate measure of ability was questioned by Gardner (1985) and has
influenced policy regarding assessment of IQ worldwide. A further debate around the discrepancy model for assessing dyslexia centres around the notion that dyslexia may be a “middle class ruse” (Riddell and Weedon, 2006) and that a diagnosis of dyslexia is directly linked to middle class power in education (Elliott and Place, 2004). Given that the discrepancy model of assessing dyslexia, based on psychological assessment is now considered a medical model of disability, a more holistic approach needs to be adopted that identifies both the strengths and barriers to learning of the dyslexic student (Pollock et al., 2004). Bell and McLean conclude that “dyslexia diagnosis remains an art and not a science, and the diagnosis is made by the tester and not the tests” (2012, p.136). They claim that observation by the assessor of students’ strengths and areas for development are more useful for a diagnosis than mere test results.

2.10.2 Curricular Adjustments

Reasonable curricular adjustments in the form of extra time in examinations, use of computer software and the availability of lecture notes on a university’s Virtual Learning Environment are now commonplace for students who have declared dyslexia. Taylor et al. (2009) concluded in their case study of teaching students with dyslexia in higher education that previous research on the experiences of students with dyslexia has been limited, particularly with regard to adjustments. The range of adjustments have been usefully described by Konur (2006) under four headings. The first of these adjustments is described as “presentation adjustments” which underpins the way that the curriculum is presented to students and should be dependent on the learning styles of the students, for example, paper handouts or electronic print or through a podcast. The second method of adjustment is described as “response adjustment” where the student should be allowed to respond to an assignment or examination in their own preferred learning styles e.g. poster instead of essay or the use of a computer during examinations. Thirdly, “timing adjustments” are used to describe extra time in examinations, usually time and a half, or extensions to work placements. A fourth type of adjustment has been described by Konur (2006) where readers, scribes or amaneurnses are employed to read exam questions or to
record the student responses to the exam questions. He refers to these as “setting adjustments” as students may have to sit an exam in a separate room to avoid distracting peers. A study by Berznitz (2003) examined the speed of phonological processing of dyslexic and non-dyslexic students and concluded that the speed of processing was lower in the dyslexic students. They conclude that this study provides evidence of the need for extra time in examinations for dyslexic students. Furthermore, Ofeish and Hughes (2003) made similar conclusions that students with dyslexia benefited from extra time in ways that those without dyslexia did not, due to the need to read, re-read and check.

Under the Equality Act (2010) these adjustments are a legal requirement. Despite this, many academic staff are unsure of how to appropriately support disabled students without what they see as compromising academic standards (Chapman, 2007; Chapman and Carlisle, 2006). This is confirmed by Tinklin et al. (2004) who have found in their own research that some lecturers are of the opinion that adjustments to teaching give students an unfair advantage and would therefore lower standards. This is supported by the findings of Riddell et al. (2007) particularly in relation to adjustments to assessments where respondents in their study appeared to have high levels of anxiety with regard to the cost of making adjustments. The area that proved to be most problematic to them was that of “conferring unfair advantage on disabled students in comparison with other students who were having difficulty on the course” (p.627). This attitude was particularly prevalent when considering adjustments for students with dyslexia. In their defence, many lecturers felt that time restrictions and an overloaded curriculum prevented them from spending the appropriate amount of time on meeting disabled students’ needs. Blythman and Orr (2002) claim that lecturers lack the confidence and skills base to support students over and above content knowledge and conflicts arise over the kinds of support they need to provide and what they feel they can do (Haggis, 2006).
In order to address lack of confidence and uncertainty amongst lecturers on how to best support students with dyslexia, experience-based training needs to be a focal point of disability training for academic staff (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). They suggest a useful approach where training could be part delivered by past or current students with dyslexia so that academic staff could have first-hand experience of the barriers these students face and how staff might best support them. May and Bridger (2010, p.5-14) illustrate in their case study, considering institutional initiatives to develop and embed inclusive policy and practice in higher education, that there should be a commitment to developing inclusive practice within individual job roles and that reflection on inclusive practice should be embedded in the appraisal process for all academic staff. Furthermore, they propose that staff development can be supported by web resources and blended learning modules on inclusive practice and the showcasing of existing good practice. They claim that these approaches would help to embed a whole institution response to students with dyslexia and other disabilities.

2.11 An Inclusive Curriculum

Loxley (2004), in her overview of accessibility issues for students with dyslexia in higher education, suggests a number of coping strategies that students with dyslexia should be encouraged to use. These include mind-mapping for planning, highlighting key points on texts, approaching a topic through a variety of media and developing a strong peer support. Such approaches are commonly referred to as adapting learning styles to suit individual learner needs (Buzan, 1982; Dunn and Dunn, 1991, cited in Mortimore, 2008) and involve a multi-sensory approach to learning utilising the auditory, visual and kinaesthetic modes of learning and also recognize the importance of the environmental, emotional, physiological and psychological milieu. However, although these approaches are widely used in schools, Mortimore (2008) recognizes that there is little hard empirical evidence as to their efficacy (Coffield et al., 2004). She also recognizes that practitioner experience indicates that a learning styles approach does allow students to build confidence and enhance relationships with teachers and lecturers.
The view that the majority student group has the potential to support disabled students has been supported by Adams and Brown (2006). However laudable these approaches are, they still place the onus on the student to make adjustments to the way they learn in an attempt to circumvent the lack of structural changes within the delivery of courses. Such changes would ultimately allow all students greater access to the curriculum. Hilsden (2008) supports this view by stressing that the development of learning strategies within the university setting is the ultimate responsibility of teachers within the disciplines. The deficit model of student support based on student deficiency and the belief that students’ learning needs can be overcome without intervention is highlighted in a number of studies (Blythman and Orr, 2002; Haggis, 2006; Wingate, 2006). Modifications made by academic staff to the university curriculum tend to be limited and formulaic and follow minimum guidelines resulting in little change in practice (Cameron and Nunkoosing 2011; Morgan 2012).

Singleton (1999) identified and recommended particular areas for consideration in relation to the nature of students’ difficulties with literacy and learning. These included students’ learning style, the demands of the course and the type of technology and support available. In addition, she identified that teacher training courses were particularly problematic for students with dyslexia. This included the amount of reading required, the emphasis on the written word as the main form of assessment and the organizational skills required for course assignments and school placements. Tinklin et al. (2004) suggested that a core requirement of a subject or discipline should be established and that alternative means of assessment can be identified which do not compromise the standards of the course. Konur (2006) goes a stage further and suggests that effective assessment does not necessarily mean modified assessment. This model of assessment is based on the medical model of disability and there is no empirical evidence to show that they have the desired outcome of “levelling the playing field”.
Waterfield and West (2007) have contributed to the philosophy that disabled students should not be considered as having distinct and different needs but that their needs be represented as a continuum of learner differences and that all learners may face these challenges at some time during their studies. They introduce the notion of “universal design” or an approach “to the design of products, services and environments which ensure that they are usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age, ability, or circumstance” (Chapman, 2007, p.70). Hall and Healey (2004) and Reid et al. (2013) suggest that this can be accomplished by the production of accessible handouts, varying the format of presentations such as flow charts, spider diagrams, graphs and illustrations and accessible classroom strategies including providing students with lists of new terms and abbreviations at the start of lectures and providing copies of diagrams etc. A similar view is proposed by Morgan (2012) who suggests that the development of more inclusive and flexible curricula would require fewer adjustments and would ensure fairness for all while maintaining academic standards. This approach is advocated by Waterfield and West (2007) with regard to assessment in higher education. They view the provision of extra time or amaneuensis as a process of fitting the disabled student into the existing assessment process thus separating them from their peers. They also view the “alternative approach” such as setting a viva voce instead of a written assignment as only benefiting a minority of students. They conclude by recommending that the most inclusive approach would allow all students to be assessed on the same learning outcomes in a variety of different ways.

Reid et al. (2013) advocate that multi-sensory learning is crucial for the success of students with dyslexia and they advocate the use of mobile technology such as smartphones, iPods and inexpensive applications that can be downloaded to these devices. These researchers claim that such devices have “unlimited potential for individualising teaching, learning and communication” (p.175). They also demonstrate how they fit in well with the concept of universal design.
Such policies are difficult to implement in higher education due to fixed organisational structures regarding assessment processes and there is much work to be done to make this a reality (Scott et. al, 2003; Hanafin et al., 2006; Mortimore, 2012). Chanock (2008) asserts that course planners in the humanities and social sciences are particularly reluctant to offer alternatives to writing in course assessment.

There appears to be a gap between what is now considered standard practice in schools where more cognisance is given to individual learning styles in course work and assessment, to what is the norm within teaching in the university setting (Reid 2005; Morgan, 2012). These findings suggest that inclusion in the university setting is seen as somehow different to what is required in schools (Morgan, 2012).

A study of wellbeing in higher education by Morris (2011) suggests that inclusive teaching strategies are known to benefit a wide range of students and that these need to be “mainstreamed and considered at the course design stage” (p.17). Moreover, she claims that these provide students with the opportunity to develop confidence and effective learning skills. The inclusive approaches recommended in the study are clear expectations and learning objectives; staggered deadlines; approachable/available academic staff; study skills development such as group work, presentations and essay writing; allowing for different learning styles; regular clear feedback and more opportunities to interact with other students. These approaches are not significantly different from inclusive practice recommended in schools (Reid, et al. 2013).

The SHEFC Report (2005) was developed to provide guidance to universities as to how they could evaluate their programmes and courses in order to meet the needs of the diversity of students, including those with disabilities. Programme flexibility in terms of attendance, pace of delivery, flexibility over method of delivery and the demonstration of
competence are recommended to course designers as a way of making their programmes more accessible to disabled students (Otten, 2003). This approach transfers the onus from the student to the university in developing effective learning and teaching strategies for all students. Shakespeare and Watson (2002) are of the opinion that the claim that “everyone is impaired” has far-reaching consequences for medical and social intervention in the 21st Century (p.25).

2.12 Support for School Placement

Assessment of school placement experience is an important part of teacher education yet very little research is available on this crucial area of student engagement (Griffiths, 2011). Student teachers need to compile, manage and maintain a detailed and substantial school file that outlines their lesson planning, resources and reflections and forms a major part of how they are assessed on placement (Meehan and Waugh, 2010; Griffiths, 2011). Singleton (1999) concludes that the cognitive impairments of students with dyslexia can have a significant impact on their achievement in terms of reading, writing, numeracy, oral fluency, organisational skills and self esteem. This will ultimately have an impact on their ability to organise and construct the school file. The use of the school file as a means of assessing students has been questioned by Imhof and Piccard (2009) as it may not allow for the flexibility to assess students, particularly those with dyslexia. Although reasonable adjustments may have been made for academic work within the university, that level of support may not be available within the school placement setting (Griffiths, 2011). The Disability Equality Duty (2006) and the Equality Act (2010) places a duty on all public providers to adhere to the disability legislation and to ensure that discrimination on the grounds of disability is unacceptable and against the law. In addition, the Equality Duty (2006, 2011) requires universities to ensure that students are not discriminated against for reasons relating to their disability whilst on a placement arranged by a university. The quality of school experience for all students, but particularly those with dyslexia, is crucial for their progress and development and any mismatch can lead to student failure due to loss of confidence and self esteem (Timmerman, 2009). It has been
recognised that work placements can be particularly stressful and problematic for students with dyslexia who are training to become teachers, social workers, nurses and midwives (Sumner, 2012).

**2.12.1 Mentoring Dyslexic Students on School Placement**

Increasingly, school mentors are being appointed to support probationer teachers (GTC, 2006b). In Scotland this is now mandatory for all newly qualified teachers and forms an important part of the induction year to which all Scottish teachers are entitled once they have qualified as teachers. According to HMIE (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate in Education), 2008, this induction scheme has attracted interest from education systems across the world. However, this level of support has not been extended to include mentors for student teachers on placement. This is the norm in secondary schools in Scotland but is not universal in primary schools as a result of re-structuring of staff roles that had been put into place after the publication of the McCrone Agreement, (Scottish Executive, 2001).

Griffiths (2011 p.8) proposes a useful model for placement support for students with dyslexia. She emphasizes that placement support needs to be “proactive, discussed, investigated and planned by all concerned” and that a dyslexia trained central coordinator, a university moderating tutor and a dyslexia support tutor should form a partnership for support. This team effort is supported by Bassey (1999) who calls for a consistent approach and effective communication within school placements. Strong partnerships between schools and universities are desirable for promoting meaningful professional development for teachers and students. However, lack of trust between the two sectors and major differences in ethos can create tensions. Such difficulties have been highlighted by Trent and Lim (2010) in their study of teacher identity construction in school-university partnerships. HMIE (2008) has called for stronger partnerships within teacher education in Scotland and stresses that they are “based on shared
ownership of programmes and students, clarity of expectation, trust, respect and equal status” (p.10). With regard to supporting students with dyslexia on school placement this can only happen if clear lines of responsibility are established in terms of who is ultimately responsible for arranging the different aspects of students’ training, supervision and support. The Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (undated) suggest that it would be advantageous for institutions to appoint a named person within each academic school who can act as a liaison between academic tutors, mentors/supervisors, the dyslexia service and the students themselves or alternatively a Practice Learning Advisor could be appointed within the school who could act as the link. They claim that training and awareness raising would therefore be crucial for mentors to increase their understanding of the detrimental effects dyslexia can have on school placement and the emotional stress that dyslexic students may experience as they struggle to conceal their difficulties because of fear of discrimination.

Support provided for dyslexic students on teacher placement from the university should be seamless but fear of their disability being stigmatised in the workplace due to lack of awareness of dyslexia can prevent students from declaring their disability in this situation (Stanley et al., 2007; Beverton et al., 2008; Pollack 2009). Placements that have not been matched to students’ needs can lead to undue stress and loss of self-esteem (Paul et al., 2008; Timmerman, 2009). However, Griffith (2011) points out that the process of supporting students with a range of needs poses often insurmountable challenges due to the individual needs of students and the differences in the environments and support available from placement providers.

2.12.2 Coping Strategies of Dyslexic Students on School Placement

In an international study conducted by Burns and Bell (2011) focusing on the development of the identities of teachers with dyslexia, three specific themes emerged. The sensitive, empathic teacher role was the most commonly referred to and involved
empathy and understanding of students with disabilities. These teachers felt that they had an advantage as they understood the barriers to achievement that their pupils had undergone and their own feelings of exclusion. This supports the findings of Morgan and Rooney (1997), Duquette (2000) and Riddick (2003). Glaser and Dale (2013) concluded from their narrative study that the personal experiences of students with dyslexia have “shaped them into caring and supportive teachers in contrast to the types of teacher they had experienced in school” which provided them with a strong teacher identity (p.35).

The second most prevalent category that was most prevalent in the study was the “teacher capitalising on personal strengths” (p.957) where the teachers described their diagnosis and the discovery of their own individual strengths such as the ability to utilise different learning styles and good oral and visual communication skills. Finally, the third teacher identity described in the study was that of the “perseverant and pro-active teacher” (p.957) who was able to take responsibility for developing their teaching practice and in persevering when they met challenges and obstacles. These teachers were keen to participate in further professional development, despite the challenges that learning something new might bring, indicating that they had developed their own specific strategies that had allowed them to persist despite the barriers and challenges.

The ability to reframe difficulties in a more positive light has been recognised as crucial for adults with disabilities to become successful in their careers (Gerber, Ginsberg and Reiff, 1992). These researchers claim that the effect of disclosure of difficulties allows students to work through this reframing process and that this has a key influence on their identities as teachers and professionals. Burns and Bell (2011) conclude that “teachers who have identities closely linked to their own experience of dyslexia will be ideally placed to help students develop an understanding of their own dyslexic strengths and weaknesses” (p.959). Konur (2006) concurs that the acceptance of disclosure and the documentation of the disclosure is a key issue for higher education students. However, Jacklin’s study concerning disclosure in undergraduate education concluded that disclosure of a disability was a “complex social process of transition to higher education”
in which students constantly form and re-form concepts of self and that, for some students, the academic identity was what they sought and that disclosure would undermine this identity (Jacklin 2011, p.105). Ferrie et al. (2001) in their study of teachers with learning disabilities, reported that teachers had made it a point to disclose their learning difficulty to their pupils and to their managers within the school in which they taught. They claim that the participants in their study “came to view their learning disability as a teaching tool rather than a deficit and readily shared this information with students” (p.29). In addition, their disability appeared to motivate them to become teachers in the first place in a desire to make a change so that others would not need to undergo the feelings of shame and the low expectations that they had endured. This is in contrast to Gerber’s study (1998) where teachers were concerned about disclosing their disability for fear that students, teachers and parents would judge them on their disability rather than on their performance as a teacher.

The importance of giving students “a voice” has been recognised by Fuller et al. (2004) and Kirwan and Leather (2011). As discussed previously, it is only by listening to students themselves about their experiences of dyslexia and how they manage and plan for their studies that universities can respond to students’ needs. This view is endorsed by Ferrie, et al. (2001) and Brunswick (2012) whose own research has been informed by in-depth qualitative studies that allow individuals to tell their own stories about their schooling and transition to study and employment. A focus on students’ own experience of dyslexia and the effect on self-concept and self-esteem could provide the focus for reflection and raising awareness amongst educators (Glazzard and Dale, 2013).

Gerber et al. (1992) remind us that students with specific learning difficulties are able to face challenges more successfully if they are able to manage and take control of intrinsic and extrinsic factors for success. This includes the ability to take risks and to try a number of solutions so that there is resilience in the face of failure and disappointment.
Burden (2005) and Elliott and Dweck (2005) propose that belief that one can change and develop is crucial to developing a strong concept of self, leading to improved self confidence and self esteem. Kiziewicz (2012), in her discussion concerning dyslexia and creativity, described how students with dyslexia use their capacity for persistence and perseverance in order to solve problems and describe their thinking to others. This accords with Sternberg’s theory that creative individuals persist in the face of resistance (Sternberg, 2006).

Kirwan and Leather (2011) have concluded in their recent study that one to one tuition and individual coaching of dyslexic students using a person-centred approach can facilitate goal achievement and personal development. They caution against the belief that delivering more reading, writing and technological support will offer a solution to students with specific learning difficulties and that self-development takes time, therefore students should receive different kinds of help at different points in their programme. At the start of the placement an informal assessment of needs would identify for the student and staff the most appropriate reasonable adjustments for the workplace. Students could also be given the opportunity to visit the placement school prior to the start of placement and to draw up a set of objectives and priorities. Practical support and strategies for helping dyslexic students to circumvent some of the difficulties they encounter in the workplace is essential throughout the placement. The Association for Dyslexia Support in Higher Education (undated) has suggested a number of strategies such as helping the student to draw up a plan for the placement, highlighting important information and dates; provision of extra time for supervision and completion of tasks; encouraging students to use a personal notebook or electronic diary and providing templates for reports and forms.
2.13 Brief Summary

This section addressed issues around support for dyslexic students in higher and teacher education. This included the consideration of how students with dyslexia are assessed within the university once they have disclosed dyslexia; the nature of curricular adjustments; the importance of an inclusive curriculum. Finally, the implications for supporting dyslexic students on school placement and the coping strategies that should be in place for dyslexic students, including mentoring, were illuminated.

2.14 The Role of Disability Support in Higher Education

In preparation for the ratification of SENDA (Special Educational Needs Disability Act) (2001) directors of disability services in England and Scotland visited Australia to learn from their models of support and to inform policy (Adams and Brown, 2006). This led to the appointment of disability support or liaison officers from the faculties within the universities to co-ordinate support for students with disabilities. This is now the norm in Scottish universities. In addition, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Councils in England and Scotland (SHEFC and HEFC) offer specific funding for improvement in support and provision for disabled students. This now includes premium funding introduced in Scotland in 2000-2001 and is paid to institutions on the numbers of disabled students claiming Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). Students are supported with the cost of equipment such as lap tops, and to allow for the hire of readers, scribes and proof readers. This funding is allocated to institutions on the basis of the number of students recruited from areas where university education has been undervalued and it is recognised that there is a cost of recruiting and retaining these students (Riddell and Weedon, 2007). These researchers argue that incentivized funds such as that of the Disabled Student Allowance perpetuate a medical model of disability which resides within the person and does not sit well with a social model of disability. For this reason the Scottish Funding Council, after consultation with stakeholders, changed the way the premium was funded and based the funding on the total number of students at each
institution rather than on the number of students who receive DSAs and this took effect in 2008.

As was considered earlier, barriers to learning in higher education can be embedded in the organisational structure of the institution and can only be addressed through institution wide initiatives such as raising awareness of the needs of all learners and the importance of good design and assessment which is flexible and allows achievement in a variety of ways. Tinklin et al. (2004) support this viewpoint and in their study of disabled students in higher education found that support for disabled students still lay largely with student support services rather than being embedded across the curriculum. Their research also highlighted that even when students had been granted reasonable adjustments such as handouts in advance of lectures, this rarely happened in practice, and the students had to repeatedly ask lecturers for these. Other studies have shown that lecture notes were often unavailable (Hanafin et al., 2007; Mortimore and Crozier, 2008).

Although the ultimate responsibility for learning in university disciplines is with the lecturers within the faculties (Hilsden, 2008; SHEFC, 2005) there is still a belief in some universities that support for learning for disabled students should be provided by Disability Services alone. Furthermore, this view is perpetuated by the separation of learning support from the university curriculum through the provision of standalone study support modules and specific help with academic writing provided by specialists (Wingate, 2006; Bailey, 2010).

The Disability legislation such as the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (2001) the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act (2010) has placed duties on universities to provide not only reasonable adjustments but also the provision of disability support from in-house disability services within the university. Students with
dyslexia can avail themselves of these services and can receive individual tuition from an appointed tutor in study skills and academic writing. The value of such programmes has been identified by Kirwan and Leather (2011) in their case study report on a study skills development programme at an independent dyslexia consultancy. Their findings highlighted the key benefits of tuition as developing a greater understanding of students’ dyslexia as a process of self development and in developing critical awareness and study skills techniques. Previous research has re-enforced the importance of these approaches (Gerber et al., 1992). These studies identified the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for success such as coaching and skills development strategies and the importance of the tutor in facilitating and encouraging success (McLoughlin and Kirwan, 2006). This is akin to a constructivist approach where the learning is “scaffolded” by another until the student is able to develop these approaches independently (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976).

However, if mentoring and coaching are to be successful there needs to be an understanding of these approaches by academic staff otherwise support for learning offered by disability services will be seen as separate from the learning that takes place in the academic setting and will be viewed as the responsibility of other professionals and will contribute further to producing a “glass wall” between disability services and the institution (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). Peck et al. (2010) are of the opinion that, although specialist support is important in the short term, in the longer term learning and teaching strategies need to take account of the increasing diversity of students in higher education.

2.15 Brief Summary

This final section of the literature review examined the role of Disability Support in higher education and the tension between lack of support within the university curriculum and over-reliance on disability services to provide support for dyslexic students.
2.16 Concluding Summary of Key Issues

Disability legislation and policy worldwide have increased the rights of young people with disabilities to equality of educational opportunity. However, discourse on inclusion in the literature reveals that it is a contentious term that can have a variety of interpretations, resulting in differences in the way that it is put into practice. It is not a fixed state but is evolving as a result of official policy and practice. Social models of disability identify the barriers to equality as negative attitudes and educational environments that are not conducive to social inclusion, rejecting medical models of inclusion which see disability as a symptom which requires diagnosis and treatment. Such polarized views can be unhelpful and are now giving way to a socially constructed view of disability that does not reject biological factors affecting disability and that takes account of individuals' own interpretations and experiences of disability.

Social inclusion in higher education in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom has been greatly influenced by international legislation such as the European Higher Education Agreement (2010) resulting in disability legislation which places new duties on universities to tackle discrimination and inequality through a whole institution response. In tandem with the disability legislation, a further driver for change within universities has been the widening access of university education to students from more diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities. This has resulted in a year on year increase of students with disabilities applying for, and gaining places at universities within the United Kingdom. The most commonly declared disability in higher education is dyslexia and this has increased four-fold between 1999 and 2012.

Stigma has surrounded students with dyslexia in teacher education and disablist attitudes regarding their fitness to practise have been identified in the literature. However, other studies have shown that dyslexic teachers have strengths that often go unrecognised including empathy with pupils with disabilities; a high degree of persistence,
perseverance, commitment and resilience in the face of adversity due to the barriers created by dyslexia.

Although fitness to practise criteria in relation to health and disability is no longer used within teacher education in Scotland, discrimination still persists, reinforcing an individual medical model of disability that emphasizes defect, creates social exclusion and feelings of unworthiness. This view is further increased by continued calls for the maintaining of literacy standards by government and schools. This may lead to dyslexic students fearing stigma and being unwilling to disclose dyslexia.

School placement can be particularly challenging for dyslexic students in teacher education as they require a high degree of organisation and planning in order to maintain the school file and to cope with the literacy demands required in the classroom. The Disability Equality Duty (2006), and more recently, the Equality Act (2010) places a duty on placement providers to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities but this is dependent on clear role identification for teachers, managers and mentors and strong partnerships between universities, local authorities and placement schools but this does not always happen in practice, creating further barriers for dyslexic students in teacher education.

Far from dyslexia being a disadvantage for teaching, the literature suggests that dyslexic teachers are ideally placed to help pupils with dyslexia understand their own strengths and weaknesses and that those who succeed have developed a range of coping strategies which help them to re-frame their difficulties in a more positive light. This strong sense of self-belief can be nurtured by mentoring, coaching and practical strategies to help dyslexic students overcome their difficulties to become effective teachers and to reach their true potential without discriminating barriers.

Despite the disability legislation and the commitment to supporting students with dyslexia in higher education, the literature has highlighted that negative attitudes and
practices still exist, including negative attitudes from academic staff and lack of appropriate support apart from making standard adjustments such as extra time in examinations. Uncertainty over the diagnosis and causes of dyslexia has led to confusion over dyslexia and how students should be supported. Although one definitive cause of dyslexia is yet to be established, it is clear that students with dyslexia will continue to experience significant difficulties with academic writing, speech, short-term memory and co-ordination and that these difficulties will exist for students, despite maturation. This, therefore, has major implications for universities in supporting dyslexic students through an inclusive curriculum which takes account of individual orientations to learning that are more than surface deep. This will ultimately be beneficial for all students.

A whole institution response to inclusion is therefore required, including individual responsibility and appropriate and effective staff development.

This chapter has reviewed the literature within this study and is followed by a chapter which outlines the research methodology.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 The Ontological and Epistemological Stance

Researchers need to define their own perspective and view of the world based on a set of basic beliefs that should guide their enquiries. The stance that I have taken in this study is that reality is subjective and includes the differing realities of those involved in the study and not just those of the researcher. An interpretivist approach has therefore been adopted which takes account of the fact that social phenomena are being continually influenced by social factors (Grix, 2002). Evidence of these perspectives will be contained in the stories of the participants from interviews and documentation. The epistemological position, or how knowledge can be acquired and construed (Hammersley, 2007) takes account of the relationship between the participants in the study and the researcher, and recognises that the interpretations offered by them will be an interpretation and presentation of the researcher’s views as much as it is of the participants.

3.2 Reflexivity Within the Study

Etherington (2004) stresses that reflexivity is more than merely checking for subjective bias but that it highlights “the complex relationships between how knowledge is created; the part that context plays in its creation, and what the individual brings to the process” (p.30). Much of the work on reflexivity has stemmed from Schon’s seminal work, The Reflective Practitioner (Schon, 1983). He proposed that the need for self reflection was the result of a crisis of confidence that stemmed from post-modernism when the positivist stance within research was no longer the “gold standard”. Moreover, Schon suggests that we form theories as we reflect on our own practices and the knowledge we have gained from our earlier practice and experience. However, according to Finlay and Gough (2003) reflection can be defined as thinking about something after the event whereas reflexivity “involves a more immediate, dynamic and continuing self-awareness” (p.9). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) define reflexivity as an awareness and response to the
fact that the researcher’s own position within their field of study influences the data that they acquire and analyse. Etherington (2004, p.28) provides a set of questions which the researcher can use to develop reflexivity when developing reflexivity of thinking. These are:

- How has my personal history led to interest in this topic?
- What are my presuppositions about knowledge in the field?
- How am I positioned in relationship to this knowledge?
- How does gender/social class/ethnicity/culture in relationship to this topic influence my informants and my own particular views?

As a practitioner who has been involved in developing inclusive practice for most of my professional life and who is used to defending the cause of inclusion and social justice I no doubt have a bias in this respect. I have been privileged to have had substantial experience regarding inclusion in education through my roles and knowledge gained through further study. I have had to bear in mind that not all participants within this study have this kind of background and that their own particular schema on inclusive practice will have been formed from their own individual experiences and may differ greatly from my own. I have, therefore, been aware of the need to develop reflexivity and continuous critical self-reflection throughout the research process.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) refer to the “interpretive repertoire” of the researcher which can limit the interpretations from the data as each individual possesses a set of cultural theories and assumptions stemming from their own previous learning and experience. To guard against the interpretive repertoire having a negative effect on data analysis, Alvesson and Skoldberg advise that creativity is required in order to see the bigger picture as well as theoretical breadth and the ability to reflect on theory. I have tried to achieve this through using what Corbin and Strauss refer to as “sensitizing questions” which have provided a means of grouping and analysing the data in order to look at all the possible meanings that have been attributed to the data, including both my own and the participants’ assumptions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.100). This will be
discussed in greater depth in the following chapter. Also, as a result of undertaking the draft literature review and receiving feedback from my supervisors I am now much more aware of how important the metatheory or one’s own interpretation of theory is in underpinning research and in developing a deeper, more reflexive approach to theory interpretation.

The process of reflexivity has been built into my Professional Development Portfolio. It incorporates a reflection on the work I was involved in while I was a full time member of staff at the university, including reflections on my role as a key member of the Framework for Inclusion group, reflection on training delivered and conference contributions such as papers and presentations and my reasons for undertaking the professional doctorate.

3.3 Philosophical Assumptions

All forms of qualitative research are based on a set of philosophical assumptions that are at the heart of the aims and objectives of the research. The aim of my own research is transformative in that it has the potential to change attitudes and practice towards students with dyslexia. To that end, it can be seen as leaning towards critical theory which “seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to reduce inequality and to promote individual freedom within a democratic society” (Cohen et al, 2011, p.31). Methodologically, critical theory uses distinctive approaches including ethnographic studies, biographical studies or case studies which endeavour to “transform, through praxis, the underlying orders of social life – those social and systemic relationships that constitute society” (Morrow and Brown 1994, cited in Cresswell, 1998, p.81). A case study method has been adopted in this study.

A further aspect to this approach is providing marginalised groups with a “voice”. Fielding (2004) proposes that student voice is represented “by the collective action of students giving them the ability to influence policies, contexts and principles” (p.43). I was aware that my interpretation of the student’s views would be influenced by my own
position within the university and my own personal interests and that my own values may surface. An alternative approach is that students can be encouraged to speak for themselves so that they can become “agents and instruments of their own change process” (Lincoln, 1995, p.281). I have advocated this approach where students with dyslexia could tell their own stories through staff development sessions with academic staff. This will be discussed in my findings and conclusions.

3.4 Research Methods

The research paradigm that I have adopted in this thesis is interpretivist. The interpretivist paradigm is the hallmark of qualitative research and is often referred to as ethnographic and naturalistic implying that it takes place within social settings (Cohen et. al, 2011). Smith et al. (2009) define interpretivism as an “iterative and deductive cycle” of analysis (p.81). The data gathered within this paradigm are generally qualitative and are based on fieldwork notes including observations and transcripts of interviews. Qualitative research is defined succinctly by Cresswell (1998) as:

“... an enquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15).

Grix (2002) guards against “method led” research and advises that the nature of the research questions should define the research methodology. The method of research design chosen should therefore reflect the purpose and aims of the study and the research questions that are posed. For this reason, I have used a case study as it allowed for the adoption of a “mixed methods” approach where qualitative and quantitative data can be integrated in order to answer the research questions and illuminate findings (Bryman, 2007). The quantitative data used in the study were generated through university statistics and policy documents rather than as a result of surveys conducted as part of the
research. I believe that this approach can still be considered “mixed methods” as the quantitative data presented has strengthened the validity of the data and has provided a more comprehensive view of the study than would be provided by a single approach (Denscombe, 2008). A further reason for using a case study method is that it allows for the observation of situations in real contexts. Furthermore, case studies are able to investigate real life in evolving situations which explore real life events and human relationships (Cohen et. al., 2011). The case study can be used to as a “step to action” (Adleman et al., 1980) and, as such, suits the purpose and outcomes of my own study which will be to contribute to institutional transformation and policy making and there will be a tangible outcome in the case study report. The case study also allows for the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm alongside quantitative analysis. Yin (2006) contends that “the stronger the mix of methods and integration at all stages, the stronger is the benefit of mixed methods at all stages” (p. 46).

The research question I have proposed in this study is “How far has a Scottish university implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the challenges, barriers, strengths and enablers? This overarching question has been answered through analysis of a set of sub questions:

1. How do students with dyslexia in teacher education perceive the attitudes of staff and the support they receive within their programmes of study?
2. What are the attitudes and perceptions of staff towards students with dyslexia in teacher education?
3. What are the particular challenges of school placements for student teachers with dyslexia?
4. To what extent does university disability policy and practice support student teachers with dyslexia?

The framing of the research questions has been an iterative process, which has changed since the inception of the original research proposal with the consequence that my methodology has also changed to suit the research questions. I had at first considered an
action research methodology but after I retired from the university this was no longer going to be possible as I would not be situated in the university in order to create change from within. My original research question which was “How can students with dyslexia become effective teachers?” was too broad and was out of kilter with the aims of the study. Cohen et al. (2012) caution that research questions require the researcher to “pause, generate and reflect on the kinds of research questions required, before they decide to do a particular investigation” (p.112). This process has allowed me to re-define my research questions in order to suit the aims and purpose of the research. Appendix 1 illustrates how I have integrated qualitative and quantitative data in order to answer the research questions. This was adapted using a matrix from Wellington (2000, p. 50). A further change that I made was to reduce the research questions to four instead of five as the original research questions one and two concerning attitudes and support were interlinked and would be best answered by combining student perceptions of lecturer attitude and support.

3.4.1 Definition of the case study

Cresswell (1998) defines a case study as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (p.249). According to Yin (2009) case studies can “explain, describe and enlighten” (p.19). As stated previously, they can also provide a step to action as their insights can be utilised for educational policy making and within institution feedback and they are written in a more accessible form than other kinds of research report (Cohen et al., 2011). This is important for the outcome of this study as the report will need to be accessible to a range of audiences including my own university, the General Teaching Council for Scotland, the Scottish Government and for students with dyslexia. Yin also defines the different types of case study including the single case design which can focus on a range of different approaches such as a unique case, an extreme case or a representative case; the embedded case design in which more than one area is researched and analysed within the case and lastly multiple case design where two or more case studies can be used for comparative purposes. My own case
study is of a single embedded case design in which more than one unit of analysis is incorporated, including students, academic staff and the wider policy and practice within a Scottish university. Multiple case design was ruled out as resources and time were limited and I wanted to focus on my own institution. Although case studies are often described as narrative studies, I prefer Stake’s concept of the “instrumental” case study which he describes as an examination of the case in order to gain an in-depth perspective into an issue or theory to illustrate the case (Stake, 1994). These perspectives should provide a rich and vivid description (Geertz, 1973) focusing on individual and groups of actors and should seek to understand their perceptions of events and will be shaped by the organisation itself (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

3.4.2 Limitations of a case study

It has to be recognized that there may be a difficulty in generalizing from a case study where researchers may not see a direct application to their own research. It has also been claimed that they may be observer biased and subjective due to difficulties with cross-checking (Nisbett and Watts, 1984). As discussed earlier, I hoped to minimize these effects by a reflexive approach which takes account of researcher bias.

3.4.3 Rejection of other methods

I had considered using a narrative approach but rejected this as there were ethical issues regarding the time that participants may have needed to spend in being interviewed. I also rejected survey methods due to the cost involved and the small-scale nature of the research.

3.4.4 Context of the case study

The focus of this study is a Scottish university. For the purpose of anonymity, the university will be referred to as Newtown University. Initial Teacher Education sits within the School of Education and belongs to the College of Arts and Social Sciences. Within the School of Education there are three programmes of study leading to
professional teaching qualifications, namely the four year Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed.), the one year Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Education (PGCE) and the one year PGCE for secondary teachers. The School of Education was a teaching college until 2001 when all teaching colleges in Scotland were amalgamated with the universities. This was as a result of the government establishing a regulated market for higher education in Scotland. Although this was initially opposed by the Colleges of Education, the mergers were successful and resulted in a substantial advantage for the universities as they integrated more fully into the educational community (Kirk, 1999). However, the culture within the university is very different from that which prevailed within the college of education. Where former teacher education colleges have merged with universities, there have been tensions between the role of teaching that was considered paramount in teacher education and the requirements of the universities in terms of research output which influence Research Assessment Evaluation ratings. Despite early bitter opposition to the closure of the colleges of education and the mergers with the universities, the student and staff experience appears to have been enhanced through the contact with and integration into the research environment within the university (Sutherland Report, 1997). The position within my own institution is that research is now more valued within teacher education and is seen as an integral part of teaching and scholarship.

3.5 Methods of Collecting Data

The table below illustrates the sample, source and timeline for the data collection in this study.
Table 1: Data Source and Timeframe of the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Collection Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 PGCE Students + 1 B.Ed.2 student</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Feb. 2011-April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Lecturers (including Associate Head Teacher)</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Feb. 2011-April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Dyslexia Advisor</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Associate Head Teacher (re Head Teacher role in school)</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Equality Schemes</td>
<td>Documentary Analysis</td>
<td>Dec 2012- Feb. 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Placement Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Directors’ Reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of student with dyslexia by programme and academic year 2008-2011</td>
<td>Quantitative Data Analysis of Secondary Data</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students disclosing a disability by programme and academic year 2007-2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Background information of Participants

Table 2 below summarises details of the age group and background of each of the participants. Numbers have been given rather than a pseudonym and these are used in the findings sections to denote the participants’ contributions.
Table 2: Background Information of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number referred to in the findings</th>
<th>Age yrs</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer and module leader on the one year P.G.C.E Primary Programme and B.Ed. 4 year degree. Main responsibility is for the thesis dissertation and research component in year 3. Has been a lecturer for over twenty years. Previously a primary head teacher. School experience tutor across the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>Dyslexia Advisor for Disability Services. 1 of 3 advisors with responsibility for assessing and supporting students with dyslexia across the university and for the provision of information and staff development for university staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>Lecturer mainly on the B.Ed. Programme across the 4 years. Additional role as convenor for years 1 and 2 and is involved in pastoral aspects and student applications to teaching programmes. Previously a primary teacher. School experience tutor across the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>Lecturer across P.G.C.E Primary Programme and B.Ed. 4 year degree. Previously a head teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Lecturer and module leader on the one year P.G.C.E Primary Programme and B.Ed. 4 year degree. Previously a primary head teacher. School experience tutor across the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Lecturer and module leader on the one year P.G.C.E Primary Programme and B.Ed. 4 year degree. Previously a primary head teacher. School experience tutor across the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Lecturer and module leader on the one year P.G.C.E Primary Programme and B.Ed. 4 year degree. Programme Director of B.Ed. 4 year degree. Previously a primary head teacher. School experience tutor across the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>21-26</td>
<td>Student nearing completion of 2nd year of 4 year B.Ed. Degree. Dyslexia diagnosed in primary school. Has undertaken 6 school placements over the course of two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21-26</td>
<td>Student in the last six weeks of P.G.C.E Primary Programme and about to undertake final school placement, having completed 3 previously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dyslexia not diagnosed until secondary school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Student in the last six weeks of P.G.C.E Primary Programme and about to undertake final school placement, having completed 3 previously. Dyslexia diagnosed in previous undergraduate programme at university. Undergraduate Degree in Psychology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Student in the last six weeks of P.G.C.E Primary Programme and about to undertake final school placement, having completed 3 previously. This student had previously qualified in Community Development. Dyslexia diagnosed at university.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Student in the last six weeks of P.G.C.E Primary Programme and about to undertake final school placement, having completed 3 previously. Dyslexia diagnosed at primary school. Undergraduate Degree in Geography.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Student in the last six weeks of P.G.C.E Primary Programme and about to undertake final school placement, having completed 3 previously. Dyslexia diagnosed at secondary school. Undergraduate Degree in Art.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.7 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main source of data collection. A set of questions was compiled for each of the different participants including students, academic staff and head teachers. My reason for using semi-structured interviews was to focus on questions that were directly related to the research questions in the study and similar questions were adapted for each of the groups of participants. Lincoln and Guba (1986) advise that structured interviews are useful when the researcher is aware of the knowledge that they need to know. A further advantage is that the structure of the interview makes data collection more systematic (Cohen et al., p.113). A pilot interview was conducted with a colleague to check for user friendliness, clarity and timing. Changes were made as a result of feedback. The questions posed in the interviews for academic staff, students and head teachers can be viewed in Appendix 2. Yin (2009) claims that interviews are one of the most important sources of information within a case study but he advises that the interview questions should be fluid rather than rigid, allowing for conversational
questions to be asked. Wellington (2000) also recognises that semi-structured interviews have the benefit of this open-ended approach. Although the order of the interview was controlled by the set of questions that had been prepared, there was still scope for spontaneity where participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on their statements and to explore areas of importance in greater depth. For example, my original question to students regarding any “critical incidents” relating to their education or studies did not yield the depth of discussion that I had anticipated in relation to lecturer attitude. However, I was aware that my role of lecturer within the School of Education may have influenced their response to this question and I therefore had to ask more probing questions discussing the kinds of support the students received with their studies. The duration of each interview was between thirty and forty-five minutes and was recorded using an electronic voice recorder. In total, thirteen interviews were conducted and these were transcribed word for word and checked for accuracy and clarity by revisiting the recordings several times. After transcribing the first batch of interviews, it became apparent that further probing was necessary in order to provide more clarity and depth and this was built in to subsequent interviews.

Focus-groups had also been considered alongside interviews in order to develop the themes emanating from the interviews, but this was ruled out as the ethics of using this approach with a marginalised group of students were questionable and may have resulted in harm to the participants as they may not have wanted to openly discuss that they were dyslexic with others or to be identified as students with dyslexia to fellow students or academic staff. The avoidance of psychological distress (Fleming and Jordan, 2006) was a strong factor in rejecting this approach.

3.7.1 Documentary Analysis

A number of policy documents relating to disability policy and practice were sourced from the university website. This information was available for staff and students and, as Disability Support Officer for the school of Education, these documents were made available to me by email. The key documents identified for analysis were:
1. The Disability Framework document.
3. Teachability guidelines for marking dyslexic students’ work.
4. Student placement policy.
5. Programme Directors’ reports on how students with a disability, including dyslexia, are supported within initial teacher education programmes.

Yin, (2009) advises that documents can be used to “corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p.103). Furthermore, he provides the caveat that we should not over-rely on documentary evidence in case study research as they may not provide a true picture as it depends on the audience for which they were written. Criticality is therefore important in interpreting the contents of documentary evidence. To that end, a documentary analysis instrument was produced for the purpose of documenting a critical analysis of each document. This incorporates references to themes occurring, ensuring an interpretive and critical approach to documentary analysis (Jupp and Norris, 1993). This will be discussed further within the analysis section of this chapter and can be viewed in Table 7.

3.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Secondary data sets from the university documentation and surveys were used as this provided useful information relating to the number of students disclosing dyslexia and the number of students with specific disabilities. Secondary data is far less costly in terms of a researcher’s time than primary data and can address questions directly relevant to the study and is extremely cost-effective (Vartanian, 2011). The disadvantage of this approach is that, as the data have been collected by another analyst, the researcher will have no way of directly influencing the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). As this data had been collected from statistical information gathered by the university and from questionnaires conducted by disability services to establish numbers of students with disabilities, in this case it provided useful information which supplemented my own findings. Permission to use the data in my research has been given by the university.
ethics committee and the university registry department provided me with figures from their database. As the Freedom of Information Act (2005) regulates government and institutional records, the university could not provide exact figures where student disability was less than six in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

Tables have been used to present the data and these are included in the Findings and Discussion sections in Chapter 4.

3.7.3 Sampling - Students

As already outlined in Table 2, the participants within this study were students with dyslexia on the one year PGCE in Primary Education and on the four year B.Ed. degree in Primary Education. This critical case sample of students was chosen as it represents a cross-section of students on teacher education programmes who have declared dyslexia as a disability and receive a range of adjustments to meet their specific needs and who had accessed support from Disability Services. The average age of these students was 25 and they were all white and female. The teaching profession in Scotland does not reflect the demographics of the Scottish population as a whole and in 2010 the ratio was 92% of females to 8% males within Primary Teaching (Scottish Government, 2010). These figures are also reflected in the low numbers of male students within Teacher Education and has accounted for the fact that there was a lack of male participation within the study. Similarly teachers from ethnic minorities are also under-represented and the 2009 census showed that only 1.6% of teachers in Scotland were from minority groups (Statistical Bulletin, 2009).

Six students were interviewed, five of whom had completed undergraduate degrees before beginning the Postgraduate Certificate, while one student was in the second year of the B.Ed. Degree. The total number of students enrolled on the Postgraduate Primary Programme was 50 students while the number on the B.Ed. Programme averaged 320. Two of the students had private school education and the remaining students were state educated. Wellington (2000) defines critical or special case sampling as choosing special
cases for certain purposes. Initially, I had hoped to also include students on the one year Post Graduate secondary programme but there had been no students with dyslexia enrolled on this programme when the study was conducted. This could have been due to the fact that the number of students on this programme was relatively small i.e. 30 students, although there have been dyslexic students enrolled on the programme in previous years. At the outset, I had planned to interview three students from each of the programmes. However, after sending an email to all students who had declared dyslexia to disability services, inviting them to take part in the study, it became clear that the response rate was lower than I had hoped and only three students responded at this stage. The low level of response could have been due to the fact that the second semester was nearly at a close when I sent out the requests and some students had already finished their studies. A second request for students to participate was sent out by email the following academic session to students via Disability Services. The efficacy of using this method is discussed in section 3.10 regarding ethical considerations. As there was still no response, a member of staff from Disability Services offered to ask some of her dyslexic students if they would agree to be involved in the study. This resulted in a further three students agreeing to be interviewed. I decided against sending out further invitations for participants at this stage as I knew that the numbers of students who had declared dyslexia on the programmes was relatively low and I may not have had a large increase in response rate. I felt that I could address the relevant research questions by going into depth with a smaller sample.

3.7.4 Sampling - Academic Staff

A purposive sample of six academic staff were interviewed. As stated earlier, the advantage of purposive sampling is that information can be provided from participants who possess characteristics that are specific to the needs of the study. A further advantage of purposive sampling is that it can provide greater depth to the study than probability sampling which draws randomly from the population (Cohen et al., 2011). The academic staff who were chosen for the study were a representative sample of lecturers who taught across the two main initial teacher education programmes, the B.Ed.
degree programme and the one year PGCE in Primary Education. The sample included lecturers on the programmes, some of whom also held management and professorial posts and a dyslexia adviser from Disability Services. I had also planned to interview two associate head-teachers from local authority schools that provide student placement opportunities. In the local authority primary schools located in the study, student mentors are not appointed and the head teacher is the member of staff who has overall responsibility for students while they are undertaking placement. However, gaining permission for head teachers to take part in the study from local authorities became problematic as an embargo on involvement in outsider research had been placed by the local authority as it was deemed to be too time consuming and that it could add to head teachers’ workload. As I felt that the views of head teachers would add depth to the study, I approached an associate head teacher who had been seconded to the university and she agreed to be interviewed. Such a small sample of head-teachers is not the ideal and the utility of this will be considered in my analysis.

3.8 Assuring the Validity of the Research

3.8.1 Validity and Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are the terms used to establish the quality of any research. Terms such as trustworthiness and credibility are often used interchangeably within social research to describe validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Although, these terms have now been adopted as acceptable in qualitative research, Yin, (2009) advises that the four commonly used “tests” that can be applied in any empirical social research including construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability are relevant to case study methodology. For this reason, I have used these terms to define the validity and reliability of this research. I have found Yin’s matrix of validity, which matches the research methods to a particular tactic associated with data collection, particularly useful, and I have drawn on it in this study (Yin, 2009, p.4). Yin defines construct validity as the design and methodology employed in any research. The tactic I have employed to ensure construct validity is that I have used multiple sources of evidence including interviews, documentary and data analysis thus ensuring triangulation or the examination
of the same area of study from more than one perspective (Wellington, 2000). Yin, (2012, p.104) advises that this type of triangulation is the most desirable method when dealing with case study data. This was achieved through asking similarly themed questions to each of the groups of participants within the study as outlined in Appendix 2 and through using the data from documentation and statistical records to address the research questions, Appendix 1. A chain of evidence has been maintained through a clear protocol that I have established for the research including formulation of the research questions, using data sources to analyse and answer each question and building up a database of evidence. Once the case study is completed, a summarised report will be sent to key respondents for review before publication, further strengthening construct validity. This will take place after the completion of this thesis. A further test of research rigour that I have adopted is consistent with Winter’s six principles of Action research (Winter, 1996). During the research process I have been aware of the importance of recognising my own perceptual bias and of the need to stand back from the situation and not take things at face value. Winter refers to this approach as the principles of a reflective and dialectic critique. I have also considered my own taken for granted views based on my previous experience and understandings and have been willing to challenge them. As previously discussed, reflexivity, or the act of examining and reflecting on one’s own impact on the situation, including one’s own assumptions, prior experience and bias will also be crucial to the validity of the research (Wellington, 2000). According to Finlay and Gough (2003) “reflexive activity facilitates a critical attitude towards locating the impact of researcher context and subjectivity on project design, data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings” (p.22). Furthermore, she claims that reflexivity presents a way for researchers to demonstrate the “trustworthiness” of their findings, particularly in qualitative research where researchers are sometimes accused of a biased un-objective approach. This is consistent with what Winter calls collaboration and the risk of disturbance (Winter, 1969, p.9). As the research has progressed I have become more aware of the need to view the differing accounts of participants from their own standpoints.
Miles and Huberman (1994) define internal validity within qualitative research as the researcher being aware that they cannot be completely detached from their objects of study and that they will bring their own experiences and convictions to bear on the research. Moreover, they define the approach to data analysis as interpretivism where “human activity is seen as a “text” or a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.8). One way of addressing internal validity is to ensure that findings and interpretations from the data are arrived at transparently (Cohen et. al, 2011). I have attempted to achieve this by using analytical approaches to data collection which included reading and re-reading the interview transcriptions and noting initial reflections and remarks in the margin and this has allowed me to adapt questions for participants during the interview process. This has been an ongoing process and has shaped the research as I have progressed. A coding system was developed to highlight specific kinds of information and data were sorted and sifted to identify themes in order to make generalizations and to link these generalizations to the body of knowledge or conceptual framework within the literature review. This process of analysis is known as data reduction and data display (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.9) where the data are organised into tables for conclusion drawing and verification and these will be embedded within the section of this chapter where the process of analysis is discussed.

External validity within a study is about knowing whether a study is generalizable. Wellington (2000) defines generalizability as “the extent to which research findings in one context can be transferred or applied to other contexts or settings” (p.197). Several researchers are of the opinion that generalizability is unimportant, particularly within a case study methodology. Flyvbjerg (2012, p.303) identifies the difficulties often attributed to generalizing from a single case study. He defends the criticism of lack of generalizability by claiming that formal generalization is over-valued within research in general. This claim is supported by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) who assert that this is a term that is now considered meaningless within qualitative research. Yin (2012, p.5) also takes up this argument and points out that much of the notoriety concerning case study as
a research method has stemmed from the false notion that it is only the exploratory phase of research before using other social science methods and as a result, it may be seen as a less rigorous form of enquiry. He is also of the belief that such a traditional view of research methodology is outdated. Although these views can be considered plausible I agree with Cohen et al, (2011) who warn that, although generalizability is often considered irrelevant, any study should ensure that it is worthwhile and of value to the research community. I hope that through the dissemination of the case study report, the findings are valued and that others may see their relevance for their own situation. This is also important ethically as those involved in giving up their time for research need to know that the research will be of benefit to others.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated so that it provides the same findings and conclusions and can also apply to the degree of confidence placed on the research methods themselves (Wellington, 2000). This can be best achieved through the use of well validated procedures throughout the research process (Richards, 2009). In terms of a case study the objective is to ensure that an investigator would be able to conduct the same case study all over again but without the need to replicate the result (Yin, 2009). However, the suitability of the term reliability has been questioned by some researchers as they claim that using terms that are deemed to be positivist terminology is incongruent with qualitative studies and Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the term “transferability” However, this does not mean that qualitative research should not strive for replication and Le Compte and Preissle (1993, p. 334) are of the opinion that some kind of replication can be ensured through maintaining in other studies the same kind of participant, the same social situations, the same theoretical framework and methods of data collection. Although the research conducted in this study is aligned to qualitative research, I feel that a clear account of the research process in terms of the research methodology will allow for some degree of transferability.
3.9 The Process of Analysis

Although there are numerous sources of guidance on how to conduct qualitative analysis, I agree with Corbin and Strauss (2008 p.36) that “it is something that the researcher has to feel himself or herself through” and that each individual should make best use of guidance that will suit their particular research. I have therefore adapted some of the approaches that have been useful and informative and these will be outlined below. As discussed earlier in the chapter I have used an interpretive paradigm (Miles and Huberman, 1995). However, as my methodology has also been influenced by the fact that I have used a case-study methodology deploying “mixed methods” there was a need to use a process of systematic analysis where the research questions also guided the analysis. Using the research questions as a focus for the analysis could be perceived as having an influence on the results and analysis but I feel that I was justified in using this approach as Yin (2009) advises that what constitutes a case should be formed by the research questions and that these should specify the “unit of analysis” (p.32). This approach also helped me to provide a focus for the volume of data that was generated. Manual coding was used as my knowledge of software for coding was limited.

The first phase of the analysis process was familiarizing myself with, and immersing myself in the data through reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and writing memos and reflective comments in the margin and sifting through the materials to identify similar patterns and themes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) refer to this as “mining” the data or “digging beneath the surface to find hidden treasures” (p.76). This was an ongoing process as the interviews progressed and feedback from this iterative process was used to elaborate questions in subsequent interviews. From this process, a set of concepts and themes began to emerge and these were grouped under general headings relating to the research questions. A set of codes was developed, incorporating these themes and the data was further analysed in order to look for similarities and differences across the data providing a constant comparison (Cohen et al., 2011). Richards (2009) advises that coding allows for a return to the data to allow for further interrogation and interpretation and is the first step in re-thinking the data (p.95). The following three tables
illustrate the initial themes and codes which emerged from the data and how these were linked to the research questions. A separate table has been used for academic staff, students and the views of other participants.
### Table 3: Initial Codes and Themes Pertaining to Student Perceptions

Abbreviations for Codes SP=student perceptions SPS=staff perceptions of students OS=Organisational Structures DSP=Demands of School Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Area</th>
<th>Code(s)</th>
<th>Link to RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT PERCEPTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>SPa</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding</td>
<td>SPb</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwillingness to make adjustments</td>
<td>SPa</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good IT Support</td>
<td>SPc</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Support helpful</td>
<td>SPd</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support important</td>
<td>SPe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Support on Undergraduate Programmes</td>
<td>SPg</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of extra time in Exams</td>
<td>SPh</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support</td>
<td>SPI</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on academic essay type writing</td>
<td>OSA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of stickers can discriminate</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments not always made</td>
<td>OSC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff development</td>
<td>OSD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No curricular support</td>
<td>OSG</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia allows greater understanding of pupils with LDs</td>
<td>DSPA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of coping strategies</td>
<td>DSPB</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstanding of Dyslexia</td>
<td>SPSe</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatisation</td>
<td>SPSf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of teacher education</td>
<td>SPSj</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety over workload</td>
<td>DSPe</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>DSPe</td>
<td>3,4, 3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on school file</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalizing on strengths</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-activity</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using dyslexia as teaching tool</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong self-concept</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalizing on strengths</td>
<td>DSPf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Initial Codes and themes Pertaining to Staff Perceptions

Abbreviations for Codes SP=student perceptions SPS=staff perceptions of students OS=Organisational Structures DSP=Demands of School Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Area</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Link to RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STAFF PERCEPTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>SPSb</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levelling the playing field</td>
<td>SPSc</td>
<td>2,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy models</td>
<td>SPSd</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstanding of Dyslexia</td>
<td>SPSe</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatisation</td>
<td>SPSf</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student deficiencies</td>
<td>SPSg</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia can be overcome</td>
<td>SPSh</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of competence</td>
<td>SPSi</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of teacher education</td>
<td>SPSj</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of literacy skills</td>
<td>SPSk</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scepticism about dyslexia and teaching</td>
<td>SPSl</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on literacy standards</td>
<td>SPSm</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Standards</td>
<td>SPSn</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise for hard work</td>
<td>SPSo</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming difficulties</td>
<td>SPSp</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Coping Strategies</td>
<td>SPSq</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for becoming a teacher</td>
<td>SPSr</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students without dyslexia demonstrate greater difficulties</td>
<td>SPSs</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties not obvious when teaching</td>
<td>SPSt</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No flexibility over assessment</td>
<td>OSh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia allows greater understanding of pupils with LDs</td>
<td>DSPa</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not discriminated against at interview</td>
<td>OSI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students encouraged to declare their dyslexia</td>
<td>OSj</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication structure between disability staff and faculties</td>
<td>OSk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia allows greater understanding of pupils with LDs</td>
<td>DSPa</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of coping strategies</td>
<td>DSPb</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong support from disability services</td>
<td>OSh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good IT support</td>
<td>OSh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Initial Codes and Themes pertaining to the Perceptions of Other Participants

Abbreviations for Codes SP=student perceptions SPS=staff perceptions of students OS=Organisational Structures DSP=Demands of School Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Area</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Link to RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER INFORMANTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good IT Support</td>
<td>SPc</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy model of assessment</td>
<td>SPSd</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming difficulties</td>
<td>SPSp</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Coping Strategies</td>
<td>SPSq</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for becoming a teacher</td>
<td>SPSr</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not discriminated against at interview</td>
<td>0Si</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students encouraged to declare their dyslexia</td>
<td>OSj</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication structure between disability staff and faculties</td>
<td>OSk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for students a “mixed bag”</td>
<td>SPc</td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Headteacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff development</td>
<td>OSd</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of teacher education</td>
<td>SPSj</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of literacy skills</td>
<td>SPSk</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scepticism about dyslexia and teaching</td>
<td>SPSl</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on literacy standards</td>
<td>SPSm</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Coping Strategies</td>
<td>SPSq</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for becoming a teacher</td>
<td>SPSr</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of links between placement schools and university</td>
<td>OSe</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived incompatibility between teaching and dyslexia</td>
<td>DSPq</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty concerning mentoring and support for students on placement</td>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this set of codes a more analytical set of themes was developed that allowed for a greater exploration of ideas and concepts from the data – in other words - “working up from the data” (Richards 2009, p.73) or taking the raw data to a more conceptual level. The groupings for the coding were still based on the themes relating to the research questions but were reduced to represent the recurring themes at a more conceptual level. These were then grouped together in order to compare the data for similarities and differences. Richards refers to this stage as analytical coding that leads to theory “emergence” and theory “affirmation” and the creation of conceptual categories (p.96).
Using this method the data were reduced to produce a definitive set of themes which had emerged from the data. I utilised the themes of positive attitude, negative attitude, passive support and active support from the themes that Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) developed for their own study of lecturer perceptions of students with dyslexia as similar themes were emerging from my own study. However, as the analysis progressed I felt that these themes needed to be more nuanced to reflect the findings in my own study. The final themes that seemed to fit the data relating to staff attitude were compliance, uncertainty and indifference, while reactive and proactive support replaced active and passive support. The themes I used are illustrated in Table 6 below.
Table 6: Themes Linked to an Analytical Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Analytical description</th>
<th>Analytical description</th>
<th>Analytical description</th>
<th>Analytical description</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of staff attitude</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student perception of support</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Student coping strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer Attitude</td>
<td>Developmental Perseverance</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Deficit Model Fitness to teach Falling standards</td>
<td>Indifference on Student</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of School Placement</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Policy and Practice</td>
<td>Disclosure Communication of adjustments Assessment of dyslexia</td>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>Disability Support structure and roles</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Assessment Support for dyslexic students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second phase of the analysis involved the writing of the accounts and initial analysis of each of the participants’ views based on the interview transcripts and the analytical themes. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to these as “interim case summaries” which provide a synthesis of what is already known, prior to final analysis (p.79). This allowed me to link the concepts and themes emerging from the analysis and to see where these were occurring. These case summaries will be discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5.

In the final phase of analysis I used an analytical framework adapted from Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.69). They propose a set of questions which allows for the facilitation of the analysis process by allowing for the consideration of a number of possible meanings so that the researcher can become more aware of the assumptions and interpretations that they are placing on the data. “Sensitizing” questions guide the research as to what the
data might be indicating and “theoretical” questions allow connections to be made between concepts. These were linked to the research questions and the themes identified in the final analysis. Appendix 4 provides an example of how this framework was used.

This has allowed for the reflexive process of analysis previously discussed (Etherington, 2009; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). This also took account of Winter’s principles of rigour as I was aware of the impact of my own bias and views on the situation, the importance of taking into consideration the motives and the views of all the “actors” and how the larger organisational issues affected the findings (Winter, 1996). As stated previously, my own background in social inclusion may have influenced how I viewed the attitudes of the participants as I have worked in this field for most of my professional life and held a firm social constructionist view of inclusion. I came to realize that the views of the participants had been based on very different experiences. Several researchers remind us that inclusion as a term is misunderstood and is still evolving (Clough, 2006; Sikes et al., 2007; Smith, 2007) and that practitioners’ experience of inclusion affects their own practice. Lack of staff development and awareness of university policy on inclusive practice would also have affected participants’ attitudes and viewpoints.

Memos were also recorded during the analysis process and these allowed me to explore more complex issues relating to the data. Richards (2009) maintains that memos are places where a project grows, allowing for more complex ideas to emerge and that these should be recorded so that they can be found in the log trail. Examples of these can be seen in Appendix 3.

Data gleaned from the analysis of the documentation and the results from quantitative analysis of statistics pertaining to dyslexia within the university were also used in order to make sense of this data, providing triangulation of evidence from a variety of sources, further strengthening the validity of the study. The research tool was adapted from a documentary analysis instrument that I had used successfully in previous research for the
Applied Education Research Scheme and was developed further from a table in Miles and Huberman, 1994. This can be viewed in Table 7 below.

The process of analysis I have described was challenging and at times complex due to the large amount of data generated and the different stages involved in the analysis as described above. Although I tried to analyse the data systematically, it was not a linear process and sometimes led to uncertainty and my questioning at times as to whether I was making sense of it. I found that, through my analysis, I needed to research further literature relating to my findings and this was unexpected as I assumed at the outset that my literature review was extensive and did not realize that the literature review was in an iterative process. For this reason I feel that if I was doing this research again I would use a “grounded theory” method (Charmaz, 2006) where theory was generated from the data itself. This would have allowed me to explore other areas identified in the research in more depth.
Table 7: Documentary Analysis Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and description of document</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content (What are the key organising words and concepts?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events around document production e.g. (previous papers or policies)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance or importance of the document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Summary of Contents:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Discourse:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there space for disagreement on interpretation of document?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing “voices” – those expected but not there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and commentary relating to analysis coding and key themes and key research questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

3.10.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical behaviour in research has been defined by Cohen et al. (2011) as the consideration of the effects of the research on participants. They warn that researchers must act to preserve the dignity of human beings and recognise the importance of the
rights of others. This includes the consideration of what Miles and Huberman (2011, p.288) refer to as “the rightness” or “wrongness” of our actions as qualitative researchers in relation to the people whose lives we are studying, to our colleagues and to those who sponsor our work”.

Ethical approval was sought from the University Ethics Committee in March 2011 and approval was granted. The university’s guidelines are based on those of the British Educational Research Association (2011). According to Greig et al. (2007, p.69) “ethics is one part of the research process that should never be learned in practice”. Prior to carrying out a research project it is essential that all the ethical implications have been considered and approved. One of the key principles of ethics is that the researcher needs to gain informed consent from all participants prior to commencing the research. For this study I drew up a consent form for all participants (Appendix 4). This briefly outlined the aims of the research and asked the participants if they consented to be interviewed about their experiences, and whether they agreed to interviews being taped and stored electronically. Participants were also provided with an outline of the purpose of the study which made it clear that the results would be published. Approval to use the documents in the research was requested and granted in my ethical approval application. Interviewees were assured of anonymity in the consent form. Anonymity can be defined as the assurance that information provided by participants should not be used to reveal their identity (Cohen et al., 2011) or to unwittingly supply information that would indicate which individuals or organisations provided which data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I have endeavoured to achieve this in my study by not identifying any of the participants directly in the study or by making any direct reference to the institution. A pseudonym was adopted for the name of the university and participants were referred to by numbers where direct quotes were used. Confidentiality refers to the agreement with a person or organisation about what may or may not be done with the data (Sieber, 1992). All electronic files of interview transcripts recorded after interview were coded so that individual names could not be identified and all names in the transcripts were deleted. All files on the university computer were password protected. However, in such a small
study as this it may be difficult to ensure complete anonymity and confidentiality of a person or an institution as people can deduce from data the identity of certain individuals. Whilst all measures will be taken to ensure that participants are not identified, there is no absolute guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality (Oliver, 2003). Miles and Huberman (1994) remind us that the research experience is filled with dilemmas such as these and that qualitative research is more about making trade-offs rather than the application of rules and that methodological frankness is important.

3.11 Lecturers

As an insider researcher, some of the participants were also colleagues with whom good working relationships had already been established therefore it was easier to draw on their own understandings (Costley et al., 2010). However, the fact that I was a fellow lecturer and insider researcher may also have influenced how they responded to my questions. Trowler (2010) makes the point that respondents in interviews who know the researcher personally, or by reputation, have pre-formed expectations of the preferences and leanings of the researcher which can change their responses to questions. One participant in the study objected to being recorded during the interview and field notes were taken instead. This request was granted but it did create some unease at the beginning of the interview. I did re-assure them that anonymity would be assured as far as was possible. I found difficulty in being able to take notes succinctly and quickly and interaction and eye contact with the interviewee was reduced as was the richness of the data. This served to show the benefits of recording interviews.

3.12 Students

The views of students regarding lecturer attitude were not as forthcoming as I had hoped. What the students don’t say may be just as important as what they say about staff attitude but this could have been influenced by the open-ended nature of the interview questions.
They may also have been wary of the fact that I was not only a researcher, but a member of staff. Again, the fact that I was an insider-researcher may have influenced how students responded to my questions and they may, therefore, have withheld information or told me what they thought I wanted to hear. However, I did not personally teach the students and this, therefore, did not raise issues of power differential between myself as a lecturer and their role as students.

Wellington (2000) stresses that each stage of the research process needs to be ethical including the design, methods, analysis and presentation of findings. One area of concern within this project was how to gain access to the students that were needed for a purposive sample. As described previously, in purposive sampling, participants are chosen as they possess particular characteristics that are specific to the needs of the study (Cohen et al. 2011). When I was the Disability Support Officer for the School of Education I was able to identify students who had declared their dyslexia. I did feel uneasy with this, even although I had sought permission from disability services and my ethical approval was granted by the university. The possibility of risk or harm, including psychological distress is something which needs to be considered in any research (Fleming and Jordan, 2006). Sieber (1992) points out that some persons are more at risk from harm than others; this includes those who may be stigmatised and are unable to speak for themselves. It did occur to me that some students may have resented the fact that I may have abused my power in being able to identify them because of my role within the university and that anonymity may have been breached despite the fact that these students had declared their disability. A further email was sent out to all students on the programmes rather than to those who had disclosed their dyslexia, requesting participation, but there was still no response. A member of the disability support team offered to ask some of the dyslexic students that she tutored if they would agree to participate in the study and this personal approach was successful and a further three students agreed to be interviewed. These students subsequently contacted me to say that they would be willing to take part. Although this may be construed as coercion or manipulation of these students, this was not the case as, it was clear from my interactions
with them that they were all willing to be involved in the research, particularly as they felt strongly that dyslexia was an area worthy of research.

3.13 Other participants in the study

The head teacher in the study was also known to me as a lecturer who had been seconded to the university. As with the lecturers in the study, the fact that I was known in another context to this informant may also have affected how they responded to my questions. I was also aware that, as there was only one participant in this category, those reading the study may have been able to recognise the identity of this participant. While there may be no absolute guarantee of anonymity as stated previously, I have endeavoured to guard against this by providing only basic details of each participant such as broad age range and limited background information.

I was aware that, as the Dyslexia advisor was in a position of trust regarding information about students and other lecturers through her university wide role, it was important to respect this and ensure that the identities of students and lecturers were not revealed.
Chapter Four: Lecturer Perceptions

This chapter discusses and analyses the findings related to lecturer attitude regarding students with dyslexia in teacher education and will draw on the data relating to disability policy and practice. The results and analysis of these findings will contribute to answering the overarching research question which is: “How far has a Scottish University implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the challenges, barriers, strengths and enablers?” This will be addressed in Chapter 7, entitled Summary and Conclusions.

The findings and discussion will be presented under the themes which were derived from the analysis and will be followed by a section which considers the conclusions and implications for practice. Examples of the analytical themes from participants’ accounts are contained in Table 8 below. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, these acted as interim case studies prior to final analysis.

Table 8: Examples of Analytical Themes from Lecturer Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This lecturer was positive in her attitude to students with dyslexia and commented on the strategies that students had adopted to overcome difficulties with dyslexia. “I had one postgraduate student who had dyslexia and she was amazing because she had put so many strategies in place herself that you wouldn’t know she had dyslexia.” This lecturer commented that the student’s teaching portfolio had been proofread to such a degree that there was no evidence of the student’s dyslexia and that this kind of checking seemed to be “second nature” to her. There was also a sense that this lecturer was of the opinion that some students who had declared dyslexia and had a dyslexia “sticker” appeared to have fewer literacy problems than some students who had not declared dyslexia. It is suggested that it may have been the extra input that these students may have had at school that has helped them to develop strategies and skills to deal with it.</th>
<th>Developmental Stance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Literacy Standards Disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Stance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| This lecturer is positive about the students with dyslexia that he has had experience of and commends them for their strategies. | Developmental Stance |
He also comments that he is surprised at the high level of literacy of many of the dyslexic students who have a “sticker” and comments that “you really wouldn’t know”. He is also of the opinion that many other students who have not declared that they have dyslexia appear to have much greater literacy difficulties. He ponders whether the reason for this is that these students have never been identified as dyslexic or had not done anything about their literacy difficulties or whether they were just careless and not putting the effort in. He saw this as a dilemma as he found it difficult to find an answer. He comments on the generally poor standards of written English of some students, particularly regarding punctuation. He does question his own role in this and wonders why student with language difficulties are progressing to year four of their degree without this being picked up. He ponders whether this could be due to the nature of the assignments that the students have been set in earlier years and that maybe they have not had to submit too many pieces of extended writing earlier on in the course. He also suggests that this may be down to lecturers not being aware of this earlier.

When asked whether this lecturer would be happy for some students to receive different kinds of assessment to demonstrate their competence he said that he had no problems with that in principle but made the caveat that “these folks have to go into a classroom and they have to teach children and how happy would any of us be as parents to know that people teaching our children didn’t know the rudiments of how to write or that their numeracy levels were really poor?” The conflicting pressures of the university standards and the practicalities of the professional role was highlighted. He emphasized that universities should be doing everything to encourage students to improve their minds but that students “still have to cut it in the classroom”.

This lecturer seemed to be unaware that “fitness to practise” standards in relation to students’ disability were no longer applicable in Scotland. He makes the comment that “at the end of the day you go back to the competing demands of academia and the profession; the academic standards and their fitness to practise on the other.”

This lecturer feels that students who have declared their dyslexia at interview and have revealed that this has been a motivator for them becoming a teacher want to use it as a positive in working with children.
It is made clear that this lecturer feels that it is not her responsibility to support students with dyslexia and there is a sense that these students should not require support throughout their studies. “If they are dyslexic then I think there is only so much I can do and they shouldn’t be looking for lots of help from us, especially if they are going into teaching. They need to be really self-aware and quite proactive in how they can support themselves.” She concedes that some students with dyslexia stickers submit excellent work but is unsympathetic to a student who has errors in their work that could be picked up by a spell-checker. She comments that she is “loathe to use that as an excuse (dyslexia) and they need to be using different things to move forward.”

There is a sense that this lecturer has to espouse the disability line when she is interviewing students but hints at doubts about this. “When I’m speaking to potential candidates, when we talk about dyslexia or disabilities I always make it clear that has no bearing on whether they are going to be accepted or not, that’s not going to be an issue, therefore if I say that I kind of do have to believe that.” There is a feeling that students with dyslexia are not seen as any different from any other students and that they will be able to overcome a problem without support. “If they know that there is something that they are lacking in, even confidence, then throughout the course I would expect them to overcome and develop that aspect of their personality because they would need that, whether it is academic or personal.”

This lecturer is not aware that there are any students with dyslexia in her teaching groups despite the fact that she receives information on this from the programme director. Her impression is that dyslexic students work extremely hard and develop strategies to cope. During the discussion about disability legislation she says that she is aware of it but that she feels that “students need to be professionally able whether they have dyslexia or not” and that it should be emphasized that their work needs to be of the “highest standard”.

This lecturer claims that he does not need to put in any particular support for dyslexic students as “students with dyslexia tend to put their own coping mechanisms in place”. He states that, although he has not seen any difficulties amongst dyslexic students there is still a question mark over these students ability to teach. “There are fitness to practise issues such as accurate
spelling when writing on the board or spelling and grammar mistakes in their teaching folder.” There is a sense that this lecturer is expecting that dyslexic students in teacher education will have a difficulty in the classroom. “Potentially there is always the difficulty of interface with children particularly if they (dyslexic students) have poor spelling.

This participant felt that students with dyslexia are much more understanding of dyslexic pupils’ difficulties themselves. “If you have a teacher or a student who has dyslexic tendencies, I think that can make them much more understanding of children with those difficulties and how you might overcome them.”

The focus on literacy as a potential problem was highlighted, the focus being the big push for literacy in schools. “There’s such a big push on literacy that you have to be very confident as a head teacher that the children are being taught the rules of literacy or whatever.” This participant seemed particularly concerned with children from deprived areas and the need for teachers to have high standards of literacy in order to teach these children. “I do think it is very difficult in these schools as literacy has to be the core focus and these children need these skills because a lot of them come in to school without these basic skills. If there is a teacher with a disability then they’d have to get support to support the children.”

With regard to knowledge about disability discrimination she felt that it was limited regarding higher education and her own training in schools had focused on “general equality training and looking at not being able to discriminate on the grounds of learning disabilities as well as a range of other disabilities or inequality issues.”

The perception that standards of literacy were falling amongst students in general was also voiced by this participant. She was also of the opinion that the literacy skills of some dyslexic students were higher than those of other students who had not declared dyslexia. She speculates that this may be due to the fact that students have not been taught academic writing at school as she perceived they had been taught when she was at school. “People were generally taught academic writing when you were at school and you knew the basic structures of writing and grammar.” This participant ponders whether this is due to the fact that language may be changing to the influence of
This participant expressed the opinion that parents might be outraged they felt that their children’s spelling had not been corrected and that the teacher hadn’t noticed it and that this was a potential problem for dyslexic teachers. However, she does concede that “a dyslexic teacher develops strategies to compensate for their own personal difficulties and worked round it in ingenious ways.

Her perception of staff attitudes to dyslexia across the university was “mixed throughout the university and it very much depended on the pro-activity of the disability support officer or down to the personal commitment of staff. “Some are very supportive, some, I think, still dispute that it even exists.”

An example of pro-activity in supporting dyslexic students within the school of education was given as a lecturer making a referral on behalf of a student to the Academic Achievement Unit. There was a sense that the onus was very much on the student to succeed when they had received the standard support offered by the university. “That person has been offered study skills support, they have been referred by their tutors to the Academic Achievement Unit, they have access to the software on the university network. If they are not engaging with this support then they should fail.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fitness to Teach Deficit Stance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onus on Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Background

4.1.1 University Disability Policy

The university Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012 is a significant document which promotes the university’s key aims and values with regard to disability equality within the university. The previous Disability Equality Scheme was published in 2006 as a response to the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty (2006) which placed new duties on public sector bodies such as universities to tackling disability discrimination through a whole institution response. As the Disability Equality Scheme is published every two years, data pertaining to 2013 will not be available until 2014. It should also
be noted that references to the Equality Duty (2011) and the Equality Act (2010) were not referred to at the time of writing as the Disability Equality Scheme was published before these Acts came into force.

The Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012 outlines the university’s mission statement which claims that:

“the university is committed to promoting disability equality for all staff, students and other members of the university community through the removal of barriers to access, discriminatory practice and the promoting of equality of opportunity.” (Disability Equality Scheme, 2010-2012)

The following brief summary of the contents of this document outlines its scope. The Foreword defines the university mission statement, the progress made over the last three years and the key areas for development which are identified in an appended Action Plan within the document. The Executive Summary describes the key areas of progress over the last three years in relation to staff and students and identifies key priorities. A university profile provides a background to the university and its responsibilities concerning disability equality including management structures and responsibilities. The legislative context and how the university has adopted a social model of disability which recognises that poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion stem from society rather than from individuals with a disability are highlighted. Finally, the document outlines how the university supports this model of disability through its summary of provision. The following statement stresses its commitment to identifying and removing barriers for disabled people:

“ The university therefore supports the principles of a Social Model of Disability and will endeavour to eliminate all barriers to disabled people across all areas of university activity, including raising awareness and promoting the use of the preferred language of disability”. (Disability Equality Scheme, 2010-2012)

Specific aspects of this document will be referred to in the discussion of findings in this chapter and in subsequent chapters as it forms an important reference point for the analysis of how university policy and practice supports students with dyslexia. This is a
significant document which provides a clear rationale for disability equality within the university and takes into account the needs of students and staff. Specific targets have been identified and evaluation of the policies is through feedback from student and staff surveys.

4.1.2 Communication of Adjustments

Staff within the School of Education seemed to be aware of the process of how information is communicated regarding adjustments for dyslexic students who had declared dyslexia. This is outlined in the following statements from lecturers.

The Programme Director is informed by the disability services and then we’re sent an email with the name of the student, the difficulty, and what we need to do in lectures and if it’s dyslexia then we are informed that they’ll (dyslexic students) have a dyslexia sticker put on their assignments and we have to take account of that when we’re marking the paper. (5)

It’s really after they come in that we get information from Disability Services, the Disability Support Officer and the Programme Director on how students with disabilities should be supported. (7)

I suppose I find out early in the programme. I think ... sends round a message doesn’t he, or maybe it’s yourself, about the students who have learning difficulties, but I tend to become aware of it when I’m marking scripts because they’ve got the sticker on. (1)

The Disability Support Officer is the initial point of contact for disabled students and has a key role in disseminating disability related information to other staff in the school, including any adjustments to support disabled students’ individual needs. This statement is taken from the Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012, outlining their role.

They work in close collaboration with Disability Services to ensure that disabled students’ needs are effectively and appropriately communicated to all relevant staff in line with the University’s confidentiality and disclosure procedure policies. (Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012)
This process also seems to be well understood within the school. The following statements from information sent out by Programme Directors to staff on their programmes exemplifies how staff are made aware of students who require specific support.

All staff are kept informed of which students require specific support. This normally requires teaching materials to be made available on the VLE and the opportunity to record lecture inputs. All ITE staff are informed of the students on the programme who have a disability and of any resulting special measures which would be put in place to support them. (internal document)

The Disability Equality Scheme makes it clear that, in accordance with the DDA (1995) (Part 2), the university has a duty to make:

reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled people accessing those services and makes it unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably than other people. The duty to make reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures, the provision of auxiliary aids and services and adjustments to the physical environment. These must be in anticipation of the needs of disabled people. (Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012)

As stated previously, reference to the Equality Act (2010) was not made in this document. However, the legislation regarding the requirement to provide adjustments for students with a disability in anticipation of their needs remains the same as the legislation within the Equality Duty (2006).

Table 9 lists the most commonly implemented adjustments across the ITE programmes. This data was gathered from information sent out from programme directors to staff on their programmes, outlining the adjustments for each student on the programme who had declared dyslexia in the academic Year 2010/2011.
Table 9: List of adjustments for students with dyslexia on ITE programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Support/Adjustments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No penalties to be given in marking bad spelling, grammar and punctuation where the meaning is clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to use dyslexia stickers on assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of lecture notes and overheads to be provided which are not available on the VLE, preferably at the start of the session. This will compensate for note-taking difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to record lectures for later review. This will aid comprehension and retention of the lecture material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended library loan facilities to compensate for the additional time required to read library material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra time for examinations (15 minutes per hour).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This student has Specific Learning Difficulties which may affect fluent, accurate and concise written expression. Please make allowance in accordance with the marking guidelines provided by Disability Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This student would prefer to be asked not to read out loud. She needs advanced notice of materials and sufficient time to review it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This student should be allowed to use covered overlays in examinations for reading purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are consistent with the range of curriculum adjustments that are provided for students with disabilities in higher education outlined by Konur (2006). These include “presentation” adjustments such as the provision of notes on the VLE and permission to record lectures, “response” adjustments such as being allowed to use coloured overlays and compensation for spelling and grammar errors where the meaning is clear and finally “timing” adjustments where extra time is granted for students for the completion of an examination.
Uncertainty regarding how to support dyslexic students, particularly with regard to how high literacy standards would be met on the programmes, is also highlighted in this document.

Concerns were raised on how the high level of literacy standards would be met, especially in the B.Ed. programme, and what adjustments should be made for students with dyslexia. It was agreed that the student must meet the criteria of the assignment, be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and any spelling would be overlooked. Ultimately the judgement call would be placed on the academic. (internal document)

These findings are consistent with several other studies that have identified that academic staff are unsure of how to appropriately support students with dyslexia without compromising academic standards (Tinklin et al., 2004; Chapman and Carlisle, 2006; Chapman, 2007; Riddell et al., 2007).

As there were few formal examinations on the PGDE and B.Ed. programmes the need for a scribe was rarely required.

4.1.3 Disclosure

A university wide admissions policy with specific guidance from staff for handling applications for disabled students was identified as a priority in the Disability Equality Scheme (2006) and it was claimed that this had been achieved in the 2010 Scheme. The document outlined that all students declaring a disability are contacted by Disability Services to advise of services available and to discuss their individual needs. Information on disabled applicants is communicated to Disability Services by admissions staff and allows students to be contacted in advance of starting their courses to identify and arrange any individual support requirements.

A lecturer with responsibility for admissions described how the admissions process was addressed within the School of Education.
In terms of the B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education programme), when they come in, right from application we often see that (a declared disability) on their UCAS forms. In addition to that, when they come in for interview, if they haven’t declared any disability and if they want to do so, they can do so at the interview stage. Of course not all students do disclose at this point and then really it’s after they’ve come in that we start to get information from Disability Services, from yourself (Disability Support Officer) or from ... , coming through that there are students who have declared and we get information on how we might want to support them. (3)

Information circulated by a Programme Director to academic staff on promoting Disability Equality in the PGDE programme re-iterates that students should have the opportunity for disclosure at different stages within the programme.

All students are reminded of the possibility of disclosing a disability at the time of interview and, if accepted onto the Programme, again encouraged to do so prior to embarking on their studies, so that any due support can be put in place in good time. This allows them to maximise the benefits thus accruing. During the Introduction Module, they are again encouraged to declare a disability/seek screening for dyslexia if they feel that this may be an issue. (internal document)

Disability Services send regular bulletins to programme staff to be read out to students during classes to encourage disclosure of a disability. The following is an example:

The University of ... has a Disability Services department which provides a range of confidential services for disabled students, including students with dyslexia. All disabled students are advised to contact Disability Services as soon as possible in order for recommendations to be made for examination and other course related support. Further details are available for the Disability Services’ website. (internal document)

The need for repeated opportunities for students to declare a disability was mentioned by one lecturer.

It’s a kind of screening process in a way, isn’t it? Just saying, “Hold it. We think you may have a difficulty here. Have you done anything about it in the past and have you said anything in the past. We think you should.” (1)
Although there are positives for students who declare a disability, such as extra resources and support, the benefits of disclosure for disabled students have been questioned in the literature as, for some students, it creates a negative self-concept (Watson, 2002) and can perpetuate a medical model of disability (Riddick, 2000). As dyslexia is an unseen disability, students with dyslexia may distance themselves from other disabilities such as physical and sensory impairment and resent being categorised as disabled (Riddell and Weedon, 2006).

Table 10 shows the number of students disclosing a disability by academic year from years 2007 to 2010.

**Table 10: Number of Students Disclosing a Disability by Academic Year**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind/par. sighted</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia</td>
<td><strong>619</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>625</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unseen</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Not known</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1132</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>1130</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show that dyslexia remained the disability with the highest disclosure rate over the three year period. This is consistent with the statistics on prevalence of dyslexia in higher education. This showed that the prevalence of dyslexia increased by 400% between 1999 and 2012, as reported by HESA (2011).

Table 11 shows the number of students declaring a learning disability/dyslexia within the Initial Teacher Education programmes offered in the School of Education over a three
year period up until 2010/2011. For data protection purposes, actual student numbers which fall below 6 are not quoted and consequently “<6” is given rather than the total. Exact figures for the PGDE programme 2008/2009 are therefore unavailable. These figures show that the percentage of students declaring dyslexia in both programmes increased between 2008 and 2011.

Table 11: Number of Students Declaring Dyslexia by Programme and Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>No of students declaring dyslexia by programme and academic year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGDE Primary</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase in numbers of students with dyslexia year on year in teacher education also reflects the trend for the increasing number of dyslexic students in higher education nationally as previously discussed. The decreasing numbers of students on each programme from 2008 was the result of the Scottish Government significantly decreasing student intake for Initial Teacher Education Programmes. Figures for 2012/2013 were not available at the time of writing.

4.1.4 Staff Development

The results of the disability survey conducted by Disability Services in order to review provision and practice for students with a disability within the university was that students felt that lack of staff development and training of academic staff regarding
disability issues was a major area that required further development. Other studies have emphasized the importance of staff development in breaking down the barriers to inclusion in higher education (Tinklin and Hall, 1999; Hurst, 2007). Areas identified in the university survey were negative attitude to disability; disclosure concerns; feelings of isolation; non-implementation of identified adjustments and lack of understanding of disability issues, particularly around unseen difficulties such as mental health (Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012 p.35). The Disability Scheme Annual Monitoring Report (2010) also identified staff development as a priority area and actions towards progress in this area were identified. This included a review of compulsory equality and diversity training for all staff, the continuation of disability-related staff development opportunities to meet specific needs of Schools/Services including as part of the induction process and progression of the inclusive practice website to showcase good practice on disability related issues. A centrally delivered Educational Development Programme had also been established in order for staff to engage with disability-related staff development. This had included a workshop by Professor Mick Healey entitled “Enhancing the Quality and Outcomes of Disabled Students Learning in Higher Education”. There was no mention of dyslexia specific staff development in either of these reports. However, the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education programme, which is now compulsory for all new lecturers, contains a module on Disability with a particular focus on dyslexia, but this is not a compulsory module.

The compulsory equality and diversity training for all staff was offered as online modules. Evidence from the data gathered from this study shows that some lecturers did not engage with these modules and they found them challenging and difficult to fit in to their workloads.

I have to be honest, I’ve got to do all the modules on that. I’ve not done it yet. We have all to do it by Christmas. (5)

I’ve been doing these ... you know that thing we had about two years ago ... there was an online thing that we had to do. Well I’ve done I think about two or three,
but it’s the one thing that sits on my desktop and I will do the others. I mean it’s interesting but it’s quite a challenge for me. (1)

The monitoring of completion rates of the modules concluded that completion rates for the full set of modules had been low but that some areas of the university had been more successful than others in respect of completion. Follow up sessions were to be held to provide staff with the opportunity to discuss issues arising from the modules.

It was clear from the data that lecturers in general lacked knowledge of Disability Legislation and that there was a reliance on others to keep them right.

I’m afraid I have to confess, my knowledge is limited. I only have people like yourself sending me messages around. (6)

I’m afraid I’ve not really looked into it here and that’s terrible because I’m just letting myself be notified by other people. (1)

I rely on Disability Services as to what is to be accepted. If in doubt I would check with disability. I do have some awareness of the Disability Act. (7)

Two lecturers expressed that they were more au fait with Disability legislation in schools and one made the point that he found inclusion in schools more interesting because it was written from a pedagogical perspective.

The thing I find about inclusion in schools, strangely enough, I find more interesting. I suppose because it’s written from a pedagogical perspective. It’s not that the problem in higher education is any different. It’s just that we tend to refer to the legislation and that turns me off a little. (1)

I think I was more tuned into additional support needs and how they impacted on schools. (5)

That academic staff seem to view inclusion for university students as different from inclusion in schools has been underpinned by other research (Reid, 2005; Morgan, 2012).
One lecturer was of the opinion that issues discussed during staff meetings relating to Disability were of a narrow nature and seemed to reinforce a deficit model of students with dyslexia as potential teachers.

More in terms of literacy concerns that we have with students, that they are able to meet the SITE (Standard of Initial Teacher Education) benchmarks and are there issues when they’re not going to be able to conform to the role of teacher. (3)

This statement raises the issue that academic staff may be sceptical about dyslexic students being able to fulfil the role of teacher and reflects the findings of several other studies (Morgan and Rooney, 1997; Weedon, undated; DRC, 2007; Riddick and English, 2006).

4.2 Learning and Teaching

4.2.1 Curriculum Accessibility

As will be seen from the findings relating to student perceptions of staff attitude and support (Chapter 5) the data gathered from participants in the study made scant mention of how lecturers made the university curriculum accessible to students with dyslexia, apart from the adjustments recommended by Disability Services. The questions concerning student and lecturer perspectives towards attitude and support for students with dyslexia showed the most valued forms of support were proof-reading and software and hardware provided by Disability Services.

However, the Disability Equality Scheme states that:

The university’s Learning and Teaching Strategy requires all of the university’s colleges to promote inclusiveness in their programme design and delivery, and to assess the impact of their inclusive strategies on disabled students. (Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012).

The university had been involved in Teachability, a Scottish Funding Council project based at the University of Strathclyde (SHEFC, 2005) that provided a range of staff development and training opportunities designed to encourage reflection on, and evaluation of, the accessibility of the higher education curriculum. Although the project
has now ceased it has been endorsed by the university as good practice and the teaching materials are still available online. The key message within the programme is that it is essential for course planners to consider a flexible approach to teaching and assessment including alternative ways of achieving programme requirements without compromising core academic standards. It advises that alternative teaching and assessment methods can be used in order to demonstrate achievement. A further important point is made that time spent at the design stage is more effective and cost effective in the long term and also allows the university to meet the legal and quality assurance of the DDA and the Equality Act (2010).

In the Student Survey carried out by the university and which was published in the Disability Equality Scheme (2010-2012), learning and teaching were identified by 34% of the students as the most important areas that should be prioritised over the next three years, indicating that the strategies described above for ensuring an inclusive curriculum need to be a focus for future staff development.

4.2.2 Assessment

The Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan identified assessment and examinations as an area for development and this was to be monitored in order to assess the impact on disabled students, including in relation to computer-aided assessment.

Assessment methods, including e-assessment, are designed to be as accessible as possible to disabled students. (Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2012). (internal document)

It is noted in the Disability Equality scheme document that the university’s School of Computing contains one of the largest and most influential academic groups in the world, researching into communications systems for disabled people. It is housed in the Digital Media Access Group. This group offer expert consultancy and advice to improve the accessibility of web and other digital resources. The university should therefore be well placed to offer first class technological support to students with dyslexia.
However, evidence of alternative forms of assessment for dyslexic students was minimal in data from the interviews, apart from extra time and the use of a computer during examinations. One lecturer did propose that different approaches to assessment would be beneficial.

One of the things I do feel quite strongly about is that higher education should be about conveying understanding rather than facts and the ability to get people to engage with ideas rather than produce things necessarily. And if we can come up with different ways, for example, for assessing them ... for example, if someone’s got a difficulty with the written word, if they can show an understanding and ability to engage with ideas and to think critically and they need to do it through a video diary or whatever, then to me that’s not an issue. (1)

Transfer of information between Disability Services and academic staff regarding students’ adjustments was working well and useful clearing notes on disability issues were sent out to all staff electronically. The data showed that one Programme Director was unsure of how much leeway to give students with dyslexia and that there was a conflict of interest between the standards and inclusion agenda. This was exemplified in a document sent out to academic staff:

Assessment continues to present us with a dilemma. While students are given additional support in the completion of written assignments including assistive technology and academic skills provision, given the fact that they are entering a profession where excellent literacy and numeracy skills are fundamental skills, if they display the inability to communicate satisfactorily through the written word, they cannot be deemed to have passed assignments.

Here, as in data referred to previously, the tensions between the standards agenda and the inclusion agenda and the difficulties academic staff face in ensuring that academic standards are not eroded, while at the same time complying with the disability legislation, has been highlighted and is consistent with the findings of other studies (Riddick and English, 2006).
4.3 Perceptions of Academic Staff

Two major themes were deduced from the data in order to address the perceptions of academic staff. These include a “developmental” stance pertaining to student perseverance and motivation and a belief in their ability to succeed, and a “deficit” stance related to fitness to teach, maintaining standards, falling standards, lecturer indifference and the onus on students with dyslexia to improve.

4.4 Developmental Stance

4.4.1 Perseverance

All five lecturers in the study expressed a positive attitude towards dyslexic students that they had taught and a feeling that they were succeeding through their own efforts and coping strategies. Their focus was in terms of how hard dyslexic students worked in order to overcome their difficulties. Their comments reflected the reflections of the students themselves in describing their perseverance in the face of the difficulties experienced due to dyslexia. Lecturers saw dyslexic students as hard-working, persevering and conscientious and in some cases more aware than other students.

I had one post-graduate student who had dyslexia and she was amazing because she had put so many strategies in place herself that you would not know she had dyslexia. (5)

I am often quite surprised by the people who have a sticker saying they’ve got dyslexia ... some of them you really wouldn’t know. They must have some superb strategies. I also suspect that some are probably very conscientious and so they really do overcome their difficulties incredibly well. (1)

Students with dyslexia cope well and maybe they’ve been more aware in some ways. They try harder. They are aware of their needs and they put the effort in. (6)

This view was echoed in a study by Riddick and English (2006) concerned with the selection process for initial teacher education. The academic staff in this study were of the opinion that dyslexic students would succeed in the classroom if they “adopted
positive coping strategies that would allow them to function effectively as educators” (p.205).

Two lecturers also commented on how well students coped with school placement due to developing their own coping strategies.

They are really quite ingenious with the ways in which some of them cope with all that and I think that’s going to be followed through in the teaching practice because they are creative with it and very organised. (2)

One lecturer described how a dyslexic student planned and delivered a lesson on compass points.

Now direction can be difficult for dyslexic students, but she had done it so well you wouldn’t know she had dyslexia. Now I spoke to her after the lesson and she told me that she practised the lesson every night to make sure that she could do it herself. It was the same with her portfolio and she told me it was just the things she did all the time. (5)

Other studies have identified the creativity of dyslexic students in overcoming their difficulties in challenging situations (Sternberg, 2006; Kiziewicz, 2012).

4.5 Deficit Stance

4.5.1 Fitness to Teach/Maintaining Standards

Despite the overwhelmingly positive attitudes of lecturers in relation to how they perceived students with dyslexia in general, when they were asked if there were any areas which were problematic for dyslexic students, a deficit view regarding “fitness to teach” was evident amongst three of the five lecturers interviewed. It was generally felt that dyslexic students lacked the appropriate literacy skills to become teachers, even although lecturers had made favourable comments about how hard-working and persevering the students were. These perceptions were not based on hard evidence as all lecturers had stated that they had not observed any significant difficulties with students with dyslexia while overseeing their teaching in schools. These attitudes are manifested in the lecturers’ comments.
These folks have to go into a classroom and they have to teach children and how happy would any of us be as parents to know that the people teaching our children didn’t know the rudiments of how to write or that their numeracy levels were poor. (1)

At the end of the day, I wouldn’t want a surgeon operating on me who had shaky hands. Do you see what I’m driving at? (1)

If a pupil’s work is coming home and is full of mistakes and the teacher hadn’t noticed it how would you feel (as a parent)? (2)

They’re still going to have to cut it in the classroom and that’s where I see the difficulty. (1)

There are “fitness to practise” issues such as accurate spelling when writing on the board or spelling and grammar mistakes in the teaching folder. Potentially, there’s always the difficulty of the interface with children particularly if they (dyslexic students) have poor spelling. (7)

These findings echo other studies that have highlighted that there are particular barriers for students with dyslexia in both teaching and nursing despite the dismantling of “fitness to practise” standards (DRC, 2007; Weedon, undated).

Pre-judgement of dyslexic students is evident from one lecturer even although she has no evidence that dyslexic students will have difficulties. The use of the word “potential” is used again, as above.

I think with our students there is always the potential issue but I haven’t seen it so I just have to assume that students with dyslexia get through the selection process because they demonstrate a commitment and ability. Then we have to acknowledge that that’s good enough. (3)

Issues around “fitness to practise” are exemplified in a document sent out to academic staff from a programme director. This was not an official policy document so does not reflect the university policy regarding assessment.

Assessment continues to present us with a dilemma. There is an expectation that students can meet the requirements of the Standard for Initial Teacher Education.
Some of these requirements present a real challenge to students, for example, with dyslexia e.g. observation, questioning, marking of work and teachers reports to establish the level of attainment, recording of assessment of results and producing professional reports for parents and other professionals. In terms of “fitness to practise”, students who are deemed unable to meet such requirements cannot achieve the necessary level of competence. While students are given additional support in the completion of written assignments including assistive technology and academic skills provision, given the fact that they are entering a profession where excellent literacy and numeracy skills are fundamental skills, if they display the inability to communicate satisfactorily using the written word, they cannot be deemed to have passed assignments. (internal document)

The final statement in the document seems to demonstrate that there is still uncertainty over how to respond to dyslexic students. The data implies that students with dyslexia lack the pre-requisite skills required for teaching.

Currently, however, it is unclear how the university expects the programme to respond to such a situation. (internal document)

However, another document sent out to staff by a programme director was more positive in the approach to supporting students with dyslexia on the programme which demonstrates a more developmental view of support.

We encourage students to explore strategies which will help them to overcome associated difficulties and this enables them to attain the required SITE (Standards for Initial Teacher Education) benchmarks. (internal document)

The fact that these views were so polarised indicates that views regarding students with dyslexia and their fitness to practise were not universal and not all staff held this negative view.

Evidence from the Disability Equality Survey carried out in 2010 as part of Disability Equality monitoring within the university, identified that the main barriers to access for disabled students and staff were lack of understanding of disability issues and entrenched and discriminatory attitudes. Insufficient time to respond to students’ needs was also identified in the survey carried out for the Disability Equality scheme and is a valid point,
but this was not referred to by participants in the interviews. This may have been due to the fact that this question was not directly alluded to in the interviews.

Issues concerning maintaining standards and professionalism were also prominent in the discussions. One argument was that children without the basic skills in literacy would need the best teachers and that dyslexic teachers would need to be supported in schools in order to achieve this.

I do think it is very difficult in schools as literacy has to be the focus and the children need these skills because a lot of them come into schools without those basic skills so you want them (the children) to have the best experience they can and if there is a teacher with a disability then they have to get support to support the children. (4)

At the end of the day you go back to the competing demands of academia and the profession, the academic standards and then “fitness to practise” on the other. (1)

There is an issue around professionalism and students have a duty to declare their dyslexia. (6)

The issue may be: can they teach language in a primary school as so much of what they teach in a classroom is done through language. (1)

These statements reflect the conflict that academic staff have over maintaining standards and equality for students with dyslexia and their perceived importance of the teacher’s role in the teaching of literacy.

4.5.2 Falling Standards

The data showed that all lecturers were of the impression that literacy standards are falling amongst students in general.

I was quite shocked at the level of literacy of students coming into ITE. It is a worry that these people are coming into teaching. (4)
A study by Ganobcsik-Williams (2004), in which she compared errors in university students’ literacy over a thirty year period, concluded that there were no significant differences in student performance in literacy over this time.

Several lecturers made the point that they felt many of the students who had not declared dyslexia had far greater literacy difficulties than those who had dyslexia.

I can honestly say I’ve never seen a piece of work with a sticker on it that has been really bad. It’s strange. Some of the worst work that I’ve seen in terms of quality of written English has been from people who don’t have dyslexia. (6)

Do you know what I find ... and this is anecdotal ... I’ve got no evidence for it but just in the time I’ve been at the university I’ve found that students’ work that I’ve marked that has the dyslexia sticker on it is usually ok, it’s usually good, and you think, what’s the problem with this student? I think that they must be working really hard because you’ve got other students that don’t have a disability sticker and their literacy skills are really poor ... really poor. (5)

Other lecturers seemed perplexed as to why literacy standards were falling and offered their own tentative views on this such as standards of teaching literacy in schools.

You have to ask yourself what has the general standards of teaching been like over probably a few generations if you have quite a few students coming in that do have difficulties in literacy? (4)

I don’t know whether that’s just a change in language, the evolution of language or whatever, you know ... I just don’t know. (4)

One perceptive lecturer hinted that students perceived difficulties could be the result of the assessment process within the university or that staff do not detect students’ difficulties soon enough.

You could have a long sentence that lasts a paragraph and they mix the tense two or three times, and even the voice, and you think ... there’s something wrong there and it worries me. I don’t know whether this tells us something about the nature of the assignment tasks we set them in the early years...maybe they don’t have to
write an extended piece of writing ...or to whether that tells us something about ourselves ... that we just don’t pick these things up. (1)

4.5.3 Indifference/Onus on Student

The data suggests that lecturers do not make any allowances for dyslexic students they are teaching as they feel it is not their responsibility as the onus should be on the student to ask for help:

If they are dyslexic ... if they do have specific problems with that then I think there is only so much we can do and they should not be looking for lots of help from us but at this stage, especially going into teaching, they need to be very self aware and need to be quite proactive in how they can support themselves.

If the students needs some help or they want me to do something they’ll come and tell me. (3)

The belief that the difficulties of students with dyslexia can be overcome without intervention has been highlighted in previous research (Blythman and Orr, 2002; Haggis, 2006; Wingate, 2006).

Lecturers seem to be unaware that dyslexic students require support or have any difficulties on placement, despite the issues they raised when they discussed “fitness to practise” of dyslexic students.

I have no recollection of anything that would make me say that dyslexic students fare any worse in the classroom. (7)

I have seen a handful of dyslexic students but they really don’t stick out in my mind and that’s interesting. (6)

An unsympathetic approach is also evident from others although the need for all students to be professional if they are to become teachers is valid.

I am loathe to use that (dyslexia) as an excuse because I think that at this stage they need to be, you know, doing more proof reading to ensure they move forward. (3)
Students have to be professionally able whether they have dyslexia or not. (7)

If the student is not making any effort to compensate for their difficulty then I can understand why people get slightly annoyed and a little bit anxious. (2)

A departmental document sent out to staff on supporting students with disabilities makes it clear that some staff are unhappy if students ask to record lecture notes, despite the fact that this is recommended for some students by Disability Services.

All staff are kept informed of which students require which support. This normally requires teaching materials to be made available on Blackboard and the opportunity to record lecture notes. It should be said that several staff are uncomfortable with the requirement to allow their lectures to be recorded. (internal document)

4.6 Discussion – Attitude of Academic Staff

Analysis of the university’s Disability Equality Scheme revealed that disability equality was very much part of the university’s mission statement. It endorses a commitment to promoting disability equality for all and identifies areas for development and improvement through regular monitoring and review. A social model of disability is recognised, where disadvantage and social exclusion stem from barriers created by society rather than individuals with disabilities. However, findings suggest that, despite inclusion being at the forefront of the university’s mission statement, some academic staff were at different points along the continuum towards a fully inclusive institution. While the university’s mission statement endorsed an inclusive approach for students with disabilities, negative attitudes towards students with dyslexia regarding their ability to teach was still evident from some academic staff. They were sceptical about how students with dyslexia could meet the required literacy standards for their courses and to achieve the competencies required to become teachers. This was despite the legislation and commitment to breaking down barriers for disabled students that was evident in university policy. This equates with the findings of Mortimore (2012) that “departments or individuals can remain at different stages, delaying transformation of the whole system” (p.1). Mortimore and Crozier, (2006) make the important point that the existence of policy does not necessarily mean that practice follows and that universities
should evaluate the extent to which practice regarding disability reflects their mission statements.

Despite this, several areas of good practice have been revealed through the data. An effective communication system has been established for informing staff of the individual adjustments for students and seems to be well understood by lecturers in the School of Education and this is reflected in the data gathered from student interviews that these adjustments are generally adhered to. This is the result of clear lines of responsibility for this process and effective liaison between Disability Services and academic staff.

Similarly, the policy for disclosure of a disability has been well established and there is a clear process from admissions through to opportunities for students to disclose at different stages of their programmes. This may contribute to the increase in students declaring dyslexia year on year. It is the most commonly declared disability within the university. Table six shows that 44% of disabled students in 2009/2010 were identified as having dyslexia. The number of students declaring dyslexia on the Initial Teacher Education Programmes has also continued to increase and the data shows that an average 10% of students have declared dyslexia on each of the teaching programmes. This data accords with the assertion in the literature that 10% of the population has dyslexia (Fitzgibbon and O’Connor, 2002; British Dyslexia Association, 2008). These findings also support other studies demonstrating increasing trends in disclosure of dyslexia in universities (Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Goode, 2007; Griffin and Pollack, 2009; Pavey, Meehan and Waugh, 2010; Griffiths, 2011; HESA 2011).

The online disability modules being offered by the university were found to be time consuming and challenging. The fact that academic staff had to combine these with their own significant workloads and to work through them without any tutorial support may have made them more challenging than face to face sessions. Two participants in the study found disability issues in schools much more interesting and relevant because it was related to pedagogy rather than to legislation. Tinklin and Hall (1999) make the
point that “where staff were well informed, this seemed to come about because of personal experience or interest in disability issues, rather than because of institutional training or policies”. (p.190).

The data showed that some academic staff found inclusion in schools more interesting because it was written from a “pedagogical perspective” and that the legislation is off putting. There is a sense that pedagogy only applies to the learning of children. This is also consistent with the findings of Morgan (2012).

The development of alternative learning and teaching strategies to support students with dyslexia was not referred to by students or lecturers in the data relating to staff and student perceptions of support. It may be that academic staff felt that by making the recommended adjustments advised by Disability Services they did not need to support student learning in any other way. Staff development related to adapting the curriculum to suit all learners was not available for all academic staff. Where this was available it was not compulsory. There was a specific staff development module on dyslexia within the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education that all new staff were obliged to undertake. However, the disability module was based on choice and was not a compulsory module.

Assessment for students with dyslexia in teacher education within the university has been mediated through assistive technology and extra time in examinations. Opportunities for students to demonstrate their competence through other modes does not seem to be an option, although one lecturer made it clear that he was supportive of this as long as it did not erode standards. The university has identified assessment and examinations as an area for development in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan. It has stated that “assessment methods including e-assessment are designed to be as accessible as possible to disabled students”. This is an area that the university could develop further in practice.
Several studies have identified the limitations of assessment processes in universities, particularly for those with disabilities, and call for a more multi-faceted approach such as a review of pedagogic practices, reviewing how students engage with the assessments on offer and allowing students to be assessed on the same learning outcomes in a variety of different ways (Waterfield and West, 2007; Hanafin et al., 2007; Chapman 2008). Changing established views of traditional forms of assessment in universities represents a considerable challenge due to entrenched attitudes regarding teaching and learning. This has been voiced by Hanafin et al. (2007). The university has identified assessment and examinations as an area for development in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan, indicating a commitment to change in this area.

Support for students from Disability Services seems to be valued by students and staff and roles have been well delineated regarding transfer of information. This is in contrast to other studies (Mortimore and Crozier, 2006) where there appeared to be a “glass wall” or invisible barrier between disability services and academic departments (Mortimore, 2012). Although the data showed that some lecturers were of the opinion that many students had literacy difficulties over and above those with dyslexia, only one lecturer mentioned how they might refer these students to Disability Services. Lecturers tend to rely on Disability Support and there is a feeling that support for students with disabilities is not their responsibility. This has been recognised in other studies and this view can be perpetuated by the separation of learning support from the university curriculum through the provision of standalone study support modules (Tinklin et al., 2004; Wingate, 2006; Bailey, 2010).

The overarching view of all lecturers in the study was encouraging in terms of the work ethic of dyslexic students and they recognized that students had been able to develop these skills over time. This therefore reflects a developmental stance over a deficit stance where the medical model of disability prevails. There has been a dearth of research into the experiences and perceptions of university staff of students with dyslexia and those that have been carried out have identified that lecturers have been far from positive in
their attitudes towards students with dyslexia and have manifested scepticism about dyslexia and issue of fairness to other students. They have raised questions as to whether dyslexic students are fit for university ((Morgan 2001; Riddell and Weedon, 2006). It is therefore encouraging that lecturers in this study were positive and encouraging in some respects towards students with dyslexia. Studies which lean towards a more positive view of students with dyslexia have been reported by several researchers (Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). These positive attitudes appear to stem from the fact that these lecturers had direct experience of dyslexic students.

Although these positive attitudes regarding the strong work ethic of dyslexic students surfaced in the interviews of academic staff, when they were asked whether there were any areas that staff felt to be problematic for students on ITE programmes, it became apparent that a number of participants in the study had held a deficit view of students such as pre-judging the likely future competence of dyslexic students to become teachers. This concurs with the findings of Madriaga (2007). The words “potential difficulties” are telling here and there is an assumption that students will have difficulties as their course progressed and there was no recognition that the students should have the opportunity to progress and develop throughout their studies. This attitude was reported by the DRC (2007) regarding maintaining standards and promoting equality, despite the fact that “fitness to practise” standards had been replaced by “competence standards”. It would seem that this attitude still prevails amongst the majority of academic staff on teaching programmes within this study and these attitudes echo the findings of earlier studies in which academic staff questioned whether teaching should be a career goal for students with dyslexia (Morgan and Rooney, 1997).

These attitudes highlight a conflict between fitness to practise and maintaining standards in teaching and disability rights legislation, therefore ITE providers face the challenge of maintaining standards and maintaining the integrity of the programme (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000; DRC, 2007). This demonstrates that although “fitness to practise” standards
have been removed, it is no guarantee that dyslexic students in teacher education will be free from discrimination and deficit attitudes towards their ability. Dyslexia still appears to be viewed as an individual defect making the individual unworthy of social inclusion (Weedon, undated).

The data shows that some lecturers equate the qualities of the good teacher with high literacy skills. Although it is understandable that those concerned with teaching may focus on the need for high levels of literacy amongst teachers, Moore (2004) has identified that the discourse on what makes a good teacher has been dominated by the “competent craftsman” role at the expense of the charismatic teacher and the reflective practitioner and that there is a focus on one model of a “good teacher”. Furthermore Riddick and English (2006) make the point that there needs to be more of a focus on the positive attributes and contributions that students with dyslexia may bring to teaching such as empathy and understanding of pupils with disabilities and creative approaches to teaching.

There seems to be an assumption by some academic staff that professionalism is somehow innate and that students will be professionals at the start of their studies. “There is an issue around professionalism and students have a duty to declare their dyslexia”. That professionalism develops over the course of student’s education through experience, learning and a developing knowledge has been voiced in other studies (Kaser and Muscari, 2000; Wear and Castellani, 2000; Hilton and Slotnick, 2005).

The continued focus on high literacy standards both at institution and government policy level could account for the comments from academic staff on how dyslexic students may not match up to this model and how this has further questioned their ability to become teachers (Riddick and English, 2006; Wyse and Jones, 2001).

There is a feeling of “moral panic” conveyed by some academic staff to the perceived failings of students in terms of literacy. Cohen (1987) defines moral panic as sporadic
outbursts which subjects society to worry about the values and principles which it upholds which may be in jeopardy. The implication from this study seems to be that teachers with dyslexia will have a detrimental effect on pupils and there was one strongly held view that teachers with dyslexia may damage children in the same way that a surgeon with shaky hands could damage a patient. Riddick and English (2006) claim that there is no research available that makes the link between teachers’ own literacy standards and the standards of the children that they teach. Recent initiatives on improving the literacy standards of pupils and the teaching strategies related to literacy of teachers have included the National Literacy Strategy (1998) in England and the Early Intervention Programme in Scotland (1997). The most significant evidence from these evaluations was that social factors were more important for pupils’ success in literacy such as the support of parents, the quality of pre-school education and class-size rather than the focus on literacy skills. Fraser (2007) emphasized that the attitude of the individual teacher had the biggest influence on pupils’ learning of literacy.

This study has shown that students with dyslexia were able to achieve satisfactory levels of literacy that allowed them to succeed in their studies and in the classroom. It has to be recognised that not all teachers with dyslexia will be outstanding teachers (Riddick, 2003) but they are more likely to become effective teachers if they possess coping strategies. Some students with dyslexia may not achieve their goals, just like any other student. Heller (1998) advises that, as with any other student teacher, we cannot be sure that they will succeed but we need to be prepared to take the risk.

The data in this study indicates that, despite disability legislation, there is still discrimination against dyslexic students on ITE programmes. There is still uncertainty about how dyslexic students should be supported and apparent ignorance that a “fitness to practise” criteria regarding disability no longer exists. This is exemplified in the references made by academic staff to the term “fitness to practise” for example, “there are fitness to practise issues such as accurate spelling” “in terms of fitness to practise,
students who are deemed unable to meet such requirements cannot achieve the necessary level of competence”.

It emerged from this research that lecturers were of the opinion that standards of literacy were falling in general and that many students, who had not declared dyslexia appeared to have greater literacy difficulties than students with dyslexia. Ganobcsik-Williams (2004), in her study of academic writing in higher education over a thirty year period, found that there were no significant differences in frequent errors made by students over this time. Skillen and Mahoney (2007) claim that difficulties with academic writing are common amongst many students when they begin their university education and these skills could to be honed and developed during their programmes of study (Skillen and Mahoney, 1997). However, a more recent report published in the Telegraph (2008) has shown that young peoples’ knowledge of grammar and punctuation is changing due to the use of mobile technology (Reid et al., 2013) and this may account for some of the claims that standards in literacy are falling.

Another reason that academic staff may have observed difficulties with literacy in students who have not disclosed dyslexia is that these students may not yet have disclosed or known that they have dyslexia. Singleton (1999) claimed that forty three percent of students with dyslexia were identified for the first time as a student in higher education. Other studies suggest that, for some students, previous history of having dyslexia at school may have been unpleasant and these students prefer to remain incognito and they attempt to manage their studies without support (Mortimore 2006: Pollack, 2009; Gibson and Kendall, 2011). This may eventually result in students not completing their programmes of study due to failure or drop out.

The assumption by academic staff that students with dyslexia are able to overcome their difficulties by their own efforts alone demonstrates a lack of understanding of what constitutes dyslexia. One lecturer stated that “if they are dyslexic...if they do have specific problems there is only so much we can do.” Another stressed that dyslexia
could be an “excuse” for poor work. “I am loathe to use that as an excuse (dyslexia) because I think that at this stage they need to be doing more proof-reading to ensure they move forward.” Several studies identify developmental dyslexia in adults as a core of difficulties which persist despite maturation and support for learning (Bartlett and Moody, 2000; McLoughlin, Leather and Stringer, 2002; Erskine and Seymour, 2005; Rose, 2009). Mortimore and Crozier (2006) support this view and go a stage further by claiming that, although students may have compensated for literacy difficulties earlier in order to allow them to gain entry to university, they reported that they remained disadvantaged by dyslexia at university due to difficulties with speed of reading, poor note taking ability and problems with expressing ideas in writing. However, the British Dyslexia Association (2008) advises that the effects of dyslexia can be lessened with appropriate intervention such as the application of information technology and supportive counselling, therefore these students require specific support in order to circumvent the barriers created by dyslexia.

Although “presentation adjustments” are now commonplace in universities and recommended for dyslexic students by Disability Services, this study shows that some lecturers still seem to be uncomfortable with allowing students to tape lectures. This was highlighted in a report sent to academic staff. “It should be said that several staff are uncomfortable with the requirement to allow lectures to be recorded.”

This deficit model of student support based on student deficiency and the belief that students’ learning needs can be overcome without intervention has been highlighted in other research (Blythman and Orr, 2002; Haggis, 2006; Wingate, 2006). The fact that students did not approach a lecturer for help was seen to indicate that support was therefore not needed and that the student would put their own strategies in place. This view has also been supported by other studies (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011).
4.7 Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The university claims that it is committed to a social model of inclusion in its mission statement and data from this study show that this is not always demonstrated in practice and that individuals and departments are hampering progress by remaining at different stages of development and transformation regarding disability. Policy does not necessarily mean that this is mirrored in practice and the university needs to monitor the extent to which practice regarding disability reflects its mission statement. This seems to indicate that there is a need for greater awareness and responsibility of all academic staff to demonstrate inclusive practice for all students. There is therefore a need for meaningful staff development where staff can hear of the barriers and challenges of disabilities such as dyslexia through the lens of the students themselves. A further way forward would be to involve students with dyslexia in experience based training for academic staff so that staff could learn first-hand of the barriers these students face and how staff might best support them. This approach has also been suggested by Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) and may also provide a means of giving students greater agency to become “instruments of their own change process” (Lincoln, 1995, p.281). Former students with dyslexia, who were now practising teachers, could be invited to talk about their experiences and the successful strategies they used in their time at university and in the classroom to overcome any barriers caused by dyslexia.

One way to embed inclusive practice would be to ensure that there was a commitment to inclusion within individual job roles for all new staff and that reflection on inclusive practice should be part of the appraisal process as proposed by May and Bridger (2010).

Although a range of staff development on disability issues is available, this does not seem to be impacting on disability practice as some participants in the study viewed inclusion in schools and inclusion in the university as two separate issues. A way forward would be for the university to review the content of staff development programmes on disability and to try to relate these more to direct practice and teaching rather than to disability
legislation. This would allow academic staff with a background in teaching to see that practice concerning making the curriculum inclusive in schools can be adapted to suit students in higher education and that they are not separate entities. By reviewing their own learning and teaching practices, academics could be made aware that these are not highly specialized approaches but are solutions that will benefit all students. Examples of these are good communication, clarity of information and opportunities for students to develop effective learning such as study development, essay writing and ways of coping with assessment.

If the online modules offered by the university are to be more valued, staff need opportunities to talk about the challenge of these modules through face to face discussion with colleagues. The distance learning module focusing on disability and dyslexia offered as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education could be made compulsory for all new staff but could also be made available for all staff. Although this was designed as a distance learning module, there are ample opportunities within the module for collaboration and problem solving during face to face sessions.

Similarly, there was no evidence of the use of alternative assessment practices to allow students to demonstrate attainment. In common with other universities across the UK, changing assessment practices is a considerable challenge due to entrenched attitudes towards teaching, learning and assessment in the university sector. In order for the university to adopt more flexible teaching and assessment practices that allow for the demonstration of achievement in different ways without eroding academic standards, different means of assessment could be built in at the course planning stage to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. The university has access to substantial computing expertise and resources researching into communications systems for disabled people. The outcomes of this work could be more widely disseminated within the university for the benefit of its own students with disabilities and for academic staff.
These fundamental changes cannot take place in a vacuum, and, as discussed with regard to an inclusive curriculum, staff development that allows academic staff to explore and develop these issues is fundamental to this approach.

Overwhelmingly, academic staff were positive regarding what they perceived to be the strong work ethic of students with dyslexia. Some lecturers also felt that dyslexic students used creative strategies in order to cope in the classroom. However, this position was reversed when lecturers were asked what areas were problematic for dyslexic students in ITE programmes. This encompassed views that students’ literacy difficulties would prevent them from becoming effective teachers, raising questions over their fitness to teach, despite the fact that there is no longer a fitness to practise criteria related to health and disability for students in ITE in Scotland. There seemed to be a tension between disability equality and the maintaining of standards and this is consistent with the findings in other studies. There is clearly a need for staff development focusing not just on disability legislation but also on the use of competencies to measure student achievement that focus on the qualities that students with dyslexia can bring to teacher education. This might lead to a more holistic view of students’ abilities that counteracts the narrow focus on literacy skills. The idea of a developing knowledge and understanding of teacher professionalism also needs to be explored so that this is seen as a developmental process for all students, rather than a given when students come into university. The students in this study demonstrated their own awareness of the need for professional standards in terms of literacy and how this develops over time with appropriate support and coping strategies. There are no specific standards for literacy in the GTC Scotland Standards for student teachers or newly qualified teachers. Students are required to “communicate effectively using a variety of media to stimulate pupils and achieve the objectives of the lesson.” If students with dyslexia are meeting these criteria with reasonable adjustments and the development of their own coping strategies then they should be deemed to be fit to practise like any other student.
Lecturers were of the opinion that there were many more students on ITE programmes who had literacy difficulties that were far more severe than those of some students who disclosed dyslexia. This raises the question as to whether these students may have undisclosed or undiagnosed dyslexia. Although opportunities for students to declare dyslexia are available for students throughout their studies, where lecturers perceive that a student may have undiagnosed dyslexia, academic staff could be more proactive in supporting these students with literacy and suggesting to these students that they can refer themselves to Disability Services.

Lack of support for students with dyslexia was attributed to the fact that lecturers felt that students were able to overcome their difficulties themselves by extra care and diligence in areas such as proof-reading and they seemed unaware that dyslexia is a life-long condition. Lecturers were of the view that, if a student did not ask for support, they did not require it. Even where Disability Services had advised adjustments such as students being able to record lectures, there were still some academics who were uncomfortable with this requirement. This raised issues of some academic staff being “out of touch” with the expectations of students in a multi-media society. Again, there is a role for staff development in terms of the efficacy of particular kinds of adjustment such as the importance of technology in supporting dyslexic students.

A “whole institution policy” on student writing could be developed that adopts a developmental rather than a deficit approach that is embedded across the university. This approach would therefore be of benefit to all students, not just those with dyslexia.
Chapter Five: Student Perceptions of Staff Attitude and Support

5.1 Findings

This chapter addresses the student perceptions of staff attitude and support and the challenges of school placement. The results and analysis of these findings will contribute to answering the overarching research question which is: “How far has a Scottish University implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the challenges, barriers, strengths and enablers?” This will be addressed in Chapter 7, entitled Summary and Conclusions.

The findings and discussion have been presented under the themes which were derived from the analysis and will be followed by a section which considers the conclusions and implications for practice. Table 12 below provides examples of the analytical themes pertaining to the student perceptions. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, these acted as interim case studies prior to final analysis.

Table 12: Examples of Analytical Themes from Student Accounts

<table>
<thead>
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<th>This student was almost in denial that she needed support and said that she did not use “stickers” on her work but felt that a proof-reader was more helpful. “You can get stickers on your work but I have never used them because I feel that you can’t have a sympathetic approach to these things if you are going into teaching.”</th>
<th>Fitness to Practise</th>
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<td>She described some of the strategies she used for coping with university work. “If I’m writing something I’ll I will put it away for a while and then come back to it later. I need to sit and read it very slowly. I find reading a chore. I feel it’s physically uncomfortable to do a huge amount of reading and I don’t look forward to it but it’s something I’ve got to do”.</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
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<td>There is a real sense that this student feels that the support she</td>
<td>Student deficit</td>
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receives is inadequate. “The only thing I get is a sticker to put on course work but to be honest it’s pretty much ignored.” She claims that it is not doing what it’s supposed to do and all it does is highlight her literacy difficulties.

She outlines some of the coping strategies she uses such as closing herself off “in a really dull room” or going to the library where she resists using Facebook or sending emails in case she becomes distracted.

She finds the Facebook page set up for her group useful as she “interprets things differently to other people and it is often wrong.”

Interestingly, this student claims that she has a very high standard of written work but that the content could be more of a problem than the grammar and spelling.

This student feels that dyslexia is an advantage for teaching. “I understand when the pupil is trying to write something and they just can’t get the words out. It gives me some sort of empathy.” She conveys that she understands how difficult it is for a pupil with dyslexia when they are asked to read out aloud and suggests that it may be better if they went out of the class for this.

This student discloses that she is dyslexic on school placement and claims that there have been no problems with disclosure and that all the teachers “have been absolutely fine with it” and that they have all been supportive. With regard to spelling mistakes in her file or on the blackboard “they don’t make a big fuss about it........they just point it out.”

This student gives a good example of the coping strategies she uses in the classroom to circumvent barriers created by dyslexia. “If a pupil comes and asks how to spell a word I make it a little game and I get them to look it up. This gives me time to go and check it for myself.”

The amount of effort required for this student to cope on school placement has been emphasized. “It is just getting through the sheer volume of work such as lesson planning. I just spend a lot of time. Definitely more time than others. I know because on my last placement I think I was getting about three hours sleep at night for about eight days. This leads to burn-out I suppose.”
The importance of adjustments such as extra time and the use of a proof-reader have been highlighted by this student. She has a proof-reader and extra time of twenty five minutes per hour and the use of a computer. She has also been allowed to use Read and Write Gold “which is a piece of software which allows me to listen to what I have written.” This student is appreciative of the software that she has been given.

<table>
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<th>Proactive Support</th>
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<td>This student expressed that she was grateful to disability services for the support that they had provided. “Before starting university the disability services interviewed me and helped to find the best possible ways in which to support me. I had a proof-reader from the beginning of first year and the use of a computer. I was also given extra support in the form of technology such as a lap-top. This support has been very useful and without it my time at university would not have been so enjoyable and comfortable as it has been.”</td>
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<th>Uncertainty</th>
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<td>There was a sense that she was less satisfied with support from lecturers “some lecturers are not aware that they should put up slides before lectures. Some do not do this and this makes following the slides and trying to type at the same time very difficult.”</td>
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<th>Perseverance</th>
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<td>Differences between the Postgraduate year and undergraduate studies at university was mentioned by this student. “It is a bit different on the Postgraduate year as it is more demanding than undergraduate studies because it is not so much needing to memorise things it is just focusing and staying focused.”</td>
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<th>Coping Strategies</th>
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5.2 Student Perceptions of lecturer attitude towards dyslexia

The themes which emerged in relation to lecturer attitude were “compliance” and “uncertainty”. Lecturer attitude was categorised as compliant when lecturers willingly provided adjustments recommended by Disability Services which was, in the main, providing lecture notes on the VLE. Although it was perceived by most students that lecturers complied with the disability guidance on adjustments for students, they make no reference to any other kind of staff attitude such as lecturers showing an interest in the needs of students with dyslexia or offering advice although I did prompt them in the interviews. Four of the students said that they had been provided with notes on the VLE. The comments from two of the students are included below:

Lecturers have been made aware that I am dyslexic and notes were being made available before lectures. If they weren’t on blackboard they’d hand me a copy. (9)

They do provide, on the whole, comprehensive notes. (11)

5.2.1 Uncertainty

Lecturer attitude was categorised as “uncertain” when it was perceived that they still appeared to penalize students with dyslexia for poor spelling and grammar and where staff showed a lack of understanding of dyslexia. One student was particularly critical of the attitudes of academic staff and felt that the sticker for dyslexia was not being used to make allowances for aspects of these students’ work concerning spelling and punctuation but were used to emphasize flaws in the overall quality of the work.

I have a sticker to put on course work, but to be honest it is pretty much ignored. I mean people still comment on grammatical and spelling errors or maybe just the wording of sentences and things like that, and to me, I thought that the sticker was to allow them to concentrate on other things. (10)

This student also perceived lecturers to be insensitive towards students with dyslexia.
One lecturer made the comment that “since you have a learning difficulty I’ve decided to pass you on that part”. I felt that this was first of all very unprofessional, and secondly, very insensitive. I think the sticker shouldn’t be highlighting it and giving them a bit of an excuse to kind of have a snipe at you. (10)

However, although this was construed by the student as insensitivity, it may have been that the lecturer was uncertain of how much leeway to give a dyslexic student in terms of assessment

Lack of awareness and indifference towards students with dyslexia was also noted by two other students and it was felt that, apart from the adjustments that were made as a matter of course in response to advice from disability services, no other provision was made for students with dyslexia.

I don’t think awareness of dyslexia is fully understood. (13)

With regard to the amount of work and getting no consideration for it ... that would make me think again about coming on this course. I would maybe have researched different universities and their approach to different students. Maybe it’s the same on every post graduate teaching course. To be honest, I don’t even think there was any point in me declaring my dyslexia at the start of the year. (10)

Several other studies have highlighted lack of understanding of dyslexia due to lack of appropriate staff development and how this contributes to communication difficulties between students with dyslexia and academic staff (Holloway, 2001; Morgan, 2001; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Hanafin et al., 2007).

5.3 Student Perceptions of Support

5.3.1 Proactive Support

Pro-active support was categorised as the provision of support over and above the basic recommendations by Disability Services in terms of student adjustments. The most frequently noted proactive support was from Disability Services in the form of Information Technology, hardware and software including voice recorders, software for
recording lectures, and mind-mapping software. Students appeared to be appreciative of this kind of support.

Obviously, I got my lap top and everything like that. There is a lot of different software that I wasn’t aware of but I now use to help me. (8)

Adjustments recommended by disability services were being made and proof-reading and extra time in examinations were viewed as particularly helpful by students. The comment by the student below demonstrates that, even with a spell-checker, a student with dyslexia cannot always pick out an error and that proof-reading can be invaluable. Extra time in examinations was also viewed as essential for students with dyslexia.

I find these adjustments very useful. Proof-reading has been an invaluable resource when reading over my work. I often don’t notice that I have not written a sentence properly, or spelling mistakes which even with a spell-checker can get missed. (9)

I receive extra time in Exams (15 minutes per hour) and the use of a computer. I find these very useful. I would struggle with normal exam conditions. (12)

One student felt that the Facebook page set up by lecturers for the Postgraduate programme that had been made available for her student group had been helpful in allowing her to check the requirements of an assignment. A study by Reid (2013) advocates the use of technology as offering students with dyslexia the potential for multi-sensory, individualised learning that is also useful for all students. This student maintains that having access to students’ comments and ideas on Facebook helps her to understand what is required of assignments and avoids some of the misconceptions she can have as she sometimes sees things differently from other people.

I often interpret things differently from other people and it is often wrong. I just need to know what other people are thinking to make sure I am on the right track. (9)
5.3.2 Reactive Support

Reactive support is categorised as lecturers providing support based on “generic minimum guidelines” where lecturers were merely complying with the guidelines concerning lecture notes being made available on the VLE. This is closely related to the compliant staff attitude described previously. This category was adapted from Cameron and Nunkoosing’s study on lecturer perspectives on dyslexia (2011, p.349) as there were similarities in my own study but I have replaced the category of “passive” with “reactive” as I felt that the category of “reactive” was more fitting within this study as academic staff did offer support in the form of lecture notes on the VLE but this was as a result of complying with the basic requirements regarding supporting students, therefore lecturers were reactive rather than active in their support.

Although there was general agreement that notes were being made available on the VLE prior to lectures, two students expressed dissatisfaction that the posting of lecture notes on the VLE was unpredictable. One student commented that she only received notes and handouts from one lecturer in particular and the lack of uniformity in the provision of lecture notes was echoed by another.

Lecturer slides could be put up before every lecture as some do not do this and this makes following the slides and trying to write at the same time very difficult. (12)

5.4 Coping Strategies

Three of the students made it clear that they were aware of their professional responsibilities regarding teaching and the skills that they feel are required and they appear to endeavour to reach those standards by their own efforts. Although this is commendable it may also indicate that these students feel that their literacy difficulties may question their fitness to practise. This accords with other studies (Riddick, 2006; Bielby et al., 2007; Beverton et al., 2008).
I think that being on this course you need to be able to spell, you need to be able to read and do all these things at a suitable level or how can you teach? You can get stickers to put on your books but I have never used them because I feel that I don’t think you can have a sympathetic approach to these sorts of things if you are going into teaching. (8)

Two of the students commented on their own high standards of work.

I do have a very high standard of written work. The content would be the problem more than the grammar and spelling but my grammar is usually excellent and my spellings are usually excellent as well. I even find that on the course people would be saying “when is it gone? and when is it went?” I would be like “how can you not know?” (10)

My personal view is that your writing needs to be at a high enough level to go and teach young children. That is not that anyone has said that to me ... that is just my personal opinion. (9).

A strong sense of the importance of students’ own coping strategies was evident from the interviews. Students described a wide range of strategies that they used in order to circumvent difficulties with areas such as composing writing, memory overload, reading difficulties and concentration.

I find reading a chore. I feel it’s physically uncomfortable to do a huge amount of reading and I don’t look forward to that but it’s something you have to do. I use different coloured acetates to put over the top and that does help a little but not a huge amount. (8)

I cannot read on-line. I know it’s really handy having e-books and things like that but I have to print it out and I have to be in a completely silent room. I can’t have any noise and I just have to focus. (13)

I can’t skim read but that is quite beneficial to me because I know exactly what the text is talking about because I have taken the time to really read it first. (8)

I like to write everything down so that I can remember it. I don’t have the long or short term memory to deal with it but if I write it down then I can check. (9)

One student described the difficulties of coping with concentration.
I have to close myself off in a really dull room, or if I went to the library I would usually have a rule ... no Facebook or emails, I could still be very distracted but I would eventually get somewhere. (10)

Perseverance is demonstrated by all students in relation to the adversity created by their dyslexia. It seems that they have dealt with dyslexia for so long that the coping strategies have become second nature to them. The ability of dyslexic students to control intrinsic and extrinsic factors for success and to try a number of solutions has been illustrated in other literature (Gerber et al., 1992).

It is difficult to pin-point because I have done it for so long. (9)

I have got into the way of being very organised. I know that it’s not meant to come with dyslexia. (8)

A desire to be like everyone else also seemed to be a strong motivator to succeed.

I’ll get all the help I can get, but when it comes to changing something so that I’m different from everybody else then I don’t like it. I like to be classed the same as everyone else. I have to work a bit harder but I can do it. (9)

Previous research has shown that belief that one can change is important for dyslexic students’ concept of self (Burden, 2005).

5.4.1 Empathy

An important theme which emerged from the data was that students felt that their dyslexia was an advantage for teaching as they were able to empathise strongly with pupils who had dyslexia.

I understand that it’s hard when a pupil is trying to write something and they just can’t get the words out or they just don’t know how to spell that word. I just think that gives me some sort of empathy towards them. (9)

This resonates with Gerber’s study which showed that dyslexic teachers had been motivated to become teachers in order to try and make a difference for dyslexic pupils,
who, like themselves, may have endured feelings of shame and low expectations at school (Gerber, et al., 2001).

This theme is developed by two students when they describe how they can be a role model to young people with dyslexia.

If I met a pupil who had dyslexia I would probably declare it to them and say “Well you know I have dyslexia and I’ve managed. I’ve become a teacher.” (8)

I say to a pupil who is dyslexic, “It’s okay not to be able to spell something. That is ok. You need to be able to look it up.” (8)

I wouldn’t be afraid to say, “Do you know I’m dyslexic. It hasn’t injured me and I can do anything I want to do.” (9)

These findings illuminate the “sensitive and empathic” teacher role identified by Burns and Bell (2011) where teachers with dyslexia showed empathy and understanding of students with disabilities. Several other studies have made similar conclusions (Morgan and Rooney, 1997; Duquette, 2000; Riddick, 2003; Glazzard and Dale, 2013).

5.4.2 Disclosure

All students interviewed made it clear that they had no difficulty in declaring dyslexia to staff in their placement schools and they felt that staff were supportive of them.

All the ones (teachers) I’ve had have been absolutely fine with it ... no problems ...they’ve all been very supportive. (11)

Teachers have almost just forgotten about it because they don’t see it in my work or anything. (12)

One student explained that she is not afraid to ask the class teacher for help when she is making resources such as work sheets and asks:

Can you have a glance at that? (8)
A key reason for declaring their dyslexia to school staff is the fear of being caught out.

I declare my dyslexia just to make sure they know in case I write something that’s wrong on the board. (9)

I’m not ashamed or embarrassed so when I do start a placement I do say, “Yes, I’m dyslexic.” I’m always really terrified that I will spell something wrong on the board. (13)

The following extract from a departmental report sent out to academic staff on promoting disability equality states:

We encourage students to be open and thus to mention any disabilities to their placement school, but understand that not all will choose to do so. On occasion we therefore have head teachers enquiring whether a student has a disability (frequently dyslexia, less so dyscalculia). They are sometimes surprised, disappointed that this was not shared with them at the start of placement, particularly in instances where resulting mistakes in spelling, poor organisational skills etc. are felt to be impacting on the students’ practice and, in turn, on their pupils. (internal document)

This indicates that some students fear that they may be stigmatised if they declare that they are dyslexic to their placement school and is consistent with the findings from other studies in the literature (Stanley et al., 2007; Beverton et al., 2008; Pollack, 2009).

5.4.3 Coping Strategies on Placement

Students described the various coping strategies that they used in the classroom in order to overcome their difficulties with areas such as correcting pupils’ spelling, writing on the board or marking pupils’ work.

For one lesson I had my spell-checker which they (the pupils) found amazing but they would never ask “Why do you have that?” None of them have picked up on my spelling. (8)

I had to mark on the spot, which I obviously didn’t feel comfortable with. When I wasn’t sure if a word was correct or not I would say, “That word may not be correct. Maybe we need to get the dictionary out.” (10)
It doesn’t jump out at you. I have to take my time. I do use my little spell-checker just to double check there is anything I’m not sure of. Then I will check as it obviously is very important. (9)

The ability of dyslexic students to utilise their own personal learning strengths accords with the findings of Burns and Bell (2011) and Glazzard and Dale (2013).

One student described how she tried to remain unfazed if she makes a spelling mistake while writing on the board.

Sometimes a child will point out, “You have not done your “e” at the end of that and I just say “Oh thanks, that’s great, missed that off.” (8)

5.4.4 Perseverance

All of the students interviewed demonstrated how much extra effort was required for them to cope with the demands of their school placements and the degree of perseverance needed in order to succeed.

One student used the term “burn out” to describe how she felt during the placement due to the fact that she had to spend much more time than other students in planning and completing tasks.

I just spend a lot of time, definitely more time than others. I know because on my last placement I think I was getting about three hours sleep at night for about eight days. This leads to “burn out” I suppose. I can manage that for a week or so but it depends on your tutor visit. If you have a very late visit and you have to do that for five weeks ... ! (10)

This is reiterated by another student.

I put in a lot of hours. I get my husband to proof read all of my work for the portfolio. (8)
That students face challenges with keeping up with work due to dyslexia echoes the findings of Mortimore and Crozier who claim that the success of dyslexic students is “clearly hard won” (2006, p.257).

There was a real sense that students had honed their coping strategies over their lifetime in order to succeed.

At school I got into a sort of routine and being that organised helped me to get my grades that I’m so proud of. I wouldn’t have it any other way. (11)

There are maybe strategies that are innate to me now as I’ve been coping on my own for so long. (8)

A positive approach to dyslexia was also evident, demonstrating how their own sense of self worth was crucial for their success.

If I had the attitude that I was really struggling then it would be more difficult for me. (12)

It is for me to prove that I can do it. (8)

A belief that a dyslexic student can succeed by trying a number of solutions is consistent with the findings of other studies (Burdon, 2005; Elliott and Dweck, 2005).

5.5 Discussion – student perceptions of staff attitude and support

It would appear that the apparent reactivity of academic staff towards support for students with dyslexia may be in response to advice on student adjustments made by disability services and that any support that is offered to dyslexic students may be conditioned by the institution’s view of support. This view was illustrated in the report referred to in the findings in Chapter 4 where the document stated that “support normally requires teaching materials to be made available on the VLE”. This view of support is also reflected in Table 5 where the list of support strategies for students with dyslexia recommended by Disability Services are mechanistic and therefore perpetuate the view that this is the only
kind of support that should be available to students. Students therefore appear to be accepting of this level of support and may feel reluctant to ask for further help. As notes on the VLE are now commonplace for all students, no real or significant support appears to be provided over and above this, although one student did find the Facebook page for students helpful in allowing her to share ideas with other students, particularly regarding assessment. This is consistent with the findings of Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) that lecturers who were deemed to be passive in their support “tended to follow the generic minimum guidelines for supporting students with dyslexia but this rarely meant a change in practice” (p.347).

A further reason why minimum support is provided may be that lecturers lack the confidence and skills base to support students with dyslexia over and above content knowledge and that there are conflicts over what kind of support they need to provide and what they feel they can do and this is therefore resulting in uncertainty over how to support dyslexic students. This is consistent with the findings of other literature (Blythman and Orr, 2006; Haggis, 2006). Lack of time may also be an issue as lecturers on teaching programmes often have workloads ranging across several programmes (Blythman and Orr, 2006). A number of previous studies support the view that the lack of understanding of dyslexia demonstrated by lecturers was due to lack of training in dealing with students with dyslexia (Holloway, 2001; Morgan, 2001; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Riddell and Weedon, 2006; Hanafin et al., 2007).

Students seemed to be satisfied with the support they received from Disability Services and they mention specific kinds of support that they have found useful including proof-reading and extra time in examinations and the provision of IT support in the form of specific software. A number of studies have concluded that extra time to complete assignments and examinations was particularly beneficial for students with dyslexia due
to their difficulties with the speed in which they process information (Lesaux et al. 2000; Bezrnitz 2003; Ofeish and Hughes 2003).

Disability Services form the backbone of support for disabled students in universities as a direct result of the legislation arising from SENDA (2001) and they are the arbitrators for the various adjustments to the university curriculum for disabled students. As a result of this, responsibility for support seems to be seen largely as the responsibility of Disability Services rather than being embedded across the curriculum. This was also a finding of Tinklin et al., (2004). This view can be perpetuated by Disability Support being perceived as offering the provision of stand-alone study support modules that can only be delivered by “specialists”. This has been similar to the findings in other studies (Wingate, 2006; Bailey, 2010).

It appears from the data that lecturers do generally provide notes on the VLE. This is consistent with the findings of Leyser et al. (2007) that lecturers are now more willing to provide this than was the case previously. This is possibly due to the fact that the VLE in universities is now a conduit for knowledge and information and is available for all students and the issue of the “fairness” of providing accommodations for some students is no longer relevant as this is now seen as a requirement for all students.

There is a sense of injustice from one student who claims that students on Postgraduate programmes are missing out because they do not have exams and therefore do not receive extra time in other areas of study such as submission of assignments. “There is really no support for people like me because we don’t do exams and we don’t get extra time”. Adjustments for disability seem to be applied across the board and there is no allowance made for different types of programme. Given that there is ample evidence from the literature that students with dyslexia encounter a range of problems with their studies, including the writing and organisation of assignments, reading speed and comprehension and organisation of time (Carroll and Iles, 2006; Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Hanafin et al. 2007; Smith, Spark and Fisk, 2007; Cameron and Nunkoosing 2012), it would seem
reasonable that, if required, they receive extra time for submitting assignments in the same way that they receive extra time in examinations. Organisational structures which govern the rules and regulations regarding assessment in universities can be resistant to change and do not always respond to the needs of students (Macdonald and Strata, 2001; Scott et. al, 2003; Hanafin and Shevlin, 2006).

Students had a strong awareness of their own professional responsibilities with regard to standards of literacy. These students appear to have developed what they consider to be the appropriate levels of literacy required for teaching. Like the teachers in the study conducted by Ferrie et al., it may be that these students continue to feel the stigma of having dyslexia and they counteract the stereotypes of dyslexia by proving to others that they are capable and successful (Ferrie et al. 2001). In addition, the increased focus from policy makers on maintaining standards within teaching and teacher education (DRC 2007; Scottish Government, 2011) may place even greater pressure on student teachers with dyslexia to demonstrate their competence in literacy.

In contrast to the dearth of examples students gave for the support they received on their programmes, they provided numerous examples of the difficulties they had with different aspects of literacy, memory and concentration and how they circumvented these difficulties. The level of perseverance and dogged persistence highlights the strengths that they have honed since early childhood. The ability of dyslexic students to become resilient in the face of failure and disappointment and to try a number of solutions has been identified as key factors for success in the literature (Gerber et al., 1992; Elliott and Dweck, 2005; Burden 2008; Glazzard and Dale, 2013). These researchers are also of the opinion that this attitude is crucial to developing a strong concept of self, ultimately leading to improved self confidence and self esteem.

All students in the study demonstrated a high level of persistence and perseverance. These students have been able to hone these strategies in order to reach the required
competencies both for their academic studies and in the classroom. This concurs with the findings of French and Herrington, (2008).

The students in this study demonstrate the ability to empathise with pupils with dyslexia and this view is supported in the literature (Morgan and Rooney, 1997; French and Herrington, 2005; Burns and Bell, 2011; Griffiths, 2011). These studies also maintain that dyslexic teachers understand their own strengths and weaknesses and are therefore more patient and sympathetic teachers. Furthermore, students with dyslexia often had strengths such as empathy and understanding of difficulties created during the process of learning, with often went unrecognised (Griffiths, 2011; French and Herrington, 2008). Through their own experiences of exclusion these teachers understood the barriers to achievement of pupils with a learning disability. This was exemplified by one student in the study who expressed that “it’s hard work when a pupil is trying to write something and they just can’t get the words out. I just think this gives me some sort of empathy towards them.” Other literature has claimed that the consequence of this should be a more supportive classroom environment for dyslexic pupils (Duquette 2000; Morgan and Rooney 1997; Riddick 2003).

Burns and Bell (2011) also identify in their study a teacher identity which they refer to as the “teacher capitalising on personal strengths” (p.957) where the teachers described their diagnosis and the discovery of their own individual strengths. This is also recognised in this study as students use their own experience of dyslexia as a role model for pupils to show that there are strategies that the pupils can use and that dyslexia has not been a barrier to success. This approach was demonstrated by one student who claimed that she would probably declare it to the pupil and would say to them “Well you know I have dyslexia and I’ve managed. I’ve become a teacher.”

Disclosure of dyslexia to their placement providers is done readily by the students in this study and the results of this seem to have been positive. One student reported that “all the teachers have been absolutely fine with it (disclosure of dyslexia) ... no problems.
They’ve been very supportive.” Several studies in the literature have shown that disclosure of a disability helps adults reframe their difficulties in a more positive light and that this is crucial for their careers (Gerber, et al., 2000; Konur, 2006). This also supports findings of a study by Ferri et al., (2001) where teachers had made it a point to disclose their learning disability to their pupils and to the managers within the school in which they taught. The participants “came to view their learning disability as a teaching tool rather than a deficit and readily shared this information with students” (p.29). This was demonstrated by one student in the study “for one lesson I had my spell checker out which they (the pupils) found amazing but they never asked, why did you have that?” However, it is clear that not all students are able to declare dyslexia as was illuminated by a Programme Director: “we encourage students to be open and thus to mention any disabilities to their placement school, but understand that not all will choose to do so.” Gerber et al. (1998) made the point that students and teachers with dyslexia fear that they will be judged on their disability rather than their performance as teachers.

A range of successful coping strategies have been developed by the dyslexic students in this study and lecturers have been impressed by how these students are able to overcome their difficulties in the classroom. Other research has shown that dyslexic students are able to face challenges more successfully if they are able to take control of intrinsic and extrinsic factors for success, including the ability to take risks and to try a number of solutions so that there is resilience in the face of failure and disappointment (Gerber et al., 1992; Elliott and Dweck, 2005; Burden 2008). This attitude was exemplified by one lecturer who stated “now Direction (the teaching of compass points) can be difficult for dyslexic students but she had done it so well you wouldn’t know she had dyslexia.”

The need for high levels of perseverance in dyslexic students has been a recurring theme in this study; both lecturers and students make the point that students with dyslexia in teacher education need to work extremely hard in order to cope with the demands of their studies, particularly those related to school placement. This accords with the findings of Burns and Bell (2011) who refer to the “perseverant and pro-active teacher” who was
able to take responsibility for developing their teaching practice and in persevering when they met challenges and obstacles as they had developed their own specific strategies that had allowed them to persist despite the barriers and challenges” (p. 957). This attitude was apparent in the words of the Disability Support Officer who claimed that “dyslexic students are really quite ingenious with the ways in which some of them cope with all that and I think that’s going to be followed through in the teaching practice because they are creative with it and very organised.”

The demands of school placement such as the writing up of daily lesson plans and evaluations and organising the material in the school file can be overwhelming for some students and can lead to “burn out” and although the students do ultimately cope this seems to be at a price as they appear to spend a great deal longer on this work than other students and often need to rely on their families for support such as proof-reading. The point is made by one student “I get my husband to proof-read all my work for the portfolio” and another student who claims that she spends more time than others on preparing her portfolio. “I just spend a lot of time, definitely more time than others.” This has also been identified in Mortomore’s study (2006).

The literature has shown that the cognitive impairments of students with dyslexia can have a considerable impact on their achievement in terms of reading, writing, numeracy, oral fluency, organisational skills and self-esteem (Singleton 1999; Pavey, Meehan and Waugh, 2010; Griffiths, 2011). The employment of the school file as a means of assessing dyslexic students on placement has been questioned by Imhof and Piccard (2009) as it does not allow for any flexibility or adjustments for dyslexic students. Most of the students in the study had managed to overcome their organisational difficulties as they had honed these skills over time to allow them to be able to cope. However, dyslexic students appear to receive no specific adjustments on school placement such as extra time to complete the school file despite the fact that adjustments should be made for students with a disability on placement. The Disability Equality Duty (Part 4) (2006) requires universities to ensure that students are not discriminated against for reasons
relating to their disability whilst on a placement arranged by a university. There is therefore a mismatch between legislation and policy.

This study suggests that academic staff have limited knowledge of the Disability Equality Duty (2006). No reference was made to school placement policy indicating that awareness of this was lacking. Despite this, the students in this study were not critical of staff within their placement schools and felt that they were understanding and supportive and the students did not fear the negative consequences of disclosure. However, some lecturers seemed to be unaware that dyslexic students required support. They claimed that they had seen no evidence while students with dyslexia were on school placement to show that “they fare worse in the classroom”. This view contradicts earlier assertions by some lecturers that dyslexic students have “fitness to practise” issues.

5.6 Conclusions and Implications for Practice

This section highlights that lecturers were considered to be compliant in making technical adjustments such as lecture notes on the VLE. The institution’s view of support seemed to endorse this attitude as this kind of adjustment is now commonplace and students may therefore not have expected, or felt entitled to, any other form of encouragement or support. Academic staff could be involved in staff development where they can consider other ways that they can support students with dyslexia “by looking beyond legal requirements and working more proactively to promote equality of opportunity” (Carroll, 2011, p. 6). It is important that staff have knowledge and understanding of the difficulties that dyslexic students face and to look at ways of supporting dyslexic students such as being approachable and available.

Where students felt that lecturers were unsupportive, insensitivity to the needs of students with dyslexia and a lack of awareness or understanding of dyslexia was perceived. A problematic area was the use of the dyslexia stickers as a student adjustment. The use
of dyslexia stickers in the assessment of dyslexic students’ work may be encouraging a student deficit approach which focuses on the students’ weaknesses rather than strengths and is leading to confusion as to how much leeway a lecturer should give a dyslexic student in written assignments. A clear policy on adjustments is therefore required for students with dyslexia that focuses on the positives rather than perpetuating labels which emphasize student deficit. At the time of writing this practice was being phased out so the university recognises the barriers created by this practice.

Disability Services have a role to play in reviewing adjustments for dyslexic students in ITE as to their suitability. Disability Services could also provide academic staff with more guidance on how to support dyslexic students in the curriculum rather than just the provision of minimum guidelines relating to adjustments. In a study by Morris (2011, p.17) of students’ mental health and wellbeing in universities, the students in the study identified a wide range of inclusive teaching strategies that would have the potential to support the wellbeing of all students. These are:

- Clear expectations and learning objectives
- Staggered deadlines
- Approachable/available academic staff
- Study skills development such as group work, presentations and essay writing
- Allowing for different learning styles
- Regular, clear feedback
- More opportunities for interaction with other students

These approaches are not highly specialized, but need to be fore-grounded for academic staff so that all students, including those with dyslexia, can benefit.

The data revealed that students did not appear to receive any specific support on school placement as was recommended in the student placement policy. As outlined in this policy, these students are entitled to support before, during and after each placement. Although the students in this study had no difficulty with disclosure some students who have declared dyslexia within the university setting may be uncomfortable with declaring
that they are dyslexic to their placement schools, therefore it would be beneficial if they were able to discuss this sensitive issue with their university tutors before they make a decision as to whether to disclose or not within the school setting.

Strategies to help students with the organisation and planning on school placement would be highly beneficial to students with dyslexia. The Learning Difference Centre (undated) has suggested a number of useful support strategies that can be encouraged by mentors such as helping the student draw up a plan for the placement, highlighting important information and dates; provision of extra time for supervision and completion of tasks; encouraging students to use a personal notebook or electronic diary and providing templates for reports and forms.

These findings also suggest that there may be a need for stronger partnerships between schools and the university based on shared ownership and trust between placement schools and universities. However, due to differences in the professional identities of school and university staff, this process may not be an easy one and this is recognised in the literature as the process of supporting students with a range of needs is complex due to the individual needs of students, differences in environments and the support available from placement providers (Trent and Lim, 2010; Griffiths, 2011). Joint staff development for schools and academic staff within universities would help to break down these barriers. The Learning Differences Centre (undated) suggest several practical support mechanisms for students with dyslexia on placement including a formal assessment of needs drawn up between the student and the staff concerned, an opportunity to visit the school before the start of placement and the provision of practical support and strategies for helping dyslexic students to circumvent some of the difficulties they encounter in the workplace.

Students’ difficulties with coping with the heavy workload associated with school placements such as planning and maintaining the school file, and the pressures that they face due to the extra effort that they need to make as a result of their dyslexia, is evident
from this study. Adjustments on placement such as extra time for completing these aspects of the placement would be beneficial for dyslexic students. This may help to avoid the inevitable “burn-out” described by students.

The strengths that dyslexic students can bring to teaching practice need to be communicated to all staff on teaching programmes so that the contribution of students with dyslexia can be valued as important for the overall understanding of how a disability like dyslexia can be a positive for teaching rather than a deficit. This could be incorporated into staff tutorials that prepare lecturers for school placement supervision and assessment. This could include examples of the strategies that students with dyslexia used in the classroom such as the use of a spell-checker and asking pupils to look up a particular word in the dictionary if the student is unsure. This would demonstrate how these approaches can be positive for students and pupils as it can foster a collaborative approach to learning between pupil and teacher.
Chapter Six: The Views of Other Informants

This chapter addresses the views of the other informants in the study namely the Dyslexia Advisor and a head teacher. The findings and discussion have been presented under the themes which were derived from the analysis and will be followed by a section which considers the conclusions and implications for practice.

The results and analysis of these findings will contribute to answering the overarching research question which is: “How far has a Scottish University implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the challenges, barriers, strengths and enablers?” This will be addressed in Chapter 7, entitled Summary and Conclusions.

6.1 Dyslexia Advisor

6.1.1 Disability Support Structure and Roles

Disability Support Services play a key role in supporting students with a disability in the university. All students who disclose a disability on their University application are contacted by Disability Services to advise of the services available and to encourage them to make contact as soon as possible to discuss their individual support needs.

The Disability Services Department has a team of 10 people, led by the Head of Disability Services, who provide a range of confidential services for disabled staff and students. This includes specialist advice on different disabilities including dyslexia screening and diagnostic services, support with recruiting and managing support workers, individual needs assessments, training with assistive technology and a loan equipment service. There are three Dyslexia Advisors who have responsibility for assessing and supporting dyslexic students.
The Service has developed a range of disability-related guidance for staff such as marking the work of students with dyslexia, arranging student placements and inclusive teaching and assessment practices. They play a pivotal role in keeping staff up to date and informed of disability legislation and staff development on inclusive issues.

The Disability Service is supported by a network of Disability Support Officers in all Academic schools. These are appointed on a voluntary basis from teaching staff within the schools and there is no remuneration or extra time allowed for these roles. They are the initial point of contact for disabled students in their School and they are required to disseminate disability related information to other staff in the School, including any adjustments to support students’ individual needs and to assist disabled students who may have problems with accessing services.

Over and above the Disability Service, students have access to a range of other services such as the Learning Centre and the Academic Achievement Unit. The Learning Centre has developed an extensive online study skills learning resource which is available to all students. It covers all aspects of learning and studying in higher education. Support for Academic Writing Skills is provided through the university’s Academic Achievement Unit. These resources are available to all students, not just those with a disability.

6.2 Disclosure

The procedure for disclosure is outlined by the Dyslexia Advisor.

They have several stages that they can disclose at. This is through the UCAS form. They can then choose to make an appointment with Disability Services once they have been offered a place. Sometimes the students are referred by tutors. It is usually the tutor that will email and say “can you see so and so” and I always get back to them and say, “Can you ask the student to contact me?”, because it’s really important that they choose to do that rather than being told to do that. (2)

When asked if students found it difficult to disclose dyslexia her reply was:
If a student has known for their entire education that they have dyslexia they are usually quite comfortable and confident. They are able to say “I have dyslexia so if I make a mistake, sorry can you help me out with that?” (2)

However, she also recognised that some students do have difficulties with declaring their dyslexia to school staff.

That lends itself to more difficulties and more anxieties. Students have said that if they had said they had dyslexia they assumed the reaction would be, “How are you going to be able to teach?” I’ve had students in tears. (2)

This resonates with the findings relating to “fitness to practise” discussed in the previous chapters.

### 6.2.1 Assessment of Dyslexia

This participant described the screening process that was used to assess students with dyslexia once they had been referred to Disability Services. This is based on a Discrepancy Model of dyslexia where IQ is deemed to be higher than overall literacy ability.

We use both a screening test and we look holistically at the work they are producing. The screening test we use is a test called the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test which is meant to give a verbal IQ. We use the WRAT test for single word reading and single word spelling. We also use the digit memory test so we can get a measure of their memory ... so we are looking at all of this. (2)

Although the focus was on a discrepancy model they also use other factors.

There have been occasions when we’ve done a full diagnostic and there’s not been that discrepancy, but I can tell from the spelling errors that there is clearly something that has gone wrong. They are not just having difficulty with spelling because it’s not even close to the word I’ve given, so whilst I would say yes, we are using discrepancy for the screening, there are lots of other factors. (2)

Not all students undergo the screening test due to the time it takes

It is too unmanageable for the university to put everyone through for the full diagnostic assessment. It takes three hours at least. If there’s no screening it can be done in about forty five minutes. (2)
When asked whether students were relieved to be told that they had dyslexia, the response was that this depended very much on the student.

I would say probably for adult learners, yes, because they say that with all of the bad things that happened to them in school ... having had that, they say “I knew I wasn’t stupid, I knew there was a reason why I couldn’t do this or process this information” so definitely for them, yes. However, some students are a little bit reticent and say “how’s this going to affect my career?” (2)

Other studies have concluded that, for some students, a diagnosis of dyslexia can be a positive and may lead to greater support (Riddick and English, 2006) but for other students it undermined their academic identity leading to a change in perception of self (Jacklin, 2011).

### 6.3 Onus on the Student

Students with dyslexia are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and to maximise the support they are given. This was highlighted by the Dyslexia Advisor who commented that one lecturer had stated that:

I didn’t feel that I could fail this person because they’re dyslexic

Her response was:

That person has been offered study skills support, they have been referred by their tutor to the Academic Achievement Unit, they have access to software either on their own, or on the university network and if they are not engaging with this support then absolutely.

### 6.3.1 Support for Students with dyslexia from Disability Services

As already discussed in Chapter 5, students seemed to be satisfied with the support they received from Disability Services. The range of software offered by Disability Services is illustrated below by the Dyslexia Advisor.
We have assisted software on the network which is available for everyone ... a wide range of text to voice conversations, spell checking, there’s all sorts of things. There’s mind mapping software that can help students plan, there’s a couple of versions of that and I also recommend Ginger Software which is fabulous for checking spelling and checking grammar. They can have access to a lap top which has some software already in it ... they can borrow digital recorders. We have some IPod Touches which can help with some of their organisational skills and so forth. (2)

One to one tuition for Study Support is also on offer for dyslexic students along with support from the Academic Achievement Unit.

They can have one to one tuition for study skills support and that is really about improving their organisational skills, planning assignments and identifying spelling errors. That can be quite difficult because the student has to understand that they can’t come in with an essay and say “can you help me with that?”

6.4 Staff Attitude

When asked what she perceived to be the attitudes of staff towards students with dyslexia she made it clear that this was very variable and this varied across academic schools.

It’s a completely mixed bag. We have some amazingly supportive tutors right to the very opposite of that scale.” (2)

An example she gave for staff being proactive was:

“he stuck on one of the red stickers on her work so that she could go and get help from the Academic Achievement Unit and I think that was really proactive.”

This illustrates that the disability support view of support for dyslexic students offered by academic staff was narrow and that change in lecturers’ practice were not emphasised. This resonates with the findings relating to lecturers’ and students’ views of support.
6.5 Views of the Head teacher

6.5.1 Support on Placement

The Student Placement Policy for the university clearly sets out the legal context of supporting disabled students on placement outside the university, the quality assurance framework and the recommended procedure.

The document outlines the obligations of the Disability Discrimination Act (Part 4) to ensure that students are not discriminated against for reasons relating to their disability whilst on a placement arranged by the university and that placement providers should ensure that appropriate adjustments are identified and made. It advises that the university should work with placement providers to ensure accessibility including providing support, before, during and after placements to take account of the needs of disabled students.

Schools within the university that run programmes involving placements, are advised to ensure that disabling barriers should be identified and removed as far as reasonably possible to enable equality of experience for disabled students, including alternative placements where necessary. It is recognised in the document that support for placement providers such as awareness training on specific disability issues may be a requirement.

The dilemma concerning disability disclosure consent is also addressed and the need for awareness of the personal consequences of disclosure about a person’s disability as well as the legal consequences for the university is highlighted. The need for a student to receive support on whether to disclose a disability is also stressed. Before commencing a placement outside the university, all students are required to complete a Disability Disclosure Form. This form provides the student with a choice as to whether to declare their disability to the placement provider or not. The form emphasizes that additional support can be provided if a student declares their disability and they are encouraged to declare a disability for this reason.
Finally, it is recommended that a written agreement should be drawn up, outlining the responsibilities of the placement provider, the university and the student, including responsibilities for making reasonable adjustments. It is advised that the effectiveness of these procedures should be monitored by reviewing feedback from the student and the placement provider and where students have encountered difficulties the academic school concerned should take steps to ensure that this does not happen again and may involve severing links with the placement provider.

Responsibility for ensuring that all academic staff and school staff are aware of these requirements, particularly those involved in admissions and placement, lies with individual Heads of School.

The head teacher in this study seemed to be unaware of the Student Placement Policy and the responsibilities regarding the DDA in relation to school placements. She was unaware of the procedure around student disclosure and showed uncertainty over responsibilities concerning disabled students on placement.

But would the university do that (inform staff in schools) if there was a specific need. Does anyone contact the school or is it the student’s responsibility? (4)

I can’t really think of any time that it’s been highlighted which is something to think about. (4)

The data in Chapter 5 with regard to support for dyslexic students suggested that lecturers were also unaware of these responsibilities.

Support for the student was viewed as another professional’s responsibility.

It might be that if you are aware of any difficulties you might actually speak to the support for learning teacher as well, and just see if there was some consultation there that could help the student and help the teacher to support the student. (4)
She also made it clear that there is no specific mentor or link person with responsibility for students per se on placement and that the lines are now blurred over who has responsibility since the demise of senior teacher roles in Scotland several years ago, as a result of the McCrone Agreement, (Scottish Executive, 2001) which led to the re-organisation of roles and responsibilities in schools in Scotland.

The kind of support we give in schools is really through the teacher ... and through the teacher modelling teaching and directing the students and obviously they practise their skills in the classroom. It certainly used to be the senior teacher who was responsible for mentoring students within the school but you don’t have senior teachers anymore. (4)

Where support for the student is discussed it is in terms of protecting the pupils from harm rather than in terms of offering emotional or practical support for dyslexic students.

We need to ensure that children are being taught correctly and that the right information is being passed to children. (4)

In terms of staff development in schools on disability issues the head teacher made the point that equality training for students was seen as somehow different and less important than equality for pupils.

It’s quite an interesting thought that when you think in terms of inequalities we don’t always think of students coming in to schools. (4)

This stance was also explored in the previous section.
6.6 Discussion of Findings

6.6.1 Views of the Dyslexia Advisor

In relation to disclosure of dyslexia it is apparent from the data that some students have no difficulty in disclosing dyslexia. This was backed up by the findings relating to student attitudes in Chapter 5. The positives of disclosing a disability such as being able to reframe difficulties in a more positive light has been highlighted in the literature (Gerber et. al, 2000; Ferrie, 2001; Konur, 2006; Riddick and English, 2006; Glazzard, 2010). However, the data also suggests that this is not the case for all students with dyslexia, particularly those on teaching programmes. Other studies have shown that students may find disclosure distressing as it was associated with negative self-concept and that some students with dyslexia did not regard themselves as disabled (Watson, 2002; Riddick and Weedon, 2006).

Data from the dyslexia advisor supports the views of the students in Chapter 5 that a wide range of support was available from disability services including computer hardware and software and one to one support with academic writing if required. The benefits of one to one tutoring and mentoring of students with dyslexia has been highlighted in other studies (Gerber, 1992; McLoughlin and Kirwan, 2006; Kirwan and Leather, 2011). The use of computer technology to enhance learning for students with dyslexia was identified by Reid et al., (2013).

As in the findings pertaining to lecturer attitude in Chapter 4 where lecturers felt that the onus was on the student with dyslexia to succeed. This view was also held by the dyslexia adviser who felt that if a student was not engaging with the support on offer then a sympathetic view would not be taken towards the student.

The diagnosis of dyslexia by Disability Services is based on a discrepancy between IQ and reading and language abilities. This involves a battery of tests which, according to Farmer, can be extremely time consuming, stressful and unreliable (Farmer et al., 2002).
The discrepancy model and the use of extensive testing has been criticized in some of the literature as being outmoded due to the unreliable nature of IQ measurement (Gardner, 1985; Rice and Brooks, 2004). There is an acceptance by Disability Services that a discrepancy based model of assessment needs to be reviewed and that a more holistic approach to assessment, looking at the experience of the student could be adopted. This view is supported by Macdonald (2009). A further advantage of adopting this approach is that a medical model of disability would be replaced by a social model, where diagnosis would be based on the perceptual analysis of students’ learning experiences rather than deficits within the individual.

6.6.2 Views of the Head Teacher

Equality issues for students on school placement were somehow believed to be different from equality issues for pupils. This is consistent with the findings from research carried out by the Higher Education Academy, (undated). It was also perceived that the support for dyslexic students was another professional’s responsibility.

Despite the fact that the university placement policy clearly sets out procedures for supporting students on placement out-with the university, this appears not to have been communicated to academic staff concerned with assessing and supporting students, head teachers and teachers within the schools concerned, or to the students themselves. Uncertainty over who should provide the support for dyslexic students on placement and the nature of the support is highlighted in the data by a head teacher who proposes that “you might actually speak to the support for learning teacher as well, and just see if there was some consultation there that could help the student and help the teacher to support the student.” A number of previous studies highlight the importance of a clear protocol for supporting dyslexic students on school placement. A partnership approach is advocated in the literature. Griffiths (2011, p.8) emphasizes that placement needs to be “proactive, discussed, investigated and planned by all concerned” and that a dyslexia trained central co-ordinator, a university moderating tutor and a dyslexia support tutor
should form a partnership for support. This view was also proposed by Bassey (1999) who calls for a consistent approach and effective communication to school placements.

Donaldson, cited in HMIE (2008) has recognised the value and importance of mentoring students in secondary schools and all students on their probationary year. However, the fact that the role of mentors in primary schools is blurred and there appears to be no clear consensus on role responsibilities means that some students, particularly those with a disability such as dyslexia may be struggling to cope as they rely solely on their own coping strategies in order to succeed.

**Implications for Practice**

Disability Services played a key role in ensuring that staff were informed of adjustments for students with dyslexia. Students were appreciative of the support they provided such as software and hardware and ensuring that special exam provision such as extra time were in place for disabled students. Academic staff were dependent on Disability Services in issuing advice and guidance on how to support students with a disability. They were rarely proactive themselves in providing support for students, that was over and above the minimum guidelines, due to lack of awareness and appropriate staff development. Although there was recognition that many students with dyslexia required additional support with areas such as academic writing, lecturers were not aware that they could have a role in supporting students with these areas. Academic staff could be made aware, through induction and staff development, that not all students come into university with the pre-requisite academic skills and that it is a process of development which they need to nurture and encourage in all students. Students could be provided with opportunities to view samples of good and bad academic writing relating to specific assignments and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses. There is no doubt that this approach is already employed by some academic staff, but data from the students may indicate the practice may not be universal.
One way forward would be for tutors and advisers from Disability Support to model the practices they use with students so that there is continuity of support. Joint staff development programmes between Disability Services and academic staff would also help to break down the barriers and lead to a more equitable relationship where the roles of each were more clearly understood.

Discrepancy models of assessing dyslexia based on the difference between IQ measurement and general ability are now no longer recommended due to unreliability of IQ measurement and the perpetuation of a medical model of disability. Disability Support should continue to review its method of assessment to include a more holistic approach looking at the student experience rather than a deficit, medical model approach.

If students know that there is a supportive culture within the placement school then they will be more likely to disclose that they are dyslexic. It is therefore important that the support available to dyslexic students is discussed and agreed between both the school and the university and the support evaluated by the student, the placement school and the university at the end of the placement in order to learn of the success or otherwise of the support and how this can improve future practice.

The blurring of roles regarding mentors in primary schools as a result of re-organisation of management roles in Scottish schools has meant that no one person seems to have clear responsibility for mentoring students on school placement. A mentor with specific responsibility for supporting dyslexic students could therefore be appointed within each school. As advocated in the literature, a dyslexia-trained central co-ordinator, a university moderating tutor and a dyslexia support tutor could form a partnership for support.
Chapter Seven: Summary and Conclusions

This chapter will begin by summarizing the findings and analysis of the data in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This will be followed by a summary of the conclusions and implications for practice and will address the key research question posed in this study: “How far has a Scottish University implemented inclusive policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and what are the barriers challenges and enablers?” The thesis will conclude with the contribution of the research to professional knowledge and the limitations of the study.

The key findings and analysis of this study have been set out in the previous chapters and are summarised here.

Analysis of participants’ accounts suggested that although most students felt that lecturer attitude was largely supportive, this was construed in a very narrow sense and was related to the fact that lecturers complied with Disability Support guidance on the provision of lecture notes on the VLE. The students may be conditioned to this level of support and therefore may not feel that they are entitled to individual support by academic staff. Where students felt that lecturers were less supportive, lecturer attitudes were construed as uncertainty and lack of awareness of dyslexia. These findings would suggest that these attitudes may stem from a lack of knowledge of the needs of dyslexic students and how best to support them.

Some academics’ attitudes to students with dyslexia were contradictory. On the one hand, they praised the work ethic of dyslexic students in terms of diligence, hard-work and coping strategies, but on the other hand attitudes to how students faced the challenges of teaching were negative in tone, raising issues around “fitness to practise” and revealed a tension between disability equality and maintaining professional standards in teaching. This view appears to be entirely subjective as there was no evidence that lecturers had first-hand experience of students manifesting these issues on school placement.
In relation to students’ perceptions of the support they received in their programmes of study, it was evident that this support was mainly of a reactive nature, in the form of generic guidelines relating to student adjustments and they appeared to be reactive in the support they offered, rather than proactive in offering support over and above the recommendations of Disability Services. More proactive support was being offered by Disability Services in the form of computer software and hardware and the provision of a proof-reading service.

Lecturer attitude to support is sometimes unsympathetic and there is a sense that the onus is on the student to improve and that dyslexia should not be used as an excuse. It is possible that some academic staff are unaware that dyslexia is a life-long condition which does not improve, despite maturation.

Some lecturers were of the view that literacy standards in general were falling amongst the students on their programmes and that many other students had greater literacy difficulties than the students who had declared dyslexia as a disability. This begs the question whether there are many more students with either undiagnosed or undisclosed dyslexia or whether the literacy standards of students is declining. The fact that students with dyslexia are perceived to have less difficulty with literacy than peers who did not have dyslexia also raises the question as to whether the support that these students had received, however limited, had impacted on their ability to succeed. These students also showed high levels of perseverance and they were acutely aware that they needed to reach a certain standard of literacy to allow them to teach.

For some students, they felt that they should not have any weaknesses in literacy if they were to become teachers and they endeavoured to reach that standard with minimum support. Although this is commendable, this could also suggest that they may fear stigmatisation due to tensions within teacher education over literacy standards and they require a more “academic” identity that they see as more befitting of the teacher role.
The high levels of resilience and perseverance that student teachers with dyslexia possessed in order to overcome the barriers they faced as a result of dyslexia were evident from the stories of the participants. This was demonstrated in the range of coping strategies that they used and had honed over a life-time.

Far from dyslexia being a detriment for teaching, it would appear that all the student teachers with dyslexia in this study feel that they are able to empathise with their pupils, particularly those who have learning difficulties, as a result of their own experience of dyslexia. In addition, they appear to be able to utilise a range of effective coping strategies in the classroom which has made them resilient and able to cope with the literacy and organisational demands of teaching. However, the extent of this level of perseverance is at a cost and results in “burn out” for some students. This has implications for the level and nature of support that is offered to students with dyslexia on placement.

Support for students with dyslexia on school placement did not reflect the advice that was presented in the guidance for placements laid down in the university guidelines. Neither the academic staff, the students or the head teacher made any reference to this document. It would seem, therefore, that there may be a lack of awareness of these guidelines by all concerned.

There are several areas where the university has demonstrated good practice in implementing disability policy and practice. An effective communication system has been established between Disability Support and academic staff regarding the transfer of information on the nature of adjustments for students with dyslexia and Programme Directors ensured that information was imparted to all members of staff on their programmes. Lecturers were in the main providing lecture notes on the VLE but there were some issues with allowing students to record lectures. This suggests that some lecturers are unsure as to how students with dyslexia should be supported, despite the guidance from Disability Services. A clear system that allows students the opportunity to
disclose dyslexia at different stages within their programmes of study has also been established. The admissions policy for teacher education is inclusive and does not discriminate against dyslexic students on entry to teaching.

The role that Disability Services plays appears to be valued by the majority of students and some academic staff and it played a pivotal role in making staff aware of disability matters. However, this guidance was not always adhered to as some lecturers are not making the recommended adjustments such as allowing students to record lectures electronically or to make allowances for poor spelling and grammar where the meaning is clear.

Although the university has recognised the need for staff development on disability issues, the on-line programme that is compulsory for staff is regarded as challenging and time consuming. Some academic staff appear to be turned off by what they perceive as too much emphasis on legislation and not enough on pedagogy. They also view equality issues for students as somehow different from equality of pupils within the school setting. This indicates that there may be a need for more meaningful staff development which demonstrates that inclusive teaching approaches as just as important for university students and constitutes good practice for all students, not just those with dyslexia.

Few academic staff appeared to employ alternative learning and teaching strategies to support students with dyslexia. This also applied to the assessment process, where, apart from making the generic adjustments advised by Disability Services, alternative forms of assessment where students could demonstrate achievement in a range of ways, was not mentioned, indicating that this was not common practice within the School of Education.

7.1 Final Conclusions and Implications for Professional Practice

In this section I will evaluate how far the university in this case study has implemented inclusive policy and practice and discuss the barriers, challenges, strengths and enablers and the implications for professional practice.
The university Disability Equality Scheme (2010) endorses a commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all, and a social model of disability is recognised, where disadvantage and social exclusion stem from barriers created by society rather than individuals with disabilities (Ainscow, 2007). The university is obliged by law (DED, 2006; Equality Duty, 2011) to implement and improve disability policy and practice through regular monitoring and review. As part of the review between 2010 and 2012, a student survey revealed that students were concerned regarding negative attitude to disability by academic staff; non-implementation of adjustments and lack of understanding of disability issues. It also recognised that lecturers were failing to take responsibility for curriculum design, delivery and assessment. It is therefore not surprising that this concurs with some of the findings in my own study. However, I feel that my own research has allowed me to identify, through hearing the voices of the participants, some significant insights which will inform professional practice relevant to the institution which is the focus of the study, and will be useful at a national and international level in informing policy and practice for students with dyslexia in both higher and teacher education. The DRC (2007) highlighted that there was a dearth of research or data regarding disabled professionals within nursing, teaching and social work and this is a fitting reason why this research may be timely.

7.2 Barriers to inclusive practice

The major barriers to inclusion within teacher education have been discussed fully in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. The data showed that some lecturers had a sometimes unsympathetic approach to support and the onus appeared to be on the student with dyslexia to improve without support (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). A further significant barrier was the evidence that some lecturers were pre-judging the competence of student teachers due to negative connotations regarding dyslexia and their ability to teach, despite the fact that there were no longer “fitness to practise” standards, resulting in a deficit stance towards students with dyslexia based on a medical model of inclusion.
(DRC 2007, Madriaga, 2007; Weedon, undated.) This was manifested in the views of some the participants and in university reports.

A programme of meaningful and structured staff development concerning disability and dyslexia may contribute towards providing academic staff a greater insight into the barriers created by dyslexia and how staff might offer support to students with dyslexia. Several studies have shown that if students with dyslexia were involved in the delivery of training, this would allow academic staff first-hand experience of the barriers that dyslexic students face and also provide these students with a “voice” (Ferrie et al., 2001; Kirwan and Leather, 2011; Fuller et al., 2004). This would also allow them to be instruments of their own change process (Lincoln, 1995). As discussed in the literature review, an approach that is gaining increasing momentum in European sociology is the analysis of individual perceptions relating to peoples’ experiences, interactions and interpretations of disability (Bertuax 2003; Humphrey et al. 2003). This also supports the biopsychosocial model of disability (Engel, 1980; WHO, 2001; Inclusion London, 2012) that considers the biological, individual and social perspectives of those with a disability and how these interact with the person themselves and their environment. This may allow academics to view disability as multi-faceted rather than merely a biological condition that is within the disabled individual. This has been an important outcome of this study.

This study also shows that academic staff, students and the head teacher seemed to be unaware of the guidelines for disabled students on placement. This is despite the fact that the Student Placement Policy outlines the responsibilities of academic and school staff in supporting students with disabilities in accordance with the DED (2006). A clear protocol for supporting students with dyslexia, that is communicated to academic staff, students and local authority head teachers would allow for a partnership approach so that the placement is “proactive, discussed, investigated and planned by all concerned” (Griffiths, p.8). The Learning Difference Centre (undated) has suggested a number of specific strategies such as the provision of extra time for supervision, completion of tasks
and encouraging students to use organisational tools such as the use of an electronic diary and the provision of templates for reports have been suggested as being beneficial for student teachers on placement. In addition, clear lines of responsibility and the appointment of a dyslexia-trained co-ordinator, a university moderating tutor and a dyslexia support tutor/mentor would ensure a more joined up approach and may help to create a greater joint understanding of the support that is required for dyslexic students on placement as suggested by Trent and Lim, (2010). Other literature has proposed that joint staff development for teachers, managers and academic staff would strengthen this approach (Trent and Lim, 2010; The Scottish Government, 2008). Furthermore, this would ensure a more equitable quality of experience for all students, not just those with dyslexia and would prevent student failure, loss of confidence and self-esteem. This is recognised in other studies (Timmerman 2009; Trent and Lim, 2010).

The Scottish Government (2008) has established an internationally valued mentoring system for newly qualified teachers that could be extended to include student mentoring, particularly in the primary school.

7.3 **Strengths and Enablers for inclusive practice**

This study has shown that, despite some of the barriers and challenges that still exist in the implementation of inclusive policy and practice, there were some strengths and enablers that were contributing to a positive ethos for students with dyslexia in teacher education. Clear lines of responsibility and an effective communication system between Disability Services and Programme Directors has been established and this has resulted in all academic staff being made aware of the adjustments required for students with dyslexia. However, this does not always result in these being adhered to, suggesting that communication system needs to be built on to ensure that academic staff are clear that it is their legal and professional duty to make such adjustments.

As recommended by the DDA, (2005) and the DRC, (2007) students have ample opportunity to declare dyslexia both at the admissions stage and at any time during their
studies. Some students in this study appear to have no difficulty in declaring dyslexia to their tutors on placement or to the pupils themselves. This suggests that, for some students, disclosure has been positive, indicating that these students do not feel stigmatised for declaring their dyslexia. This is consistent with the findings of Duquette, 2000; French and Herrington (2008).

A major strength and enabler identified in this study is the attitude of dyslexic students themselves in terms of perseverance, resilience in the face of adversity and the coping strategies that the students employed in order to circumvent these difficulties and the empathy they displayed for pupils with additional support needs in the classroom (Morgan and Rooney, 1997; French and Herrington, 2008). This has also been recognised by academic staff. According to Cameron and Nunkoosing (2011) academic staff who were positive about students with dyslexia had direct experience of students with dyslexia. Opportunities for staff development where students themselves showcased these strategies would allow academic staff to become more aware of dyslexia and the students’ strengths rather than focusing on their perceived weaknesses. This would allow academics to learn about strategies for teaching and learning from the students themselves (French and Herrington, 2008). Riddick (2003) recognizes that not all teachers with dyslexia will be outstanding teachers as they will have a range of competencies and skills like any other teacher but that teachers with dyslexia were more liable to become effective teachers if they possessed coping strategies.

A further strength identified is the key role that Disability Services play in providing additional support for students with dyslexia in terms of assessing students, ensuring that staff are made aware of the recommended adjustments and providing individual support for students through the provision of computer software and hardware. The provision of proof-readers and extra time in examinations was valued by all students. This is consistent with other literature that has concluded that extra time in examinations is crucial for dyslexic students due to the need to re-read and re-check work (Bernitz, 2003; Ofeish and Hughes, 2003; Lesaux et al., 2006).
Nationally, the Scottish Government and HMIE, (2008) has shown the issue of mentoring teachers has been considered a priority as it has established an internationally valued mentoring system for newly qualified teachers that could be extended to include student mentoring particularly in the primary school. The Scottish Teachers’ Education Committee (2008) has called for universities to continue to “refine and enhance support for students with dyslexia” (p.9). In terms of support for students with dyslexia on school placement, placements could be matched to students’ needs and supportive mentors appointed who understand the barriers for students with dyslexia in the classroom, but who also recognise their strengths and help students to build on these strengths.

7.4 Challenges for the university in implementing inclusive practice

There are a number of significant challenges for the university in embedding inclusive policy and practice. This study indicates that there is a need for more inclusive approaches to teaching to be embedded in the design of programmes in order to benefit all students, not just those with dyslexia (SHEFC, 2005; Lewis and Norwich, 2007) and this may ultimately lead to a lessening of the need for adjustments for students with dyslexia, lessening the conflict between fairness and maintaining standards (Healey, 2003; Waterfield and West, 2006; The Education Academy, undated). Hall and Healey (2004) suggest that this can be accomplished by the production of accessible handouts, varying the format of presentation such as flow charts, spider diagrams, graphs and illustrations and accessible teaching strategies including providing students with lists of new terms and abbreviations at the start of lectures and providing copies of diagrams etc. Students could also be encouraged to use multi-sensory approaches to learning such as mind-mapping for planning, highlighting key points on texts, approaching a topic through a variety of media and developing a strong peer support (Loxley, 2004; Mortimore 2008; Reid et al. 2013). In addition to these practical approaches, a more inclusive culture and environment that celebrates difference would contribute to the overall wellbeing of students. Carroll (2011) suggests that this can be accomplished through promoting
successful learning and achievement outcomes for students and staff and the encouragement of self-awareness and confidence.

The impression that literacy standards of students in teacher education may be falling and that there may be many students who have not declared dyslexia who have considerable literacy difficulties, warrants further investigation. These students may fear stigma or discrimination or that their needs may not be met (Olney and Brockleman, 2003; Pollack, 2005; Jamieson and Mortimore and Crozier, 2006; Morgan, 2007). There may be a further underlying cause in that difficulties with academic writing are common to many students when they begin university (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004; Skillen and Mahoney, 1997) and all students could be given the opportunity to develop these skills through the duration of their studies. This has implications for the university in supporting students with academic writing throughout their programmes of study and in recognising the need for a “whole institution policy” on student writing that is developmental rather than based on student deficit.

A further challenge for the university is ensuring that academic staff are made aware that they are responsible for supporting students with dyslexia and it is not solely the responsibility of Disability Services (Tinklin et al. (2004). This view may have been perpetuated by the separation of learning support from the university curriculum through the provision of standalone study support modules and specific help with academic writing provided by specialists (Wingate, 2006; Bailey, 2010). Individual support for students with dyslexia is valuable (McLoughlin and Kirwan, 200; Kirwan and Leather 2011). However, if mentoring and coaching are to be successful, opportunities for staff to become familiar with the approaches used with dyslexic students by Disability Services could be created, otherwise support for learning offered by Disability Services may be seen as separate from the learning that takes place in the academic setting and may be viewed as the responsibility of other professionals and will contribute further to producing a “glass wall” between disability services and the institution (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). Peck et al. (2010) are of the opinion that, although specialist support
is important in the short term, in the longer term learning and teaching strategies need to take account of the increasing diversity of students in higher education

As discussed above, a whole institution response to supporting students in the university curriculum is desirable. May and Bridger (2010) suggest that this can best be achieved by incorporating responsibility for inclusion in job descriptions for academic staff and embedding inclusion of students with disabilities in the appraisal process.

7.5 Concluding Comment

This study has shown that, although organisational structures are in place to develop and evaluate disability policy and practice including management responsibilities and strategic planning, if the university is to fully comply with disability legislation and honour its pledge to encourage all individuals to reach their full potential and to continue to foster positive changes in behaviour and attitude it should endeavour to ensure that its mission statement, which aims to promote equality and diversity for all, is understood at all levels and embedded in practice. Mortimore, (2012) reminds us that progress towards a fully inclusive institution can be hampered by departments and individuals being at different stages, thus preventing change within the organisation. This research has revealed that there are still considerable barriers and challenges to full inclusion of students with dyslexia in teacher education. Six years have passed since the publication of the DRC’s ground breaking report into maintaining standards and promoting equality within the professions of social work, nursing and teaching (DRC, 2007). It was recognised in this report, that although Scotland had taken the lead in abolishing “fitness to practise” or health standards, this did not reflect a change in attitude towards students with dyslexia in teaching, social work and nursing. The report recommended a framework of professional standards of competence and conduct, coupled with effective management and rigorous monitoring of practice as the best way to balance the aspirations of people with disabilities and the maintaining of standards. This can best be
achieved by universities assessing the level of coping strategies of students with dyslexia and the support that they need in order to reach the desired standards for their professional responsibilities. It would seem that the university in this study has adopted these recommendations and it may take time to instil in the culture of the university the belief that students with dyslexia have a wealth of skills and experience that can enrich the teaching profession. The OECD report: Educating Teachers for Diversity: Meeting the Challenge (2010) makes the case in point. “Diverse teachers bring to the classroom their unique experiences and perspective which can help them better relate to their diverse students” (p.1).

7.6 Contribution to professional knowledge

A dearth of research concerning people with disabilities within teaching was recognised by the DRC, (2007) and in relation to the attitudes of academic staff towards students with dyslexia in teacher education (Cameron and Nunkoosing, 2011). In addition, much of this research refers to the situation in England, and, although there are areas of similarity, I have made some comparisons between the approaches in Scotland, England and Wales. The analysis of the data in my own study has revealed similarities in the findings of other studies related to the attitudes of academic staff, support for students with dyslexia and the barriers and challenges that they face. Although these areas are important in their own right, I feel that this research has raised some significant issues relating to dyslexia and teaching that other studies have not recognised. I propose that three areas are of particular importance for understanding the barriers that students with dyslexia face in teaching. The first of these is concerned with the belief amongst academic staff that there are many more students with literacy difficulties on their programmes whose literacy difficulties appear to be of more severity than some students with declared dyslexia. This may have an impact on support for students who may have undeclared dyslexia as they may be overlooked. This would be an area that would merit further research to see whether the latter assumption is warranted, and, if so, how can universities support these students. A comparative study of dyslexic and non-dyslexic students as carried out by Mortimore and Crozier (2006) could be the basis of this
A further question that this study highlighted was why some lecturers saw inclusion and equality for pupils in schools as being different for university students. This was a surprising finding as lecturers in this study had been teachers in their former careers and yet they did not seem to make the connection that the learning and teaching approaches developed in schools to promote inclusive practice could be adapted for university students with additional support needs. Finally, a finding that is particularly relevant to the Scottish context is the lack of awareness of the legislation regarding support for students with dyslexia on placement and the absence of mentors in schools. This has implications for the Scottish Government, universities and schools as previous policy that resulted in teacher re-structuring has led to uncertainty over who has responsibility for this important role in primary schools.

7.7 Limitations of the Study

It has to be recognised that there were several limitations of this study. In terms of the sample, it was smaller than first planned. This was, in part, due to the poor response rate of dyslexic students and to time constraints that made it difficult to interview a large number of participants. However, Richards (2009) notes that well designed qualitative research projects are usually small due to the need for attention to context and detail and as these take time they do not require large samples. Another significant limitation was the absence of a more significant head teacher “voice” due to the fact that local authority schools were not permitting their head teachers to participate in any outside research. The focus on female students is a further limitation and may have reduced the representativeness of the findings but this could not be avoided due to the low ratio of male students in teacher education.

This chapter has summarized the findings of the study, discussed final conclusions and implications for practice, including the barriers, challenges, strengths and enablers for the university in implementing inclusive practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education. It concluded by considering the contribution to professional knowledge and the limitations of the study.
This chapter is followed by the Professional Development Portfolio.
Chapter Eight: Professional Development Portfolio

8.1 Reflexive Review

During the course of this project I have explored the development of my understanding of becoming a “reflexive researcher”. I have come to realize that there is more to reflexivity than merely checking for subjective bias. It involves being able to engage with findings that challenge pre-existing notions and assumptions and involves complex relationships that consider awareness of the part that context plays and that individuals bring to the process (Etherington, 2009). As an “insider-researcher” I was able to draw on the shared understandings of my colleagues. I was able to draw on my experience as a lecturer who was situated within the school of education in order to understand some of the students’ and lecturers’ attitudes and assumptions. This allowed me to take a more balanced view in recognising the opinions of others. Standing back from the situation, I could see from my own experience that the demanding role of being a lecturer in teacher education, working across a number of programmes could create a survival mode where time for supporting individual students is limited. Conducting this study has allowed me to reflect on how inclusive my own teaching approaches were concerning students with dyslexia and I realized, that, despite my background in inclusive practice, my own practice in terms of inclusive teaching approaches was found to be wanting. Costely et al. refer to this process as “understanding your professional self in relation to your personal self” (p.3). There were also several disadvantages of being an “insider-researcher”. The role of the “worker researcher” posed many dilemmas and challenges particularly as I was evaluating and judging the work experiences of colleagues who were in my own faculty and there was sometimes a conflict between my role as researcher and my professional role within the university (Sikes and Potts, 2008). This may have created issues of power differential between myself as researcher and some of the participants in the study as those who knew me may have pre-formed expectations of me which could have affected their responses to my questions.
A further challenge to the research process was the fact that I retired from the university before the research was completed. This created a different dynamic in relation to how I was perceived. No longer could I influence change from within. My role became an outside consultant who hopes to facilitate change. This also influenced my research methodology as I realized that action or work-based research would not be appropriate. Maintaining contact with the university was crucial for this process and I knew that it would be essential to maintain regular contact with the university in order to keep my mentor informed of the progress of my research so that my work would still be valued. This was achieved through regular meetings with my mentor who will be key in disseminating the case study report to the university. Buchanan and Body (1992, p.27 refer to this as “backstage activity in the recruitment and maintenance of support”.

A review by Baker et al. (2006) of the widening participation literature concerning the barriers faced by non-traditional students in higher education concluded that studies concerned with “empowerment” in higher education tended to demonise academic staff, holding them responsible for changing practice within the institution and that the views of students are valued more than the views of staff. I feel that in this study, I have provided a view that recognises both the legitimate staff and student perspective and that also recognises that the political agenda itself affects the outcomes for students and staff.

The research journey has been both an illuminating and challenging experience. Conducting this research has shown me that the research process is not linear and that some of the decisions made at the start of a research project need to be modified and re-visited along the way. I soon realized that my original research questions were too broad and had to be modified and that my intention to use Action research would need to be shelved due to the fact that I had retired from the university and I would not have the same ability to create change from within. I also became aware that the literature review could not be seen as static as new and more up-to-date books and papers on the subject of dyslexia in higher education had to be taken account of during the research process therefore writing the literature review became an ongoing process. With the benefit of
hindsight, I feel that using a grounded theory methodology where theories “emerge from, rather than exist before the data” (Cohen et al. 2011), may have allowed me to explore more diverse areas raised in the research itself such as the influence that parents and schools may have on students with dyslexia with regard to their attitudes to learning and their self-esteem.

Finally, I return to the aims of this research. I believe that the “lived realities” and the thick description (Geertz, 1973) offered in this case study will have an impact on university policy and practice for students with dyslexia in teacher education and may help to empower students with dyslexia by providing a snapshot of the experiences and ways of knowing of this marginalized group.

This thesis has provided an analysis of the strengths and limitations of inclusive policy for dyslexic students in teacher education through a case study method which has examined the perspectives of students, academic and Disability Support staff. It has been further informed by analysis of policy documents relating to disability. There is the potential for this study to provide insight and guidance to all stakeholders concerned with disability and teacher education on how inclusive policy and practice is impacting on dyslexic students in initial teacher education programmes. I am also confident that the findings of this study will help to shape future policy and practice within the university that was the focus of the study but may also influence change at national and international level.
8.2 Aims and Purpose of the Professional Development Portfolio

Professional Development Portfolios are not merely a list of experiences, accomplishments and professional development. Williams and Jordan (2009) advise that “they provide a format for self reflection on practice and goal planning” (p. 125). Increasingly, they are used by a variety of professionals to document professional growth and, according to Moon (2005) learning journals or portfolios are containers for reflective work, including the “thinking place” for the appraisal of the quality of personal and professional activities (p.30). I had never kept a diary and was unused to reflecting on a regular basis but I found that having to write and analyse my thinking on a regular basis for the PDP allowed me to re-visit and re-evaluate my thinking as my studies and career progressed.

As a lecturer in teacher education, I was responsible for introducing students to PDPs, including electronic portfolios. I was puzzled as to why students found this aspect of their studies so problematic, but having had to embark on this process myself for the Professional Doctorate, I now realize that it is far more demanding than writing a report on what has gone before. I faced the same dilemma as my students in that reflective writing is challenging and it is unlike the “technical rationalism” that is dominant in more formal research (Schon, cited in Lyons, 2002 p.191). Lyons (2002) defines reflective practice as “thinking with examples” that puts particular focus on the insider’s view of experience and highlights the importance of problem solving (p. 191).

As already stated, undergoing the process of reflexivity in relation to my own research has given me greater insight into how my own particular experience and view of the world has shaped my understanding of the research process. I hope that this PDP, through a process of reflection and reflexivity, will allow me to showcase my own strengths and experiences as a teacher educator and researcher and will reflect on where I am now, how I arrived here and where I want to go.
8.3 My Learning Journey

I have had a varied career in education. This is summarized below:

- primary teacher 1971-1981
- head of department in Learning Support in secondary education, with whole school responsibility for staff development and support for pupils with additional support needs 1987-1996
- self-employed educational consultant 1996-1999
- development officer roles in the local authority and voluntary sector 2000-2003
- lecturer in higher education 2003-2011

Primary education was my initial career goal, and, looking back I was a restricted professional (Hoyle, 1978) with little opportunity or concern for professional development and my career goals were narrow and consisted of the day to day concerns of teaching. I had begun teaching at the age of twenty, and after ten years as a primary teacher, I realized that I needed to move on. There had been few opportunities for professional or career development and at that stage I was not motivated to become a head teacher or manager in primary education. I had always been interested in pupils with additional support needs. The catalyst for this was a placement I undertook at a specialist unit for students with disability while I was a student. After spending three years in South Africa, an opportunity arose to teach as a support for learning teacher in a secondary school on my return to Scotland. This appointment renewed my love of teaching and led me to review my career goals as I felt that I wanted to pursue a career in Special Educational Needs. The early 1980s was an interesting time in this field as the ground-breaking Warnock Report (1978) re-defined the categories of SEN. It emphasized the role of all teachers in supporting pupils with learning difficulties, focusing the support on mainstream education rather than in stand-alone remedial departments which were often separated from the mainstream school. This report had a major influence on my values in special education and I began to realize that disability was more than identifying problems and weaknesses within young people with SEN. I
now became more aware that barriers created by the learning environment itself could contribute towards learning difficulties. I suppose this was a mental shift towards the belief in a social model of inclusion where the emphasis is on identifying disabling barriers within the environment (Riddick 2000; MacDonald 2009). My commitment and developing philosophy and values relating to special education were nurtured further after completing a one year diploma course in SEN. I came to realize that Piagetian theories of education, where young peoples’ learning seemed to be limited by stages of development, had influenced my understanding of how we think and learn. This theory was termed learning “readiness” (Woods, 1988, p.7) and was prominent when I had first qualified as a teacher. I remembered, with regret, how I had assumed that some children had not been “ready to read” due to their own lack of development. As a result of undertaking further study, I now embraced the teachings of Vygotsky (1962) and Bruner (1966) who put instruction at the heart of learning and identified the importance of language and social interaction. These teachings have had a profound effect on how I came to view learning and teaching as I now became aware that significant others, including parents, teachers and peers contributed to and supported children’s learning and acted as a support or scaffold until they were able to learn for themselves. This I saw as particularly important for supporting young people with SEN and was the basis of the support strategies that I developed within the mainstream classroom.

My confidence and expertise as a practitioner in support for learning was further advanced by studying for a Masters Degree in Education at the Open University. Promotion to a Head of Department in Support for Learning soon followed. However, after a school closure which left me without a post, I decided to go in another direction. I had become increasingly interested in educating adults and therefore ventured into consultancy where I worked for a number of organisations within both the public and voluntary sector. These roles further strengthened my belief in social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all learners. This experience allowed me to see education in a different light, from the perspectives of a range of professionals including social workers, community educators and volunteers and to hone my skills as an adult educator. This
experience also made me realize that education does not need to take place in formal settings as I worked with adults in libraries and art galleries. Brookfield (1986) makes the point that some of the most significant kinds of adult learning are not formally designated to adult educational settings. I had also developed an increasing interest in research in education as I had conducted an evaluation of Dundee City Council’s provision for out-of-school-hours learning. When I look back now, with the benefit of undertaking research at doctorate level, I realize that the research methods I used for the evaluation were not as well developed as they should have been, but they fulfilled the purpose of obtaining further funding for the local authority and gave me a deeper insight into how other professionals worked.

This foray into educational research made me want to pursue further research and, when funding for the local authority project ended, I applied for and was successful in obtaining a post as lecturer in teacher education. However, my perceptions of the role of university lecturer were very different from the reality. As referenced in my literature review, teacher education was in a state of flux after the colleges of education had been merged with the universities (Kirk, 1999). There had been fierce opposition to this by teacher educators but mergers went ahead (Sutherland, 1997). I took up the post during a transition when college staff were resisting being involved in research as they saw their main remit as being focused on learning and teaching. The opportunity to be involved in educational research had been a significant factor in my taking the post, but the reality was that time for research had been squeezed out and lecturers were spread across a number of teaching programmes and had extremely demanding workloads. The difficulties I experienced in adapting to a university setting and academic work resonates with several research studies which outlined similar challenges to those I faced on transition to a university environment (Ducharme, 1993; Sinkinson, 1997; Murray, 2005). Lecturing in so many diverse areas including design technology, mentoring, and language education left me feeling increasingly de-skilled. Although I was deemed to be an “expert” in these areas I was “no longer feeling expert” (Harrison and McKeon, 2008 p.154).
8.4 Opportunities and Challenges in Higher Education

These feelings of inadequacy were gradually overcome through several opportunities that led to a change in my own outlook and confidence. I was appointed as Programme Leader of the Support for Learning and Inclusion pathways of the M.Ed. I was also asked to take on the role of Disability Support Officer for the School of Education, Social Work and Community Education. I was approached by the Dean to take on this role when it became vacant as it was felt that my experience in inclusion would be advantageous for the post. Although there was no extra time or remuneration for this role, I felt that it was something that would further enhance my knowledge and experience of disability and inclusion in higher education. I now felt that I had returned to my specialism of inclusive education, and through these roles, my confidence and reputation grew. McCulloch (2009), in her narrative study of transition of teachers from schools to teacher education, suggests that “connection to individual disciplines seems to be fundamental to the identities of participants” (p.156). This also made me feel that I was once again a professional who had knowledge and skills in a specific domain. Warrier, (2003) defines professional identity as the perception of oneself as a professional as being closely related to the knowledge and skills one has and the work one does.

Being involved in teaching Masters Level studies to students on the M.Ed. degree provided further experience in educational research. Taking students to Masters Level meant that I had to revisit the research processes that I had undertaken in the Masters Degree and to update this to take account of more recent developments in Action research. However, I still felt that my knowledge of educational research was limited and that, to progress the knowledge of my students, this area needed to be developed. In 2005 I applied to become a part-time fellow on the Applied Educational Research Scheme (AERS) which was funded by the Scottish Government. This allowed me to become part of a community of researchers from a range of backgrounds that met on a regular basis. Working under the guidance of experienced researchers, I became responsible for planning and researching a case study on school leadership and
management. The monitoring report, included in the portfolio of evidence (p.194), outlines my roles within the remit and my research needs and achievements. Taking part in the AERS project called for a high level of commitment, shared responsibility, team work and personal autonomy. Managing this work alongside my university duties was not easy but I persevered and gained a great deal from it in terms of research methodology and collaborative ways of working. It added a new dimension to my work and it was to be the stepping stone and catalyst for undertaking the Professional Doctorate. The experience has stood me in good stead for doctoral studies in terms of research knowledge, experience and the work ethic required for juggling independent study and work commitments. The process of planning and conducting interviews with teachers while undertaking the case study as part of the AERS research influenced the research methodology and methods that I used in my thesis. I was able to apply what I had learnt regarding interviewing and case study method.

I was also aware that my considerable knowledge and experience in the field of Special Educational Needs may have influenced the responses of the academic staff within the study. This is discussed with regard to reflexivity within the thesis in Chapter 3.

Although taking part in the AERS project was beneficial for my own development, I felt that there was little opportunity to share my experience and findings with colleagues in my own university, as research in education was still not valued by the faculty at this time. This situation reminded me of what Weik (1982) termed a “loosely coupled system”, where despite the university goals and values of research, there was still a culture of not valuing research within the faculty of education. Sergiovani (1984) claimed that loose coupling within an organisation can be prevented if members are “sufficiently connected to the enterprise’s purposes and values, so that, either willingly, or unwillingly, they will function to reflect or achieve them” (p.50). There was also a feeling that the “elders” in teacher education were resistant to research as they wanted to reinforce their own values that were determined by their own expertise as teacher educators. This made it more difficult for me to find a suitable community of practice to
work with. Wenger (2006) defines communities of practice as “groups of people who share a common passion for something they do, and learn how to make it better if they interact regularly” (p.1).

This feeling of being alone in my pursuit of research knowledge and experience within the faculty changed in 2008 when there was a re-structuring within the university and “new blood” had been brought into teacher education, helping to raise the profile of research. This changed the dynamic of the School of Education as the restructure allowed different communities of practice to flourish. The Scottish Teacher Education Committee, with financial support from the Scottish Government, was charged with implementing a two year action plan to embed inclusive education, particularly in relation to pupils with dyslexia, across the teacher education programmes in Scottish universities. This was to be achieved through the development of a framework for inclusive practice. Each of the seven Scottish universities appointed representatives to the working group and I, along with an Associate Dean, were chosen to represent my own university as I was deemed to have the most experience of inclusion within the School of Education. Over a two-year period, regular meetings of the inclusion working group enabled a “community of practice” to develop. This was a highly satisfactory phase of my career as I felt that I was being given an opportunity to develop my knowledge and experience of inclusive education which was of benefit to myself, my colleagues and my students.

The Framework for Inclusion was launched at a national conference by the Cabinet Secretary for Education in Scotland in April, 2009. The rationale of the framework is included in the portfolio of evidence (p.195). Although it is nearly four years since the launch of the Framework for Inclusion, it is still valued as a tool in identifying the needs of dyslexic learners. Reid, (2013), in a recent article in the National Association of Special Needs editorial, claimed that the Framework for Inclusion was a good example of an innovative assessment framework. I felt that I had been privileged to have been part of this collaborative venture. This is a rare outcome in Scottish universities as
traditionally universities compete with each other for funding and research projects. Being involved in the development of the framework was certainly a high spot in my university career that led to an increase in self-esteem and standing within the education community in Scotland.

8.5 Professional Development

During my career in the university I have attended staff development opportunities including conferences and courses both within and outside my own university. These have been related to both my research needs and also for the broader roles that I fulfilled within the university. In 2011, I attended the induction programme for the Professional Doctorate at Cardiff University (p.196). This intensive three day programme provided an important overview of the different aspects of the Professional Doctorate. I have found the presentations and the notes I made to have been an invaluable resource and I have drawn on them throughout my studies. I found the sessions on reflective practice particularly useful both for the PDP and the thesis itself. Theories of change and ethics in educational research were also illuminating and have helped to inform my own research.

8.6 Reflections on developing the knowledge and skills of others

Any teaching role in higher education inevitably involves developing knowledge and skills in students. Lecturing and leading seminars and group work with students was my key role when I began my work in teacher education, but as my career progressed I was increasingly involved in supporting the professional development of colleagues both in my own and other Scottish universities. I was responsible for facilitating the Framework for Inclusion both in my own university and in other Scottish universities involved in the Framework. The feedback from the seminar in which I took part, introducing programme directors to the background and rationale of the Framework document is illustrated in the portfolio of evidence (p.198). A recurring theme within the feedback from participants at this event was the importance of the opportunity to meet with others to share ideas and how they might take them forward in their own universities. This exemplifies the success of this event and the development of a community of practice.
approach where knowledge is both located and created (Lave and Wenger, 1991, cited in Edwards and Collison, 1996).

In my first year as a lecturer in education I had been asked to write a module for the Masters programme. I had found this a daunting prospect as it was something that was new to me. There was very little help and advice available. However, as I have discussed previously in this portfolio, I was deemed to be an “expert”. Despite this initial fear of writing a module, I found that it was something that I enjoyed and it was satisfying to see the end result. One example of this is the module I wrote for the Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education in 2010. The module was entitled Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education and was developed as a distance learning module for the university VLE. The outline and rationale of this module can be seen in the portfolio of evidence (p.199). This module contributed to the Certificate in Higher Education which is compulsory for all lecturers in higher education. This module is discussed in Chapter 4. I also wrote a further M.Ed. distance learning module for students on the VLE entitled Working Towards Inclusion. This included peer assessment as a feature. The rationale for this module can be seen in the portfolio of evidence (p.201). An example of a student’s evaluation of the module is shown in page 203.

Developing this module provided a good starting point for the literature review in the Professional Doctorate. My increasing knowledge and experience of inclusive practice through undertaking the Professional Doctorate and being involved in the development of the Framework for Inclusion has been invaluable for informing the modules.

Writing these modules also helped me to develop my skills in the design of interactive distance learning materials and use of information technology as a teaching tool. My experience of some online modules had highlighted that there is still a lack of dialogue in some distance learning courses compared to face-to-face sessions. I aimed to avoid this problem by introducing more interactivity and problem solving. Mason and Rennie (2008) have suggested that areas that need to be considered in the design of distance learning materials are methods and strategies to increase interactivity and active learning.
and issues of accessibility. Society is increasingly using social media as a networking tool, therefore, I felt that it was important to harness these skills in order to increase student motivation. This also had the benefit of encouraging students to develop their skills in working collaboratively. One issue I had in developing the modules was the fact that Blackboard was being updated to a new version therefore I had to learn how to use this version in conjunction with writing the modules. This proved to be a considerable challenge but I felt that I was learning by doing and by the time I had completed the module I felt competent in using the on-line tools to support student learning such as Blogs and discussion boards. This experience was useful for developing other programmes within my remit. I have also used Skype in the delivery of presentations to fellow students and staff as part of the assessment process for the Professional Doctorate. This has further increased my experience of using interactive technology.

8.7 Reflections on the Professional Doctorate

The success of being involved in developing the Framework for Inclusion fuelled my desire for further challenges and it was at this point that I decided to undertake a Professional Doctorate in Education in 2009. I had been accepted to study for a PhD at Stirling University much earlier in my career. At that time I was financially unable to afford the fees but this was something that I had always regretted. When the opportunity arose again, although it was late in my career, I felt that I did not want to lose a final chance to complete a Doctorate. I knew that I was nearing retirement at this stage but decided that completing a Doctorate was a personal challenge that I wanted to accomplish regardless of my age. Learning at any age is fulfilling and I agree with Findson and Formosa (2011) that older learners value their own learning and take pride in their own achievements.

I felt that supervising and supporting students on the Masters programme had provided a good grounding in the research process. However, the reality of undertaking my own research was much more demanding than I had anticipated. Defining the research
questions and methodology was an iterative process that changed as I refined my thinking and objectives. My original research question had been too broad and seemed to be at odds with the aims of the study. After I had submitted the Contextualising Change and Professional Development module in December 2011, feedback from my supervisors influenced a change in research methodology. This change in thinking was exemplified in this extract from an email sent to my supervisors.

I am now beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I think that I have been influenced by the requirements of the assignments and that has clouded my view of the final research project as there seems to be a strong focus on action research and the need to plan and evaluate change. But I now see that much of this can be addressed in the CPD portfolio and does not need to be part of the dissertation itself. This also influenced how I framed my research questions as I was thinking about the outcome rather than the process. I feel that the new questions I have posed are much closer to what I had envisaged in the first place.

Another factor in my rejection of an Action research paradigm was that now that I had retired from the university I would no longer be viewed as an “insider” researcher. It became clear that Action research would prove to be more difficult as I would not have the same opportunity to influence change from within. For this reason I adopted a case study method. The outcome from the research would be a case study report for a range of stakeholders including the university, the General Teaching Council and the students themselves. My original outcome had been an extension to the framework for inclusion but feedback from my supervisors had made me realize that this may have been too ambitious in the circumstances.

Delivering the presentation on Contextualising Professional Change and Development to my fellow students and supervisors at Cardiff Metropolitan University was an extremely worthwhile process which gave me confidence that my research proposals were sound. The feedback on my presentation skills demonstrated that the time I had spent on preparation had paid off. The comments made were that my plan was clear and had been well thought through. The feedback can be viewed in the development portfolio (p.205).
Using Skype for the presentation was perhaps more daunting than the presentation itself as I had not used it before but my nervousness soon faded as the presentation progressed. This made me realize how challenging it must have been for my M.Ed. students in using this kind of technology for the first time on their distance learning programmes.

Comments from my supervisors on the draft literature review highlighted that my “criticality” of the literature needed to be further developed. Moon (2005) defines a number of skills and attributes that are required for critical thinking. Among these are judgement, effective provision of evidence, clarity and precision, creativity, emotion and metacognition or awareness of one’s own thought processes. Re-framing and developing more criticality within the review was an important step forward as I had taken for granted that I had possessed these skills. In my role as M.Ed., tutor I was used to advising students that they needed to develop more critical analysis in their academic writing. It came as a shock to realize that I needed to do the same. It was re-assuring and useful to have had this level of feedback before I submitted the thesis itself. I began to see that this process of self-discovery related to my own work would be similar to how the academics in my study might feel about their own practice. Although they may have been confident in their work as teacher educators, the findings and recommendations from my own study could challenge their own practice. There is no doubt that change can be threatening to an organisation and its members and can cause feelings of anxiety as the status quo becomes blurred (Marris, 2007).

The process of critical reflection and developing a theoretical framework for my thesis was further developed through what Richards (2009) refers to as “telling it”. Richards emphasizes that “telling” what is going on in a research project is just as valuable as writing the final report and that “it is much more natural to tell why the story has changed than to rewrite a written up report” (p.191). A presentation to the Association of Disability Support Officers in Higher Education (ADSHE) in 2011 outlined my early findings and led me to identify and refine some of the key themes that were emerging from my ongoing analysis. The seminar presentation at Cardiff Metropolitan University
on my research proposal and the feedback, were also crucial in helping me to adapt and develop my literature review and research methodology. This can be viewed in page 205 in the portfolio of evidence. A further opportunity to interpret and analyse my findings was through the writing of an abstract and paper for the ECER international conference in Cadiz in September 2012 which was subsequently accepted. The acceptance of my paper is shown in page 207 within the portfolio of evidence. The feedback from the international audience that attended my presentation was extremely positive, although challenging at times, as there were differing cultural views on inclusion from some of the participants and I had to defend my own views regarding the social model of inclusion. This led me to reflect further on the fact that everyone’s experience and schema concerning inclusion is different and is dependent on culture and experience. An important outcome of the presentation was that, unknowingly, I had referred to a paper that had been written by a researcher from Beit Berl University in Israel, who attended the presentation. She was surprised and delighted that I had referred to her research and she has asked if I would contribute to a joint paper for publication once I have completed my thesis. This is an avenue I hope to pursue on completion of the thesis.

I have presented papers at a number of important conferences both in the UK and internationally. These have further extended my research experience and presentation skills. These are summarized in the table below.
Table 13: Table of Conference Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Title of Presentation</th>
<th>Date of Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Educational Research Association</td>
<td>Management and Organisational Change in Schools</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>(SERA), Perth, Scotland</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Erasmus Mundus Special Educational Needs</td>
<td>Towards inclusion: being with others, Supporting teachers in understanding and developing inclusive practice</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference, London</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECER European Conference in Educational</td>
<td>Curriculum Leadership Post-devolution in Scotland</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, Helsinki</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECER European Conference in Educational</td>
<td>Skills for Learning and Skills for Life: A Study of Out of School Hours Learning</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research, Berlin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECER European Conference in Educational</td>
<td>To Teach of not to Teach: a study of dyslexia in teacher education</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research, Cadiz</td>
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8.8 Facilitating Change

In 2011 an opportunity arose to take severance from the university. This was a difficult decision to make as I was at a satisfying stage in my career. I was also enjoying the challenge of my studies on the Professional Doctorate programme. However, after some soul searching I decided that the time was probably right to retire from the university and that this opportunity might not arise again. I decided that, once I had retired, I would continue with my studies. With hindsight, this was a good decision as it has allowed me time to complete my Doctorate while pursuing new interests and projects. Since retiring
from the university, I have a different role as manager or leader of change. My role is now an outside consultant who hopes to facilitate change rather than a change agent who “takes responsibility for ensuring that change takes place” (Burnes, 2004). Maintaining contact with the university has been crucial for this process and I have had regular meetings with my mentor who will be key in supporting my dissemination of the case study report to the university.

8.9 New Beginnings

Since retiring, I have become an External Examiner for several modules at Glasgow University. I feel that this is a role I would not have taken on in the past as I felt under-qualified, but the fact that I am studying for the Professional Doctorate has given me confidence and credibility within this role and has kept me in touch with what is happening in higher education. I am also a part-time tutor within the School of Medicine at Dundee University. There will also be an opportunity to supervise Doctorate students once I have finally gained my Professional Doctorate.

A further role that I have embarked on is outside the domain of university education. I have set up a support group in Scotland for people with rare diseases on behalf of a charity. Although this seems unrelated to my role in higher education, I feel I have been able to use the transferable skills that are the outcome of the experience in my career and in undertaking the Professional Doctorate. These include:

- interpersonal skills,
- confidence in presenting knowledge and information to others,
- empathy and understanding of disability and
- ability to conduct credible research.

Completing the Professional Doctorate has been a rewarding experience but has also been extremely demanding in terms of time and energy. There have been peaks and troughs along the way. I found the analysis process particularly demanding. Texts on illustrating the process of qualitative analysis within research are notoriously vague. Miles (1975),
cited in Miles and Huberman (1994), make the point that “the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion” (p.2). There were times when I doubted if I was able to make sense of the mound of data that had been collected. This was rather like being a detective; sometimes the leads seemed promising in solving the mystery while at other times it seemed as though the mystery would remain unsolved.

My reflections in this PDP demonstrates the considerable journey I have made on the road to becoming a more critically aware, autonomous and independent learner who can make an original contribution to new knowledge and greater understanding of inclusion in higher education.
Table 14: Portfolio of Evidence submitted in the Professional Development Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document/artefact</th>
<th>Page Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellow of Applied Educational Research Scheme Monitoring Report Feedback, outlining research experience.</td>
<td>P 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework for Inclusion rationale – provides a background to the development of the framework for inclusion</td>
<td>P 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualising Professional Change and Development Module programme — highlights the areas covered on Professional Doctorate induction at Cardiff Metropolitan University.</td>
<td>P 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Programme Directors’ seminar – highlights the success of the seminar in the feedback from participants</td>
<td>P 198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline and rationale for Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education module for the Teaching Qualification in Higher Education programme – demonstrates my developing knowledge of inclusive curricula in higher education and module writing skills.</td>
<td>P 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale and aims of Working Toward Inclusion module for the Masters Degree in Education – further demonstration of module writing skills and knowledge of inclusive practice.</td>
<td>P 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module evaluation feedback – evidence of student satisfaction with module.</td>
<td>P 203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Contextualising Professional Change and Development module – demonstrates my presentation skills and development in terms of planning for the Professional Doctorate.</td>
<td>P 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of presentation of paper at ECER, Cadiz, 2012.</td>
<td>P 207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback on progress while involved as a Research Fellow in the Applied Educational Research Scheme

Despite changes to the membership of the case study group and organisational disruption in her own faculty, Catherine has sustained her input to the case study group. She also made a significant contribution to the analysis of data, and in particular to the initial stage of coding frame development. Over the year, Catherine has completed the first stage of analysis of all the interview transcripts for her own case study site. In addition, she has gained invaluable experience of submitting conference abstracts; a skill she will be well placed to build on and develop in the future.

Research Mentor: --------------------------
A National Framework for Inclusion in Education in Scotland

Rationale

Inclusive Education in its broadest sense is a very high priority for the Scottish Government and for all those involved in education in Scotland. There is clear recognition of the fact that teachers need to be well prepared and appropriately supported throughout their careers if they are to succeed in developing and sustaining the desired inclusive practice which will enable them to meet the increasingly diverse needs of all children within schools in Scotland.

Representation by Sir Jackie Stewart in April 2007 to the Scottish Government, HMIE, GTCS and STEC, on inclusion issues associated specifically with dyslexia within Initial Teacher Education, led to an in-depth consideration across all seven Scottish teacher education institutions as to how inclusive education was promoted in the education and development of student teachers. The results of this review were (i) a paper issued by STEC entitled “Inclusive Education within Scottish Teacher Education” which reported on the current situation within ITE and identified issues requiring to be addressed and (ii) an agreement on a two-year plan to establish shared general principles and articulate these within a national framework to provide clear guidance and support for student teachers and for teachers and educators throughout their careers.

The Scottish Teacher Education Committee, with the support of the Scottish Government, set up a Working Group on which there was representation from all of the seven universities involved in initial teacher education, to move forward on this two-year plan and to develop the National Framework for Inclusion.

The remit of the Working Group was to develop a National Framework for Inclusion which would identify the values and beliefs, the professional knowledge and understanding, and the professional skills and abilities, in terms of inclusive education, to be expected of student teachers and of qualified teachers at whatever stage of their career. The Framework would also provide, via an extensive web-based repository of resources, a source of additional information, advice, guidance and support for student teachers and teachers seeking further assistance with specific aspects of inclusive education. The Working Group decided to divide the task between two sub-groups, one of which would focus primarily on the Framework Document while the other worked on the Resource Repository. The two groups came together on a regular basis to ensure that progress on both aspects was reported upon and that further development was agreed by the whole group to ensure a coherent end result.
UWIC’s Professional Doctorate

CONTEXTUALIZING PROFESSIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT MODULE

PROGRAMME

01-03 November 2011

Location: O2.56 CSM Llandaff (tbc)

Day 1 - Tuesday
1 November 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30-10.30</td>
<td>Introduction and programme overview</td>
<td>Professor Eleri Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>Mike Snelgrove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-1.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.30-3.00</td>
<td>Organisations and change</td>
<td>Hefin David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-5.00</td>
<td>Change agency</td>
<td>Professor Eleri Jones</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Day 2 - Wednesday
2 November 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00-10.30</td>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>Dr. Jill Llewellyn Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>Dr. Bill Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-1.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-2.30</td>
<td>Ethics in researching professional practice</td>
<td>Professor Scott Fleming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30-4.30</td>
<td>Getting the most out of UWIC's library and learning resources</td>
<td>Amanda Bennett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30-6.00</td>
<td>Expert witness: researching one's own organisation</td>
<td>Dr. Allison O'Reilly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Day 3 - Thursday
3 November 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30-10.30</td>
<td>Professional development portfolios/ research skills training</td>
<td>Dr. Sian Rhiannon Williams/ Dr. Jan Huyton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.00</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>Your change project – writing/reflection time/ informal discussion</td>
<td>Professor Eleri Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30-1.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30-2.30</td>
<td>Plenary: Next steps</td>
<td>Professor Eleri Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paper 1

Feedback from Murrayshall Event

- The teachers were so professional – good stuff.
- The opportunity to meet with other ITES and share ideas.
- Networking and sharing ideas with colleagues from other ITES. Reassurance that inclusion is valued and that there is commitment to take things forward.
- Good links between the Framework and Practice.
- Excellent opportunity to share ideas with colleagues.
- Discussion question in first session was, perhaps was a bit obscure (for our group anyway)
- Well organised, excellent venue. Good to have some quality time away from teaching to focus on these areas.
- Wonderful to concentrate on one area of practice all day. Feel I have really extended my own understanding of inclusion issues.
- Well structured! Good insight!
- Very thought provoking. Brilliant to hear experience of others and to work towards inclusion practice targets. Thanks!
- I think it was valuable for our staff to discuss how they might take these issues forward in their programmes, particularly in the context of learning with other Universities are doing/might do.
- Excellent opportunity to share practice, thinking with colleagues and other institutions. Thanks!
- Valuable to take time out to think about implications for programmes and to find out about what is going on in our University and others.
- Thoroughly appreciated the space to think, engage, discuss and reflect with colleagues from across the institutes. Great to know we are not alone and look forward to continuing relations and opportunities to move forward together.
- Felt much more ‘tuned-in’! Now on board – feel motivated to promote this agenda. (English teachers are allowed to mix metaphors!)
- A very helpful and thought-provoking event, in delightful surroundings! Sincere thanks!
- Very friendly, informative and useful exploratory session in beautiful surroundings. Thanks!
- Opportunity to explore the framework and time to discuss coherent way forward.
- This Inclusion Practice Working Party (?) with a defined remit and Pr of framework should be developed as a model of practice awareness, the 7 ITSE institutions for other key issues eg. Theory Practice Connections.
- A very informative and interesting 2 days. The presenters knew their stuff and engaged the audience. So good to have time to share with and listen to colleagues – well done STEC. More of this kind of thing please!
- Thought provoking! Enlightening! More aware of the need to talk and share.
Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education

This module (Appendix 2) examines current issues in teaching students with disability in Higher Education and how the curriculum can be adapted to accommodate learning differences amongst the student population. Students are introduced in part 1 to the most recent legislation pertaining to disability including the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). The key tenets of the act are that:

- it is unlawful to treat disabled students less favourably in admissions, exclusions and "student services", and institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments to provision where disabled students would otherwise be substantially supported
- institutions are required to provide access to auxiliary aids and services such as sign language, and interpreters for the deaf
- institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments to physical features of their buildings and environment (e.g. the provision of loop systems and wheelchair access).

In the journal article by Konur (2006), the range of curricular adjustments that can be made are reviewed as are key questions relating to these such as the attitudes of disabled students, attitudes of academic staff towards curricular adjustments, the effect of adjustments on performance, attitudes to adjustments to learning technologies, and finally attitudes of non-disabled students.

The idea of curriculum accessibility is explored and participants are referred to web resources from Techdis, and the Universities of Loughborough, Strathclyde, Gloucester and Worcester. These feature a series of online tools which offer advice and guidance on designing an accessible curriculum for disabled students by encouraging the development of a more accessible curriculum, overcoming barriers to accessible practice and in responding to the needs of disabled students in a variety of learning and teaching situations. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council’s Teachability Project (undated) is highlighted and participants are asked to consider changes in practice with regard to teaching that can be made for the benefit of all students and not only those with a disability.

Pedagogical and technical approaches to teaching are touched on and participants are required to evaluate their own teaching using a check list from the Higher Education Academy (undated) and to subsequently design their own evaluation tool that can also be used when planning course design.

Inclusive assessment is another area of focus in the module and participants are asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of modified assessment provision (MAPS).
Qualitative research conducted by the Higher Education Academy, (2006), has concluded that there is dissatisfaction amongst students with the latter form of assessment and that inclusive assessments which are built into course design and meet the needs of all students is preferable are these are more consistent with equality of opportunity.

The barriers and enablers to inclusive higher education are considered and participants are asked to evaluate perceived barriers and enablers within their own institution. Readings from both the Open University and Edinburgh University require the students to focus on issues such as course competencies and how these may discriminate against students with disabilities. A publication by the Disability Rights Commission (undated) outlines the discriminatory practice that still exists within social work, teaching and nursing in institutions across the United Kingdom where students are assessed against criteria that are deemed to measure "competence" for that profession. Competence is defined as "an academic, medical or other standard applied by or on behalf of an education provider for the purposes of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability" (Teaching Development Agency, 2007, p. 18). For example, a prospective student who has Dyslexia may not be deemed competent to teach as they may have difficulty with spelling and grammatical structure. The practice of using competencies based on a medical or deficit model of assessment has been abandoned for social work and teaching in Scotland and the Disability Rights commission applaud this.

Finally, in this section, a range of web resources on Disability issues has been provided for reference including legislation, disability disclosure, teachability and teaching approaches for students with Dyslexia. (Appendix 1 pp. 11, 12)

Along with disability, the module provides a brief overview of other issues related to equality in higher education based on the seven equality strands identified by the UK Government namely disability, age, gender, race and nationality, religion or belief, transgender identity and sexual orientation. Participants are introduced to the various acts for each equality strand (Race Relations amendment Act, 2000; Gender Equality Duty 2007; Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2006; Gender Recognition Act 2004; and the Employment Equality (Age) Discrimination Act 2006). Scenarios addressing equality issues related to higher education have been posed and participants' engagement with these was designed to develop their understanding of equality in higher education. (Appendix 2 pps 12-15)
Peer Assessment

After you have completed your assignment for part 1 you will be required to peer assess a partner student’s work. This partner will be assigned to you. You will provide feedback on the following assessment proforma. Each student will be expected to use this feedback to improve their work if they agree with the comments, before submitting to their tutor for formal marking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Working Towards Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Education, Social Work and Community Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit rating</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Debate about inclusive education is a topic of interest to educationalists worldwide. Within the United Kingdom, the concept of inclusion, part of a broad human rights agenda, is at the core of the Government’s education policies. While it is recognised that there are a number of very positive aspects within current policy, many serious concerns and questions remain.

The module provides opportunity to review the barriers and challenges of inclusive education in the light of current legislation and policy. It considers also the effects of other legislation which impact on social inclusion.

The underpinning philosophy of the module is informed by understanding the historical perspective and by being able to develop an ability to scrutinise present practice and contribute to the debate about future trends. In addition it is about encouraging collaborative initiatives which when undertaken in a positive manner, can help reduce exclusion.

Specific Aims

The module is designed to enable participants to:

- investigate and reflect on current policy, provision and practice in relation to inclusive education;
- deepen understanding of the historical, political and social contexts which lead up to present day thinking;
- examine and explore personal practice leading to professional development.
Module Assessment
The assessment is in 2 parts of overall length 5000 words.

Part 1 (for Peer Assessing)
Participants will be required to submit a paper of 1500 words in which they will demonstrate the understanding of the concept of inclusion.

Specifically they will be required to
- review and critically analyse the literature and influential documents and reports relating to inclusion
- demonstrate their understanding of the evolving concept of inclusion and social justice drawing on some major key milestones which have resulted from political and social change.
- include supportive evidence

Part 2 (2000 words)
Using the knowledge and understanding gained in this area of inclusive practice, undertake an audit and analysis of practice in your setting. Identify and justify one focus for development.

Specifically they are required to
- identify and justify from the audit of their own setting a focus for development relating to inclusive practice.
- draw up an action plan (duration not more than 4 weeks), stating clearly how you intend to proceed, colleagues you will involve and work with and a specific target(s), with justification, you intend to reach
- implement the action plan, keeping to the timescale set, provide a portfolio evidence of progress
- at the end of the set time and drawing on the portfolio of evidence, write a critical analysis and evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the action plan.
- Critically reflect on their own practice by standing back from it and being prepared to challenge their own views and understandings.
Module Evaluation Form

Please copy and submit this form to the programme administrator with your final assessment.

Module Number and Title Working Towards Inclusion

Name

Setting Secondary School

Please comment on the following:

The content of the module

The content of the module was √

very appropriate ☐ appropriate ☐ not as appropriate as other modules ☐

I found the module materials were a useful introduction which led me to investigate the topic further.

The Assessment Tasks

The Assessment Tasks were √

Very challenging ☐ challenging ☐ quite challenging ☐

The assessment tasks supported my development in the following ways…

I really enjoyed the opportunity to develop my understanding of inclusion and inclusion practices in the first part of the assessment. The peer assessment was a bit difficult because there was no feedback sheet other than the sheet used for the peer assessment in Module 1; however this encouraged collaborative working with the other student as we had to develop a shared understanding of the assessment criteria.

The second part of the assessment was particularly useful in helping me to understand how inclusion fits into my current setting as it encouraged me to examine in detail the
opportunities available to pupils in the school, and the aspects of inclusive practice which need to be further developed. It also gave me an opportunity to introduce a strategy which I had previously investigated.

Please identify the relevance of the Module to you, your development and your practice by writing a statement

This module has encouraged me to examine my own values and practice in relation to inclusion. As a result of this I have looked more closely at my own classroom environment and also at the wider school environment. I identified aspects of strength within my current practice, however I also identified opportunities for improvement within my classroom and I am currently putting these into practice where possible.

Please evaluate your Overall learning from this Module identifying your goals for your next module by writing a statement

I have been able to look in depth at my own practice and at practice across the school and this has helped to develop my understanding and implementation of inclusive practice. I have also further developed my enquiry skills and use of literature to support my values and practice. In the next module I hope to be able to further investigate my skills in literature investigation and also develop my understanding and practice in terms of collaborative teaching and learning.

Any other comments

Signed: ___________________________  Date: 23rd March 2010
**FEEDBACK SHEET FOR:**  Catherine O’Hair

**Presentation skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>quality</th>
<th>slow, clear delivery, clear and well referenced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confidence</td>
<td>very confident with material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clarity and conciseness</td>
<td>clear &amp; well understood by all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time-keeping</td>
<td>took it to the wire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of IT</td>
<td>clear slides, not too many bullets, interesting slide design, good use of link to show plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answering questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>confidence and demonstration of expertise</th>
<th>confident, demonstrates knowledge of area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flexibility and willingness to accept alternatives where appropriate</td>
<td>accepted &amp; dealt with question about sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>very clear &amp; competent handling of Q&amp;As</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Content

| Identify and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of change in a specific context; | Yes. Good project identified to implement in the context in relation to dyslexia and responsible care. |
| Apply relevant tools to the analysis of a specific organisation or context including consideration of ethical issues; | Undecided. Literature review and sector statistics used to justify relevance. |
| Demonstrate autonomy in the formulation of a relevant area of study through the identification of a complex problem appropriate to exploration through sustained research; | Yes. Fits with widening access and diversity agenda. |
| Conceptualise a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding; | Good project. |
| Develop a first-stage research proposal with clear aims and objectives and selecting appropriate research methodologies and research design; | Clear aims and objectives. Action Research detailed. |

Interesting reflection of being a change agent working from outside the university.
European Educational Research Association

EERA e.V. | c/o FU Berlin | Amimallee 12 | D-14195 Berlin

Catherine O'Hara
Scottish Learning Initiatives
34 Gamekeepers Road
Kinnesswood
Perth and Kinross
ky13 8jr
United Kingdom

Berlin, 27/Jun/2012

To Whom It May Concern

This is to confirm that Catherine O'Hara is the author/co-author of the below mentioned proposal(s), which is/are accepted to be presented at ECER 2012 – the European Conference on Educational Research.

The conference will take place in Cádiz, Spain, from 17 to 18 September (Emerging Researchers' Conference) and from 18 to 21 September 2012 (Main conference).

Catherine O'Hara is author/co-author of the following accepted contribution(s):

- **Title of Proposal**: To Teach or Not to Teach: Student Teachers with Dyslexia in Teacher Education, Strengths, Barriers, Challenges, And the Way Forward
- **EERA Network**: 22. Research in Higher Education - **Format of Presentation**: Paper
- **Author(s)**: O'Hara, Catherine
- **Presenting Author**: O'Hara, Catherine

All ECER presentations are peer reviewed, held in English language and last 15 to 20 minutes.

We look forward to seeing Catherine O'Hara in Cádiz.

With kind regards,

Prof Leif Moos
President of EERA
References


Bell, S. (2010). Inclusion for adults with dyslexia: examining the transition periods of a group of adults in England: "Clever is when you have come to a brick wall and you have got to get over it without a ladder". *Jorsen*, 10 (3), 216-226.


Student Survey. Cheltenham: Geography Discipline Network, University of Gloucestershire.


Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (2005). Teachability: creating an accessible curriculum for students with disabilities ((2nd ed), available from Anne Simpson, Disability Services, University of Strathclyde, Floor 4 Graham Hills Building, 50 George Street, Glasgow. G1 1QE.


The Learning Difference Centre (undated). Supporting Dyslexic Students on Practice Placements. University of Southampton, 45 University road, Highfield, Southampton, S0171BJ.


Watson, N. (2002). “Well, I know this is going to sound very strange to you, but I don’t see myself as a disabled person: Identity and disability”. *Disability and Society*, 17 (5), 509-529.


Chapter Nine: Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Questions Method Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Documentary Analysis</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do students with dyslexia in teacher education perceive the attitudes of staff towards them within their programmes of study?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with students.</td>
<td>Programme Directors’ reports outlining the support offered within each of the programmes. Teachability guidelines for marking dyslexic students’ work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do students with dyslexia in teacher education perceive the support they receive within their programmes of study?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with five lecturers. Semi-structured interview with Disability Support adviser.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the attitudes and perceptions of university staff towards student teachers with dyslexia?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with five lecturers. Semi-structured interview with Disability Support adviser.</td>
<td>Programme Directors’ reports outlining the support offered within each of the programmes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do students with dyslexia cope with the demands of school</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with associate head-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Placement Policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| placements? | teacher.  
Semi-structured interviews with all students and lecturers. | 5. How does university policy and practice support students with dyslexia in teacher education? | Interview with Disability Services adviser.  
Interviews with students and lecturers. | Analysis of policy documents pertaining to disability in higher education.  
Disability Framework. Disability Scheme, 2010-2012.  
Disability Annual Report, 2010-2012.  
Useful Clearing Notes from Disability Services regarding disclosure.  
Accessibility policy for Disabled Students. | Analysis of data pertaining to student recruitment and retention of students with dyslexia on teacher education programmes.  
Analysis of percentages of students disclosing a specific disability taken from Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2012-2012. |
9.2 Appendix 2: Questions for semi-structured interviews

Questions for semi-structured interviews with STUDENTS

What programme are you following and what stage are you at in your studies?

How recently has your dyslexia been diagnosed?

Did you receive any support for dyslexia while you were at school and if so what was that support?

What adjustments, if any, have been recommended for your studies by the university disability service?

How useful have you found these?

What learning strategies do you use at university to help you cope with your dyslexia?

How have teachers on school experience responded to your dyslexia?

How have pupils in schools responded to your dyslexia?

What coping strategies do you use on school experience to help you meet the standards of initial teacher education?

Describe any “critical incidents” within your studies and/or school placement relating to your dyslexia?
Questions for semi-structured interviews with HEAD TEACHER

What is your role within the school?

What is your own experience of students/teachers with dyslexia in your school?

Are there any particular areas within teaching that you perceive to be problematic for students with dyslexia?

What strategies, if any, do students/teachers with dyslexia employ to circumvent any issues that they may have with classroom teaching?

What is your understanding of the disability legislation regarding dyslexia within the teaching profession?

How is this being implemented in your local authority?
Questions for semi-structured interviews with UNIVERSITY STAFF

What is your role within the university?

How are you informed of students with dyslexia on the programmes in which you teach and/or manage?

How do you ensure that adjustments made for students with dyslexia are put in place?

What strategies do you use in your own teaching to support students with dyslexia?

What is your perception of how students with dyslexia cope with the demands of school experience?

Are there any particular areas within school experience that you perceive to be problematic for students with dyslexia?

What is your understanding of the disability legislation regarding dyslexia in higher education?

In what ways is this being implemented?
### 9.3 Appendix 4: Examples of Sensitising Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sensitizing Questions</th>
<th>Memos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1 Student perception of staff attitude.</td>
<td>Positive Attitude.</td>
<td>What is going on? What are the issues, problems or concerns?</td>
<td>Although perceived as positive, is support mechanistic? Lecturers seem to be responding to info sent out by disability services but provide no other support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who are the actors involved and how do they define the situation?</td>
<td>Students make little reference to other kinds of support. Are their views of support conditioned by institutional view of support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is its meaning to them?</td>
<td>Students feel they are receiving adequate support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are their definitions and meanings different?</td>
<td>Wide polarisation where comments were positive. No mention of curriculum or emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With what consequence are they acting?</td>
<td>Are students accepting of support? Are they afraid to ask for too much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What they don’t say is just as crucial as what they say. Perhaps question was too open-ended?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Theoretical Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sensitizing Questions</th>
<th>Memos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the relationship of one concept to another?</td>
<td>What would happen if? Would attitude towards support and dyslexic students in general change if there was specific staff development regarding dyslexia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What are the larger structural issues and do these events play into or affect what I’m seeing? Are notes on Blackboard now commonplac e for all students so no real significant support is provided over and above this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Could this be a good thing as dyslexic students are not singled out? All students receive the same kind of support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.4 Appendix 5: Consent Form

Professional Doctorate in Education. Outline of research to be undertaken by Catherine O’Hara

Dyslexia and teaching:

An Investigation of the experiences of students with dyslexia on initial teacher education programmes

This study aims to investigate the extent to which students with dyslexia in initial teacher education are supported in order to meet the demands of their university studies including school placements. The intended outcomes are to inform universities, schools and policy makers as to how the disability legislation regarding dyslexia is being implemented in universities and the outcomes for student teachers.

I consent to:

be interviewed about my experience of dyslexia in initial teacher education  yes/no
interviews being taped and stored electronically    yes/no

I understand that I will be free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand that any information I will give will be anonymized.

I understand that I am free to consent to some, all or none of the above.

I understand that tapes of interviews will be stored electronically on a computer at ....... University during the duration of the study and then will be destroyed.

By signing below you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

Participant’s signature.............................................. Date.................

Printed name of person obtaining consent......................

Signature of person gaining consent .............................