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Being Working Class within Clinical Psychology – A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

Abstract

The Clinical Psychology profession has long struggled to attract a workforce representative of the population it serves. A literature review revealed that people from working-class backgrounds face marginalisation within the profession. This study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), aiming to unveil the discourses and ideologies that underpin these challenging experiences. CDA was undertaken on a pre-existing webinar, website, and academic article. Three discourses were revealed: professional, academic, and inclusion-focused. The findings reveal how the emphasis on professional and academic norms perpetuates inequalities, marginalising those from working-class backgrounds and undermining efforts to improve fairness and inclusion within the profession.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Background

The Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) is a postgraduate programme in the UK that combines clinical and academic training over three years, offered by 38 UK universities. Trainees are taught a range of psychological models and interventions to address psychological distress and promote well-being across the life-span, including children, adults, older adults, families, and people with developmental and intellectual disabilities (BPS, 2019). The profession aligns with NHS values, emphasising respect and dignity for all individuals (NHS Careers, 2024). However, Clinical Psychology has a history of being perceived as oppressive and excluding marginalised groups (Turpin and Coleman, 2010; Patel, 2003).

I started the MEd inclusion pathway hoping to enhance my inclusive practice across my education and clinical roles. The MEd transformed this goal, emphasising ways I could utilise my position as a working-class Clinical Psychologist to promote social change.

1.1.1. *Inclusive Practice and Clinical Psychology*

My interest in this project began in 2020, before starting the MEd, when I attended a webinar where working-class Clinical Psychologists shared their struggles within the profession (Curvis, 2020). This resonated with my own experiences and highlighted the barriers faced by those from working-class backgrounds in pursuing a career in Clinical Psychology.

During the first two years of the MEd programme, I was introduced to Bourdieu's concept of capital (1986) and its relation to social-class. Bourdieu's work emphasised how education is shaped by middle-class norms, giving those with access to financial, social, and cultural capital an unfair advantage. This reproduces middle-class dominance and excludes individuals from working-class backgrounds. This concept reflected my own educational experiences and the challenges I observed in teaching undergraduate and DClinPsy programmes.

1.2. Research Focus

While studying EE814 and EE815, I conducted a literature review focusing on inclusion within Clinical Psychology. This review revealed that People of Global Majority (PoGM) often face exclusionary practices, silencing, and the pressure to conform to the profession's established norms. The findings resonated with the experiences shared during the webinar, prompting me to focus my MEd project on amplifying the voices of working-class individuals within the profession.

My initial literature review uncovered a lack of research on the experiences of working-class individuals in Clinical Psychology. I initially planned to recruit participants from working-class backgrounds for my study. However, due to challenges in gaining ethical approval, I decided to focus on examining the discourses within the profession that contribute to exclusionary practices.

Chapter 2 outlines how I began the project by conducted a systematic review of the literature. This revealed persistent oppressive experiences among psychologists from working-class backgrounds. Influenced by the MEd teachings on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I recognised that focusing solely on individual experiences could overlook the impact of socio-political contexts (Reynolds, 2019). Therefore, I decided to conduct a CDA to explore how power operates within the profession to reproduce middle-class norms.

1.3. Research Aims

Chapter 3 outlines my research aims, which were to critically examine the power dynamics within the socio-political context of Clinical Psychology and how these dynamics reproduce middle-class ideologies. The main research question was: What discourses around social-class can be identified within the Clinical Psychology profession? Sub-questions explored the influence of socio-political and economic factors on these discourses and their implications for those applying, training, or working in the profession.

1.4. Methods & Timescales

Chapter 3 outlines how I adopted a critical theory and social constructionist perspective, allowing for an exploration of the complex and contrasting discourses surrounding working-class identities within the profession. A critical realism ontology

was also employed, acknowledging the systemic structures and power dynamics that shape individual experiences. Using Fairclough's (2001) CDA framework, I analysed how language reflects and reinforces these discourses within the socio-political context.

Chapter 3 further outlines the study's corpus, which included three data sources: a two-hour webinar featuring working-class psychologists discussing their experiences, a peer-reviewed academic article suggesting that A-level results are the best predictor of success in Clinical Psychology training, and the website where applicants apply for Clinical Psychology training.

1.5. Value of Research

Chapter 4 outlines the CDA analysis and the three key discourses revealed, emphasising the need for systemic change to promote greater inclusion within the education system that serves as a gateway to the profession. Chapter 5 considers how the study contributes to the broader discussion on how to transform an education system that is tightly controlled by those in power to promote social justice. It is the first known CDA to explore the systemic influences underpinning the challenges faced by working-class individuals in Clinical Psychology, shifting the focus from individual issues to the broader social context. Furthermore, by applying CDA to a peer-reviewed academic article and website data, this research offers an innovative approach that others may build upon to extend critical research in the field.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) is a competitive three year programme which leads to the professional title of Clinical Psychologist. Research highlights historic struggles for the profession to be representative of those it serves (Turpin and Coleman, 2010; Patel, 2003). This may be due to the narrow entry criteria which favours academic achievement. This is reinforced in recent intake data which highlights that the majority of successful applicants are White, able-bodied, heterosexual and from

higher income brackets (Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology, 2022).

Across psychology, social-class is persistently absent in research and conversation. Following the increasing socio-economic divide resulting from the Covid pandemic, and the Equality Act (2010) review, the British Psychological Society (BPS: 2022) launched a campaign, lobbying to include social-class as a protected characteristic within the Equality Act. Head of Psychology at Leeds Beckett University, Rickett (n.d., cited in BPS, 2021a) emphasised the astonishing absence of consideration given to social-class within psychology. She considers that neoliberalism and the notion of a modern, classless society underpins the dearth of research and hence the exclusion of social-class within the Equality Act (2010).

The effects of overlooking social-class for working-class people plunged into the Clinical Psychology doctorate programme was emphasised in a webinar series (Curvis, 2020). Clinical Psychologists and trainees from working-class backgrounds shared disconcerting and oppressive experiences, along with the unique skills that working-class people bring to the profession. Bourdieu's (1986) theory on capital potentially explains these inequitable experiences as those from working-class backgrounds have less access to economic, social and cultural resources, impacting on access and participation within higher education (Richardson et al., 2020).

The rich experiences of working-class psychologists expressed in a webinar series (Curvis, 2020) offers inspiration for this study. However, webinar data does not offer transparency around sampling, recruitment, or methodology and is not peer-reviewed. Therefore, this literature review aims to unveil the experiences of working-class Clinical Psychologists, seeking to source peer-reviewed academic articles relating to working-class Clinical Psychologists' experiences within the profession.

2.2. Search Strategy

The initial literature search was undertaken on 16th June 2024, utilised psychology (APA PsycINFO, and CINAHL) and education (Education Research Complete) databases. The search terms developed with the Librarian were: ("clinical psycholog*" OR "clinical scien*" OR "assistant psychology" OR "graduate psychology" OR "trainee

psychology*” OR “psychologist in training” OR “newly qualified psychologist”) AND (experience* OR story OR narrative* OR qualitative OR oppress* OR marginalisation OR challenge* OR difficult* OR access* OR barrier*) AND (“social class” OR “socioeconomic status” OR SES OR “social status” OR “social rank” OR “economic status” OR “social group” OR “social inequality*” OR “social deprivation” OR “poverty” OR “working class” OR “lower class”) AND (selection OR interview* OR qualifi* OR apply* OR application). The search was refined to include peer-reviewed articles, written in English, and published. This resulted in 206 articles which were screened by title and abstract for inclusion (Table 1). No relevant articles were found (Figure 1).

Table 1: Initial literature Search Strategy – Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
<p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working-class adults - Psychology graduates, Assistant Psychologists, applicants to the DClinPsy, Trainee Clinical Psychologists, qualified Clinical Psychologists <p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing experiences/stories of being working-class - Articles exploring experiences of social-class alongside other identities (e.g. ethnicity or disability) <p>Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any country <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative studies - Peer reviewed articles - Published in last 10 years (2020-2024) - English 	<p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professions outside of psychology <p>Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studies analysing DClinPsy selection process data <p>Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non peer-reviewed literature - Theoretical papers - Discussion pieces

The absence of peer-reviewed academic literature relating to experiences of being working-class within the Clinical Psychology profession contrasted with the rich stories shared in the Curvis (2020) webinar series. I consulted Clinical Psychology colleagues from working-class backgrounds who suggested the absence of literature could fit with the White, middle-class context in which Clinical Psychology exists within (Patel, 2003). I re-engaged with the librarian regarding critical theory and post-modern approaches to literature reviewing (e.g. Costley, Elliott, and Gibbs, 2010) which revealed possibilities of consulting the grey literature and marginalised sources. Fellow working-class

psychologists, advanced Google searches, and thesis databases revealed three theses which met inclusion criteria. The reference lists of included sources were hand searched for additional literature yet no additional literature was found.

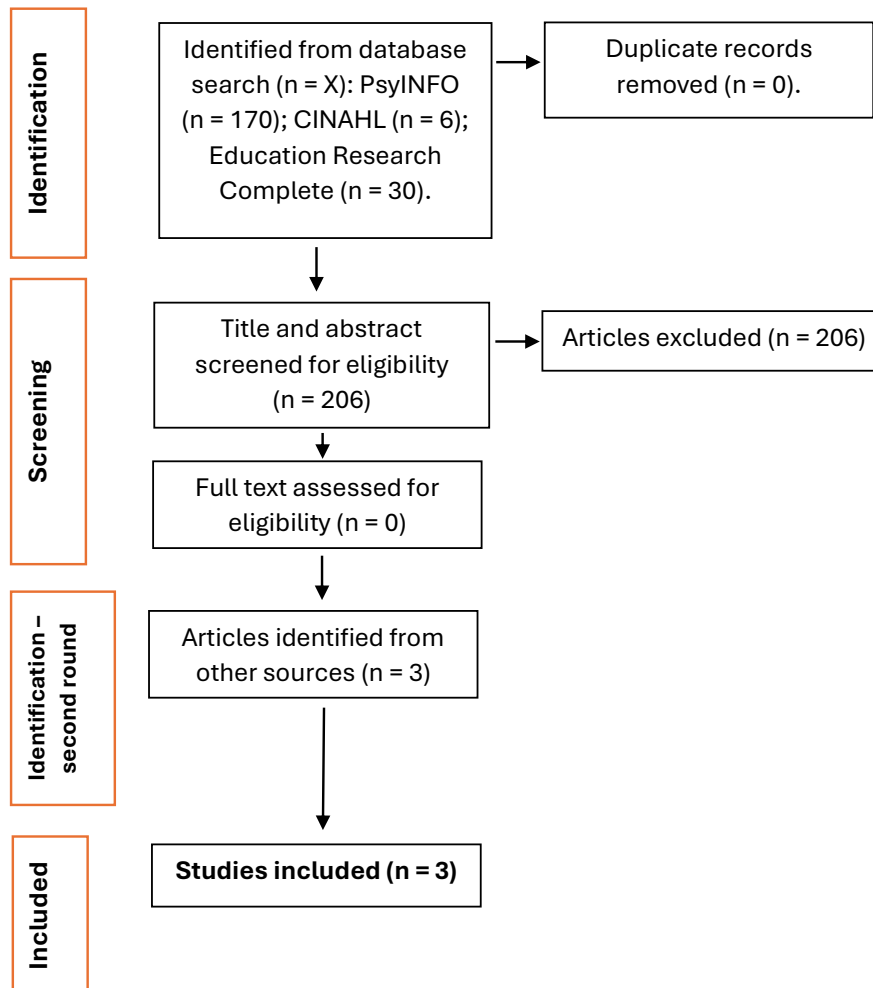


Figure 1: Flow chat of systematic literature review process.

2.3. Study Characteristics

The three studies included 41 participants (32 Clinical and 9 Educational Psychologists: EPs) who took part in semi-structured interviews with a working-class insider-researcher. The overall sample mostly included White British females (Table 2), which is reflective of the demographics within the profession (Clearing House, 2022).

Table 2: Characteristics of Included Studies

Author(s) and year of publication	Design	Recruitment Strategy	Sample Size & demographics	Findings
Thomas (2022)	Qualitative: semi-structured interviews	Principal Educational Psychologists in UK were emailed and asked to pass study details on to EPs in their teams.	9 Educational Psychologists who identify as being from working-class backgrounds - 7 female; 2 male - 7 White British; 1 Irish; 1 Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British; 1 multiple ethnic groups.	A thematic analysis revealed six themes: 1. It isn't going to land in your lap 2. At time it felt really unfair 3. Finding a way out 4. Evolution of self 5. It's really difficult to talk about 6. Coming from LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages
Place (2023)	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	Purposive sampling – emailing 29 DClinPsy UK programmes	13 Trainee Clinical Psychologists who had been in training for 1 year + were interviewed Most participants were cis-gender; female; heterosexual; White British; neurotypical; aged 25-34 years.	A thematic analysis revealed three themes: 1. Trajectory of acculturation 2. Making class visible 3. Making class invisible
Lovick (2024)	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	Purposive sampling using Twitter	19 Trainee or qualified clinical psychologists who self-identified as working-class Participants defined the following demographics in their own words: - 12 18-24 years; 4 35-44 years; 2 45-54 years; 1 65+ years - 3 male; 16 female (19 cisgender) - 11 Trainee CPs; 8 CPs - 14 White; 3 White Other; 2 Black African; 1 Prefer not to say.	A thematic analysis revealed six themes: 1. Resource roulette 2. Class conundrum 3. The unplanned journey 4. The destination dilemma i) are we there yet; ii) The class conversation 5. The working class way: i) working class values; ii) Being working class: A help or a hindrance 6. Distinctly different.

2.4. Appraisal

Studies were appraised using the AACODS tool (Tyndall, 2010: Appendix A), designed specifically for grey literature. All authors were doctoral students at reputable UK universities (Bangor, Cardiff, Surrey), with at least a psychology undergraduate degree,

receiving specialist research training and supervision. Doctoral theses are reviewed by specialists in the psychology-field. This enhanced the ‘authority’ and ‘accuracy’ of the literature. Place (2022) and Lovick (2024) focused on Clinical Psychologist’s experiences of being working-class whereas Thomas (2023) focused on Trainee Educational Psychologists (EPs). The potential implications on ‘significance’ and ‘coverage’ of including experiences of EPs will be considered when summarising the themes. ‘Coverage’ of all three studies was limited to predominantly White, heterosexual, cis-gendered, participants, limiting experiences of those with multiple marginalised identity characteristics. All theses were submitted within the last two years, providing up-to-date accounts. ‘Objectivity’ could be questioned as all three authors identify as being from working-class backgrounds. Though, each author clearly acknowledged their position and their research is rooted in the evidence-base and participants’ experiences rather than the author’s personal opinions. Furthermore, there are advantages of insider-research, facilitating safety for marginalised participants to share their experiences (Mercer, 2007). Given the dearth of research in this area, these authors have used their doctoral research to unveil often invisibilised experiences, offering a significant contribution to the profession, the evidence-base, and a foundation for future research.

2.5. Literature Synthesis

The following synthesis integrates findings from the three studies found in the literature review, exploring the impact of social-class on individuals' journeys in the fields of Clinical and Educational Psychology.

2.5.1. Navigating Resources and Class Identity

Three studies unveil the unequal resources those from working-class backgrounds experience in applying to, training, and working in the profession. Lovick’s (2024) ‘Resources Roulette’ theme revealed the challenges working-class trainees and qualified Clinical Psychologists face owing to limited access to mentors, insider-knowledge, and awareness of the profession. Some participants expressed feeling lucky to have a supervisor or colleague from a working-class background which offered access to resources. The ‘Resources Roulette’ theme highlights what Bourdieu (1986) termed capital (economic, social, and cultural) in shaping professional trajectories.

Access to supervisors, mentors, and financial support exemplifies the critical accumulation of social and economic capital necessary for success. Furthermore, Thomas's (2022) theme 'It isn't going to land in your lap' reveals how the obscure nature of the Educational Psychology profession exacerbates inequities, with middle-class candidates holding more capital (Bourdieu, 1986) such as their social and cultural capital connecting them with professional mentors, hence being more likely to be successful. Both studies highlight the structural challenges working-class people face in accessing resources. These findings highlight the need for doctoral training programmes, and the profession as a whole, to consider how pre-training access to resources can be more equitable and how recruitment processes can mitigate class-based inequalities to facilitate a more inclusive profession.

Two studies highlighted the personal and professional identity challenges faced by those from working-class people. The participants in Lovick's study (2024) shared challenges in defining their class status, being uncertain as to where they fit, emphasised by the 'class conundrum' theme. One participant described this as "muddle class" and another described having a "foot in both camps". This reflects Bourdieu's (2002) concept of habitus, where ingrained dispositions influence self-perception and social identity, which are challenged when stepping into Clinical Psychology where the field is framed by middle-class norms. Trainees who come from working-class backgrounds and step into the middle-class world of Clinical Psychology hence experience a social environment which contradicts their authentic ways of being. The 'Class Conundrum' theme from Lovick's study (2024) illustrates a struggle with internalised class structures. Place's (2023) 'trajectory of acculturation' theme complements this, describing participants' efforts to reconcile their evolving social capital with their authentic working-class roots. The 'resource roulette' theme (Lovick, 2024) also emphasises variation in the support participants received from supervisors, peers, and course tutors to facilitate identity development. This contradicts the BPS's Strategic Framework (2021b) which indicates intentions to promote inclusion and eliminate discriminatory practice. These findings highlight the need for safe and reflective spaces for working-class psychologists to explore their personal and professional identities.

2.5.2. Educational and Professional Pathways

Two studies underscore the unpredictable and often unsupported nature of professional journeys into the profession for working-class individuals. Lovick's (2024) 'The unplanned journey' theme depicts those from working-class backgrounds struggling to navigate the application process, interviews, training and qualified psychology careers with minimal guidance. Thomas' (2022) 'At times it felt really unfair' theme emphasised how those from working-class backgrounds experienced multiple challenges compared to middle-class peers. This included their lives being disconnected from professional careers, which resulted in limited awareness or support to get through the door of the Clinical Psychology profession. Once on training, trainees spoke of the challenges of needing to do paid-work alongside studying and the requirement to own and maintain a car to access placements, which brought financial burden. Though it should be noted that Thomas' (2022) study focused on EPs who receive a lower salary than Clinical Psychology Trainees. These findings highlight the hidden systemic challenges and inequalities that result in those from working-class backgrounds having less exposure to support in their journey into the profession. They highlight the need for systemic change to provide equitable career guidance and exposure to professional opportunities.

Two studies considered the psychology profession has become more inclusive in terms of gaining a place on training, though the reproduction of middle-class norms presented challenges in finding belonging for those from working-class backgrounds who gain a place on training. Lovick's (2024) 'The destination dilemma' theme represents participants deliberating over whether the profession has made enough progress towards inclusion and diversity. Some experiences within this theme noted positive developments including noticing diversity within their training cohort. Other experiences emphasised that talking openly about being working-class, still remained on the sidelines. This aligns with Foucault's (1982) examination of power dynamics and identity formation within professional fields, where power is upheld by maintaining the elite middle-class, professional norms that afford authority to control others. Thomas' (2022) 'evolution of self' theme reflects participants' experiences of journeying toward belonging and professional identity amidst newly acquired social mobility, highlighting

the tension between personal advancement and working-class loyalty. These findings highlight the need to understand and dismantle power structures that result in those from working-class backgrounds gaining a seat at the profession's table which is not made or suited to them. This perpetuates class disparities and stunts personal and professional identity development.

2.5.3. Conversations about Class

Findings from three studies highlighted the power structures that make it difficult to have conversations around class, yet the value experienced when this was possible. Lovick's (2024) subtheme, 'the class conversation', emphasised open dialogue about class as being important yet challenging as there were limited spaces where such conversations could be started and contained. Foucault's concept of discourse (1972) explains how power shapes which conversations are legitimised thus, discourse is a vehicle which facilitates monitoring and moulding of people. Place's (2023) themes 'Making class invisible' and 'Making class visible' discuss the often overlooked class assumptions within clinical training. These findings emphasise how those from working-class backgrounds would value a safe space to make visible their social-class though conscious efforts to reveal and address hidden power dynamics that invisibilise the value of being working-class.

The three studies reveal a hegemony of middle-class norms within the profession which minimise working-class identities and afford less power and status, further making it difficult for those from working-class backgrounds to bring their authentic selves to the profession. Place's (2023) theme of 'trajectory of acculturation' reveal working-class trainees' experiences of being different from middle-class peers which initiated shame, leading to conscious or unconscious attempts to change parts of themselves to fit the norm. This theme highlighted a duality between the shame and pride trainees held in their backgrounds. This reflects Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence (cited in Weininger, 2002), where dominant cultural norms devalue working-class identities, particularly in the early parts of clinical training. As trainees acquired more capital through training, there were experiences of becoming more open about working-class backgrounds. Lovick's (2024) 'The working class way' and Thomas' (2022) 'It's really difficult to talk about' further illustrate the internal and external struggles associated

with working-class status. These findings suggests that the profession's middle-class norms operate to reproduce more of the same, negating the value that working-class individuals bring to the profession.

2.5.4. Strengths and Challenges of Working-Class Backgrounds

Two studies highlighted how working-class psychologists found ways to embrace their backgrounds, benefitting their service-users and the profession. Lovick's (2024) 'working class values' subtheme emphasises perseverance, resilience, and commitment which those from working class backgrounds felt they brought to the profession. Thomas's (2022) 'coming from LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages' theme highlights participants' deep understanding of systemic factors and the ability to connect with clients. Critical theory reinforces the importance of recognising and amplifying these strengths within professional contexts. These findings highlight the value for the profession in finding ways to embrace the unique skills of working-class psychologists to achieve inclusion and social change.

Three studies underline how limited social mobility and financial struggles impacted on the attainment and identities of trainee and qualified psychologists. Lovick's (2024) 'Being working class: A help or a hindrance' outlines working-class people's isolation in feeling different to both family and to professional peers. Thomas' (2022) 'it isn't going to land in your lap' theme outlined the lack of financial support available for many participants from family or the university. This was further emphasised in the 'at the time it felt really unfair' theme where participants spoke of the unfathomable cost of being required to buy and maintain a car to access placements alongside the cost of moving to a city. The discussions of financial struggles underscore the economic and social barriers and the internal conflicts between professional success and class identity. Bourdieu's (1986) emphasis on economic capital which examines how socio-economic conditions regulate opportunities, are evident here. These findings highlight the need for policies and support to foster genuine inclusion within the profession.

2.6. Rationale for Current Study

These findings of the literature review collectively shed light on the significant challenges faced by those from working-class backgrounds in the psychology

profession. All studies consistently highlight the impact of unequal access to resources, unseen systemic barriers, and the invisibilising of social-class, leading to identity struggles. Hence, the middle-class hegemony had those from working-class backgrounds disguising their working-class backgrounds to fit in with the profession, preventing the profession benefitting from their unique skills and abilities.

A strength of these findings is the consistency of themes across a broad sample of trainee and qualified psychologists across the UK from recent studies. The focus on experiences of working-class people provides a rich account and the use of thematic analysis across all studies allowed for synthesis of findings. However, examining these findings through the lens of critical theorists highlights the limitation of focusing on individual experiences having potential to let the social context 'off the hook' (Reynolds, 2019). Therefore, it would be worthwhile to critically examine how power operates within the socio-political context of the Clinical Psychology profession to reproduce middle-class norms that are persistently evident in these findings (Tarlau, 2014). The study aims to unveil hegemonic ideologies within the profession to understand how these influence the discourses and experiences that are available to those from working-class backgrounds. Therefore, the main research question will be: What discourses that are in circulation around social-class within the Clinical Psychology profession? The two sub-questions will examine: How do socio-political or economic factors and power shape and re-produce the discourses that are in circulation relating to social-class within the Clinical Psychology profession; and what are the implications of these discourses for people who are applying, training or working within the profession?

Chapter 3 – Research Design

3.1. Research Position

I took a critical theory and social constructionist positions throughout this research. A critical theory paradigm recognises socio-political forces, attempting to unveil systemic injustices to create social change (Tarlau, 2014). This stance supported my intention to expose the possible social, economic, and political complexities that contribute to hegemonic ideologies around social-class within the Clinical Psychology profession. Taking a social constructionist stance, I deemed there to be multiple

perspectives on reality (Gergen, 1994). Social constructionism emphasises that social interaction co-constructs reality, which changes as we move between contexts and over time (Hinchley, 2010; Soler, 2013). Collectively, taking critical theory and social constructionist stances offered possibilities for me to recognise the complexity of the multiple and potentially contrasting discourses relating to being working-class in the Clinical Psychology profession, and to expose these discourses with the intention of facilitating social justice in the profession.

3.2. Research Approach

Grix (2002) highlighted that the direction of research is influenced by the paradigm, or set of beliefs. Therefore, I used Grix's flowchart (2002, p. 180) to consider the links between ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods, sources and analysis. Ontology relates to what is possible to know about reality (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). Given my critical theory and social constructionist stance, my ontological position considered reality to be constructed through language and discourse. Therefore, language is not only a reflection of social reality, but constructing of it. My stance also connects with a critical realism ontology which recognises the underlying and systemic structures and power that exist alongside our perceptions (Scott, 2010). These stances fit with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology. CDA takes an ontological position whereby truth and reality are thought to be constructed or co-constructed by language, discourse or talk, and represent the social, political, and economic context, as opposed to an individual objective reality (Wiggins, 2023; Burman and Parker, 1993). CDA takes a critical epistemological position, critically examining how social, cultural, and political factors uphold power and reproduce normative ideas (Burr, 2003; Rahal & Vadeboncoeur, 2013). This fits with questioning taken-for-granted assumptions and exposing how language can perpetuate social inequalities, such as the Clinical Psychology profession being predominantly White, middle-class, abled-bodied (Patel, 2003) and this being reproduced through the language used within the profession. Hence, CDA fit with my Critical Theory position and was chosen to make visible the discourses that shape how working-class identities are constructed and re-constructed (Lyons & Coyle, 2007) within the socio-political context. The CDA approach also fit with my social constructionist stance as talk is

considered to represent collective discursive practice (as opposed to individual experience) which is shaped by the socio-cultural influences (Fairclough, 2001; Wiggins, 2023).

3.3. Method

CDA is both a methodology and a method (Fairclough, 2001). As a method, CDA critically examines how language use reproduces dominance of the powerful and creates inequalities (Machin and Mayr, 2012; O'Halloran, 2011; Rahal & Vadeboncoeur, 2013; van Dijk, 1997). CDA asserts that individual experience can only exist within social and political contexts, seeing individuals as co-constructing meaning with their use of talk from the available discourses (Burman and Parker, 1993).

3.3.1. Data

CDA is interdisciplinary and studies complex social problems from multiple perspectives (Wodak, 2011). This fit with this study's research questions which intended to draw on multiple perspectives to make visible the discourses that were in circulation within the Clinical Psychology profession.

Drawing on the literature review, including the excluded literature, revealed several possible data sources that could be critically examined using CDA. These included articles within the BPS's magazine, policy documents, forum posts, webinar data, websites and podcast data. Given the time constraints of this study, the research questions were used to select data which would represent multiple perspective and which has potential to unveil power structures within the profession. Inspiration for the data selection was also gained from Azumah Dennis (The Open University, 2023) who talked of the benefit of 'putting perspectives into conversation with each other'. Hence, I hoped that selecting data from a variety of authors, stances and perspectives would offer opportunities for meaning making within and across these perspectives and discourses.

The first data was pre-existing interview data from the 'Being Working Class in Clinical Psychology' webinar series (Curvis, 2020), publicly available on YouTube. The entire webinar series includes three recorded webinars, over 7 hours in length, involving 11

psychologists (trainees and qualified) sharing experiences of being working-class in the profession. This data was selected as it links to the main research question, having potential to make visible the experiences and discourses relating to social-class within the Clinical Psychology profession. The experiences of the working-class psychologists also touched on the socio-political and economic factors which influence their experiences and the implications these had on their experience, therefore having the potential to address the research sub-questions. Though, given the time-constraints of this project, a decision was made to only include the first webinar from the series. This involved four psychologists (two trainees and two qualified psychologists).

The second data selected was a peer-reviewed academic journal article written by the Clinical Psychologist who leads the largest DClinPsy programme in the UK. The article presents quantitative data, citing an increased intake of applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds to suggest that the profession is becoming more diverse (Scior et al., 2013). This article was chosen as it concluded that A-Levels are a predictor of success during DClinPsy training. Although this article is over ten years old and has significant flaws in coming to this conclusion, within my clinical practice, I notice this article is cited to justify recruitment processes which exclude applicants who scored less favourably on A-Levels. The decision to include a peer-reviewed academic article was inspired by the work of Gilbert and Mulkay (2003) who analysed scientific discourse to examine how biochemists justify their claims. Their innovative discourse analysis revealed how academic literature weaves scientific rationality with the presentation of facts which are based on infallible interpretative work. Collectively, this results in inaccurate beliefs entering into scientific discourse disguised with 'truth status'. Hence, this connects with my experience of A-Level results being a predictor of success being reproduced in the Clinical Psychology profession. This data connects with the research sub-question which aims to examine how power shapes and reproduces the discourses that are in circulation. To maximise opportunities to respond to the research questions within the time constraints, only the analysis and discussion section of the article will be included in the CDA.

The third data selected is the application website for applicants to the DClinPsy programme. This website outlines the eligibility criteria and selection processes for

DClinPsy applicants (Clearing House, 2023). Owing to time constraints, only one section of the website will be used. I considered the main research question's focus being to identify discourses relating to social-class within the profession, and the sub-question's intention to unveil how power shapes discourses. Therefore, I selected the 'Equal Opportunities' section of the website, titled 'Contextual Admissions'. This section refers to possible changes to the selection process aimed at improving inclusion.

3.3.2. Analysis

As a method of analysis, CDA involves the researcher drawing on critical theory to critically scrutinise texts (verbal or written), examining how structure connects with agency (Rahal & Vadeboncoeur, 2013). As CDA is interdisciplinary, it is possible to combine methods from within the same paradigm. Given that the webinar data (Curvis, 2020) was lengthy and had ethical implications of assuming consent for analysing publicly available data (see below), a narrative analysis was first undertaken on this data. The 'storying stories' approach (McCormack, 2004; Emden, 1998) to the narrative analysis was used owing to its ability to maintain the integrity of the data. This was used to facilitate a coherent and collective story to emerge which represents the four psychologists' collective experiences of being working-class in the profession. Then, to condense the collective story, Labov's (1972) six narrative dimensions were used: character, setting, events, audience, causal relations and themes. Narrative analysis privileges individual experiences, rather than starting with the socio-political, like CDA (Clandinin, 2006). In isolation, narrative analysis was at odds with the aims of this research, which intended to examine the power, discourse, and social structures which might construct and reproduce classism within the profession. However, the output of the narrative analysis facilitated possibilities to place these collective working-class experiences into 'conversation' with contrasting views (The Open University, 2023) about the profession whilst protecting individually shared experiences.

The narrative analysis intended to make visible the experience and discourses of working-class psychologists, with potential to unveil how socio-political and power influences how these discourses are maintained. The experiences that were made visible in the narrative analysis were then critically contrasted with the other two data in

the corpus, using CDA. Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) (Halliday, 1985, cited in Bloor and Bloor, 2013) was used to deconstruct the language used in the article and website, followed by exploration of how these sociocultural practices the language represents was supported or contrasted by the collective narrative story. The SFG approach involved examining the words used (or neglected) and the meaning and discourses that shape and are shaped by the use of language (Halliday, 1985, cited in Bloor and Bloor, 2013). SFG also involved critically examining where power is held and by whom which can expose dominance and positioning (Rahal and Vadeboncoeur, 2013). The SFG method also allowed for systemic and structural influences to be examined. For example, given that the DClinPsy is a programme funded by Health Education England, dominance and power may be held and imposed from wider systems (Bloor and Bloor, 2013). The SFG method was aligned with the aims of the study as it deliberately sought to bring forth multiple perspectives which critiqued taken for granted truths (Jensen, 1997) i.e. within the Clinical Psychology profession.

3.4. Reliability and Validity

CDA considers data analysis to represents constructions as opposed to a truth about a person or institution's intentions, beliefs of behaviours (Alasuutari, 1995). Given that the webinar, the website, and the article were published at specific points in time, the reliability of the original data is strong, though the analysis undertaken is subjective. Though I took great care to employ the CDA methods accurately in the analysis, my lack of experience of the approach may have led to unreliable findings. To counteract this, support was sought from a supervisor experienced in the approach. With regards to validity, CDA requires the researcher to present examples of the analysis being rooted in the data, providing face validity (Harper, 2006). Such transparency allows the reader to assess validity for themselves, potentially leading to greater empiricism than quantitative approaches (Harré, 2004).

3.5. Ethical Decisions

I used the Stutchbury and Fox (2009) framework to appraise the ethical concerns presented by this study at multiple layers of the system i.e. the research environment, the consequential, moral, and relational layers. Stutchbury and Fox (2009) recognised the intersection of these layers and therefore, to outline the ethical decisions made, I

will weave these layers into the outline of the ethical concerns that were presented. Given that being an ethical researcher requires ongoing reflection on ethics-in-practice (Hopkins, 2007), especially given the additional challenges of being an insider-researcher (Mercer, 2007), this framework was used in the design, undertaking, and write-up of this study.

3.5.1. Participants

The 'deontological layer' considers the 'duty' and how the research is undertaken (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009). Although the data for this project was publicly available, I had a duty to respect the individuals who publicly shared their multiple perspectives and academic writings without consenting to the level of critical analysis this study undertook. There is much debate about whether social media data should be deemed publicly available (BERA, 2024, p. 4). Markham and Buchanan's (2012) study found that authors of blog posts did not perceive their stories to be publicly available and reported distress as a result of researchers reporting on what authors deemed private identity stories. This connects with Stutchbury and Fox's (2009) 'inner layer' which considers the individual and how the rationale for the study centres respect and autonomy. These values are also central to the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Ethics (2021b), the BPS (2021c) guidelines for internet-mediated research, and BERA's ethical guidelines (2024) regarding centring respect for participants. I emailed the author of the webinar series to share information about this study and offered an option to opt-out. This fits with the BERA (2024, p. 4) guidelines, not assuming that publicly available data can be used without consent. However, no response was received. Therefore, I decided to undertake a narrative analysis on the webinar data to create a collective (rather than individual) narrative before placing this 'in conversation with' (The Open University, 2023) the academic article and website data. Creating a collective story afforded a level of individual protection and anonymity and no names were used in the collective narrative.

3.5.2. Context

The consequential layer considers ethical implications for individuals, groups or society (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009). There are potential implications for the Clinical Psychologists who wrote the academic journal article and applicant website. Whilst

these are intended for a public audience, CDA seeks to unveil injustice and oppression. I had a duty within the write-up to situate injustices within the socio-political and historical context (Foucault, 2001), rather than being critical or blaming of individual authors (Toulmin, 1972). This was pertinent as this study aimed to facilitate social change and so bringing those in power (i.e. those leading DClinPsy programmes or applications) into conversation with those who are marginalised increased the likelihood of this. I hope such considerations will facilitate opportunities for communicative action (Habermas, 1987) to facilitate social change in the dissemination phase of the project.

Chapter 4 – Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter will begin by presenting the narrative analysis of the webinar data. This collective narrative analysis will be ‘placed in conversation with’ the Critical Discourse Analysis of the peer-reviewed academic journal (Scior et al., 2014) and the DClinPsy application website (Clearing House, 2024).

4.1. Narrative Analysis of webinar data

The ‘storying stories’ approach to narrative analysis (McCormack, 20014; Emden, 1998) was undertaken to combine four psychologists’ stories of being working class in the profession (Curvis, 2020). The narrative analysis aimed to address the main research question: What discourses are in circulation around social-class within the Clinical Psychology profession? To condense the collective story, Labov’s (1972), six narrative dimensions were considered: characters, setting, events, audience, causal relations and themes. The characters and themes are outlined below as they pertain directly to the research question.

4.1.1. Characters

- **Main characters:**
 - **Working-Class:** “deprived”; not a striver; naïve; isolated; “different”; yet “definitely wouldn’t change my background”

- **Middle-Class:** “didn’t have to worry”; “has their shit together”; “academically very capable”; “talk eloquently about politics”; “reads the Guardian and listen to Radio 4”
- **The DClInPsy Profession:** presents “hurdles” or “walls” that are “so defined and fixed”; “looking for a very specific person”; “set ... arbitrary guidelines .. feel very disconnected from real life”.
- **Supporting Characters**
 - **Supporters/Parents:** “Parents definitely weren’t in a position to give me anything in a way of help”; “good supervisors”.
 - **People from own background:** “It became more difficult to talk to friends I went to school with”
 - **The University:** “intimidating”; “rarely places that are in the kind of areas we’ve [The Working-Class] grown up”; “unsettling”.

4.1.2 Themes

- **Hidden inequalities**

‘The Working-Class’ journey is beset with “social deprivation”, “ill health”, being “bullied”, “chaotic”, “complicated messages”. This puts ‘The Working-Class’ on the back foot in education compared to ‘Middle-Class’ peers who “didn’t have to worry” and are “academically able”. This is pertinent given that the ‘DClInPsy Profession’s’ recruitment process privileges A-Level and degree grades to determine suitability and decide who gets an interview. As ‘The Working-Class’ come to the end of their undergraduate degree and begin to explore suitable experience for the DClInPsy application process, ‘The Working-Class’ are hit by “another hurdle” and begin to recognise “the fake idea of meritocracy”. Gaining clinically relevant experience is challenging when ‘The Working-Class’ are in “absolutely no position to do any honorary work”, “being really limited by geography” and not having “the money to move to the other end of the country”.

- **Fit the Mould**

Applying to ‘The DClInPsy Profession’ or gaining a place on training has ‘The Working-Class’ entering into the “predominantly middle-class” profession. Being grateful of this

opportunity and enjoying the illusion of being middle-class, whilst also feeling like “an imposter” and “felt very othered”. “Feeling you’ve got to fit the mould” as “you don’t want to feel like that outsider, you don’t want to feel different”; “learning to fit in”. Though this leaves ‘The Working-Class’ isolated from working-class family and friends who don’t get it: “It became more difficult to talk to friends I went to school with”; whilst also feeling “different to peers on training”. “A lonely and stressful experience”; “learning to fit into this very academic world”. This pressure to fit in continued into qualified life: “Felt like I wasn’t doing it right” and “I wasn’t being the right kind of psychologist”; where accents “still get commented on” and “I do worry people judge me”.

- **Uniqueness of Being Working Class**

“We can offer a uniqueness of experience”; “being able to communicate in a way which is consistent with [service users] around you”; “understanding the complexity of different influences”; “recognising that not everybody is going to have the ability to pay a bus fair to come to an appointment”; “Bringing a non-blaming approach”. A collective recognition and hope that “... the more diversity ... in the profession the more voices will have to enrich”; “more voices to shape what happens”; “it’s in everybody’s interest to have that diversity not just the people from working-class backgrounds”.

In summary, the narrative analysis highlights that those from working-class backgrounds can experience multiple unseen barriers and ‘othering’, along with a pressure to fit into the middle-class hegemony within the Clinical Psychology profession. To understand how socio-political, economic and power influences shape these experiences, a CDA will now be undertaken on the website and academic article.

4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

I applied Fairclough’s (2010) three dimensions (text, discursive practice, and social practice: Figure 2) to the corpus. Three discourses were found: i) academic and professional discourse; ii) fairness, inclusivity and diversity discourse; iii) contributions of diverse experience discourse.

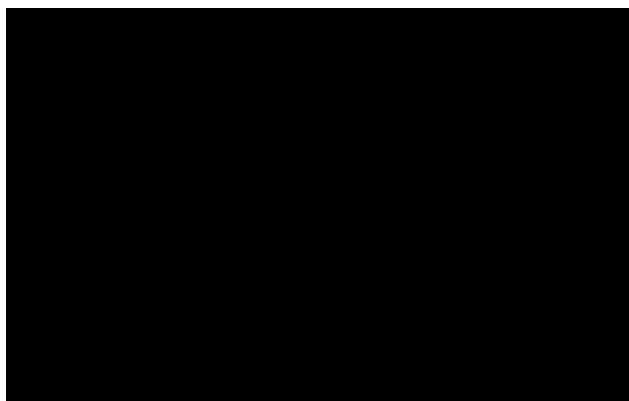


IMAGE REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Figure 2: Fairclough’s framework for critical discourse analysis

In this section, I will show how I analysed each piece of data at a textual level, using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG: Halliday, 1994). Following the analysis of each piece of data, to respond to the research sub-questions, I will draw on Foucault and Bourdieu’s theories to highlight the dialectic relationship between the data at a textual level, the discourse that are in circulation, and the sociocultural forces that shape these (Figure 2). I will also consider how the CDA findings fit with the themes from the narrative analysis.

4.2.1. *Clearing House Website*

The website presents a professional tone throughout, drawing on specialised language (such as “contextual recruitment process”), specific to academic settings. The text is predominantly declarative and provides seemingly factual information. The chosen ‘contextual admissions’ section begins by presenting the possibilities of changes to the selection process, before referring to evidence for this change, and ending with an outline of the benefits and potential next steps. This presents a logical flow whereby the reader could consider those leading the selection process to be enthusiastic about improving inclusion and diversity. However, application of SFG (Halliday, 1994) revealed how language choices are potentially manipulating the perspective of the reader. This is supported by van Dijk (2001) who described how deliberate decisions around language made by those in power manipulate the views of the oppressed. Three extracts will be shared from the website:

Participant	Process	Process	Process	Process	Process	Process	Process
Agent (Active)	Mental	Material	Existential	Relational	Material	Material	Existential
<i>Many Course Centres</i>	<i>are considering</i>	<i>developing</i>	<i>contextual recruitment process</i>	<i>Is based on evidence that contextualising individuals' achievements</i>	<i>using additional information about their education, social, and economic background</i>	<i>can lead to</i>	<i>a fairer and more inclusive selection process.</i>

Extract 1

Extract 1 is an example of Active Voice, whereby the sentence is fronted with the Active Agent (“Many Course Centres”), which precedes the verb (“considering”). Active Voice has the effect of emphasising the Course Centres as agents who hold power over the selection process (Halliday, 1994).

Extract 1 also shows an dysfunctional transactive process. There is an Active Participant (“Many Course Centres”) and something affected by the actions of the Participant (“a fairer and more inclusive selection process”), with six Processes in between. This distances those in power (“Many Course Centres”) from the invisibilised participants i.e. applicants who are disadvantaged by the DClinPsy selection process. The use of several different Processes also implies the Agents are making active steps towards inclusion, minimising that those in power and merely “considering” changes. This has the relational effect of the audience erroneously perceiving the Course Centres as active in making steps towards inclusion and equity.

Process	Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Material	Agent	Mental	Victim	Reason
Could help	<i>Course Centres</i>	<i>recognise</i>	<i>individuals with strong potential</i>	<i>for success at doctoral level and within the profession.</i>

Extract 2

Halliday (1994) indicates that Participants can either be presented as Active Agents whereby they hold responsibility and power over an event, or are ‘victims’ whereby they are passive in an event. Extract 2 is another example of a Transactive Process where the Active Agents, “Course Centres” are shown as directive in the Mental Process of “recognising” the Passive (Victim) Participants’ “strong potential”. The Active Agent (“Course Centres”) has again been placed before the verb which provides another example of Active Voice, positioning the event (selection) as being done to the “individuals” (applicants from marginalised backgrounds). Thus, “individuals” are positioned as passive in this Transactive Process. This is evidence of dominant positioning (Rahal and Vadeboncoeur, 2013) of “Course Centres” which is reproduced throughout the website.

Halliday (1994) proposed two types of Modality which indicates likelihood or intention: Modalization (probability and usuality) and Modulation (obligation and inclination). The use of the Material Process, “could help”, in Extract 2, is an example of Modalization, indicating possibility of changes being beneficial, rather than obligation. The introduction of vagueness to conceal agency is a technique known as Nominalisation (Fairclough, 2003). Nominalisation can also be seen in Extract 1 where the Active Agent (“Many Course Centres”) “are considering developing” the selection process. This conflicts with the statement that the “contextual recruitment process[es]” are “based on evidence” and “can lead to” (as opposed to *will* lead to) “a fairer and more inclusive selection process”.

Within SFG, the Circumstance offers reasons for the Process of “recognising individuals with strong potential”. The choice to include the Reason Circumstance of “for success at doctoral level and within the profession” emphasises that those in power (“Course Centres”) are privileging academic and professional skills within the selection process. This contrasts with the narrative analysis which emphasises the unique contributions that those from working-class backgrounds bring to the profession beyond education attainment e.g. being able to be with people in distress.

Participant	Process	Process	Process	Participant
Agent (Active)	Relational	Relational	Material	Receiver (Passive; Victim)
<i>The Group of Trainers in Clinical Psychology</i>	<i>have agreed the questions</i>	<i>which have evidence</i>	<i>for improving the inclusivity and equity</i>	<i>of recruitment processes</i>

Extract 3

Extract 3 shows that The Group of Trainers in Clinical Psychology are again, presented as Active Agents in the selection process (event). The power held by the Active Agent is further emphasised by the Relational Process “have agreed the questions”, indicating the completion of a process without transparency about how the questions were agreed upon and how inclusive this Relational Process of “agree[ing]” was.

In Extract 3, the receiver of the Participant’s “questions” “for improving the inclusivity and equity” is the Passive Participant of the “recruitment process”. Choosing to refer to the second Participant as a ‘thing’ as opposed to an individual or group dehumanises the processes. This is an impression that can be seen throughout the paragraph, where there is a persistent absence of those at the centre of the DClinPsy recruitment process changes, specifically applicants from marginalised backgrounds being named.

This power held by “The Group of Trainers” is further emphasised by the Relational Process whereby they “have agreed” selection questions “which have evidence”. The use of declarative statements alongside the professional tone of the website asserts to the reader that this is factual. Though, again, the author chooses not to share any evidence or references. Given the evidence based, positivist positioning of the Clinical Psychology profession (William and Watson, 1991), the decision to exclude the evidence or references within Extract 1 and 2, and the avoidance of assertive actions towards the goal of “fairer and more inclusive selection process”, emphasises van Dijk’s (2001) perspective that language choices of the powerful can manipulate marginalised people.

- **Discursive Practices in Website**

The three extracts from the website reveal a discourse around fairness, inclusivity and diversity. Attempts are made by the website author to show that those who hold the

power in the selection process are making decisions and undertaking actions towards an inclusive process which values diverse experiences and skills. However, there remains a dominant professional and academic discourse. These discourses privilege a narrow measure of success within the Clinical Psychology profession, as being related to academic performance, as opposed to privileging the unique social and cultural capital which those from working-class (or other marginalised) backgrounds bring.

The extracts also reveal a discourse of the contributions of diverse experiences, highlighted by the discussion of the “contextual recruitment process”. This suggests there is, at some level, an awareness that those from marginalised backgrounds have potential to bring something valuable to the profession.

- **Social Practices in Website**

The fairness, inclusivity and diversity discourse revealed within the application website reflects the political context of the Equality Act (2010) in the UK. This legislation mandates universities to evidence how their selection procedures avoid discriminating against those with protected characteristics. Furthermore, the DClinPsy programme is funded by Health Education England which requires programmes to work towards their inclusion aims (HEE, 2024). These contexts might explain why the website refers to potential changes to the selection process, despite the absence of committed action, in an attempt to create the impression that the Course Centres are responding to their legislative obligations.

- **Connections with the Narrative Analysis**

The unveiling of the professional and academic discourse within the website data, and the favouring of academic attainment explains why working-class psychologists experience hidden inequalities and a pressure to fit the mould. The consideration of a contextual recruitment potentially indicates a challenge to the power that is held by the predominantly White, middle-class profession (Patel, 2003), and is advocated for within the narrative analysis theme ‘uniqueness of being working-class’. This challenge to gatekeepers, who control access to the DClinPsy profession has potential to redistribute access for a more inclusive profession (Bourdieu, 1977, cited in Riddell, 2009; Bourdieu, 1987).

4.2.2. Academic Article

The academic paper mostly uses declarative sentences to present findings from a quantitative study aligned to the academic expectations of the journal. The article is published in *The British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, which has a good impact factor, adding status to the claims made in the article.

Extract 4 is presented in the second paragraph of the article's discussion. The extract focuses on the study's findings that A-levels are predictive of DClinPsy training performance and clinical placement challenges. Several Relational and Material Processes are used to accentuate the predictive value of A-levels. The reader is being positioned to see A-levels as a robust and reliable predictor of DClinPsy performance, being reassured by the presence of external corroborative evidence. SFG analysis of Extract 4 emphasises the narrow story that is told here.

Circumstance	Participant 1	Process	Participant 2	Participant
Source	Carrier	Relational	Attribute	Attribute
<i>From all the information available at selection</i>	<i>school leaving exam grades (A-levels)</i>	<i>were</i>	<i>the most important predictor of performance during training;</i>	<i>the only data that showed a reasonable range.</i>

Extract 4

Extract 4 begins to discuss and establish the study finding that A-Levels are predictive of performance during DClinPsy training. Extract 4 uses a Source Circumstance ("From all the information available") to emphasise to the reader that there was a robust gathering of "all" the data available at selection. This minimises the limited data that was used to draw these conclusions. The subsequent use of the Relational Process "were" emphasises a linear and one directional relationship between these Participants. This creates a context of legitimacy for the claims yet to come.

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance	Process	Participant
Actor	Material	Goal	Manner	Relational	Attribute
<i>They [A-Levels]</i>	<i>predicted</i>	<i>marks on all four of the exams</i>	<i>independently of other pre-course variables</i>	<i>and were univariately associated</i>	<i>with clinical placement problems.</i>

Extract 5

In Extract 5, the Active Agent “They [A-levels]” is used at the start of the sentence, before the verb “predicted”, using Active Voice which focuses the reader’s attention on this Participant and emphasises its power. A complete Transactive Process is used to show that A-levels predict “marks on all four of the exams” (Participant) and “clinical placement problems” (Participant). The use of Active Voice within this Transactive Process suggests that the “exam” Participant and “clinical placement” Participant are Passive Participants in this predictive Process. These choices continue to persuade the reader of the strength of A-levels as a predictive power in the selection process. However, “all the information available at selection” (Extract 4.1) used to reach the conclusion that A-levels “predicted” “exam” and “clinical placement” outcomes is based on the existing data collection and does not include “contextual” information which the Clearing House website (2023) is proposing. Yet there is no recognition of the limits in this relationship data in these extracts. Furthermore, these extracts contradict the narrative analysis findings where those from working-class backgrounds emphasise that despite the challenges they faced in education, including A-levels, they brought unique contributions to their clinical practice.

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance	Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Goal	Location	Actor	Material	Goal	Temporal
<i>This</i>	<i>corroborates</i>	<i>evidence from medicine</i>	<i>where</i>	<i>A-levels</i>	<i>have been found to predict</i>	<i>academic performance</i>	<i>many years after graduation (McManus, Smithers, Partridge, Keeling, & Fleming, 2003)."</i>

Extract 6

Extract 6 functions to add weight to the stance taken in Extracts 4 and 5, by providing external evidence. The use of the Material Process “corroborates” suggests an action,

connecting the study findings [“This”] with existing evidence. The use of the Material Process “corroborates” also positions the study findings as confirmation of pre-existing knowledge. The Material Process connects the study findings with the Participant “evidence from medicine”, which adds credibility and reliability to the claim.

The choice of Temporal Circumstance (“many years after graduation”) to specify the time frame in which A-level prediction remains valid, facilitates temporal authority. This results in the reader accepting the long term reliability of this claim of predictive power. Furthermore, the use of a citation (“McManus, Smithers, Patridge, Kelling, & Fleming, 2003”) attaches academic rigour and positions the study findings within a temporal framework, suggesting the claim has a long, evidence-based history. This invites the reader to trust the predictive power of A-levels owing to the credibility of the published academic research.

Extract 7 comes from the second paragraph of the conclusion and reflects several occasions in the discussion where “further research” is indicated.

Participant	Process	Process	Circumstance	Participant	Process	Participant
Carrier	Relational	Mental	Phenomenon	Carrier	Relational	Attribute
<i>Further research</i>	<i>is needed</i>	<i>to understand</i>	<i>how performance on the course relates to practice over the longer term as a clinical psychologist</i>	<i>and whether all those who complete training</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>indeed fit to practice</i>

Extract 7

The Relational Process “is needed” indicates necessity (and high Modulation) regarding the Carrier “further research” which suggests that the current study findings (and evidence base) is inadequate. The implication given the context of the article is that the academic community are responsible for undertaking such research.

Extract 7 questions whether existing selection criteria is adequate. This is shown in the Mental Process “to understand” the Phenomenon of “how performance on the course

relates to practice over the longer term as a clinical psychologist”. This is further shown by the Carrier “all those who complete training” being placed in a Relational Process (“are”) which questions whether those selected through existing processes are “fit to practice”. Combined with the high modulation that “further research is needed”, this not only suggests that the current study findings did not offer an adequate insight into this phenomenon but also calls into question the selection process and potentially the DClinPsy training as being rigorous enough in ensuring fitness to practice, and potentially suggests the need for scrutiny or reform. The questioning of the evidence base stands in contrast to Extract 4 which attempts to convince the reader of the robustness of the study findings that A-level results are predictive of DClinPsy training success. It is notable that despite this article being published 10 years ago, there remains little progress towards the future research mentioned (as evidence by the literature review).

Extract 8 comes at the end of the conclusion of the article. It makes a proposal for an alternative selection process by posing a question. This aligns with the Clearing House website whereby there is some attempt to propose an alternative selection process to improve inclusivity.

Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Actor	Material	Goal		Relational	Attribute	Interpretation
<i>Would a lottery system</i>	<i>choosing</i>	<i>among all students</i>	<i>judged to meet entry criteria</i>	<i>be fairer</i>	<i>to applicants, trainees, and ultimately to service users</i>	<i>(cf. Simpson, 1975)?</i>

Extract 8

The inclusion of the reference (Circumstance) adds weight to the radical idea of the “lottery system” (Participant) and indicates that the idea has credence and a history in academic literature. The reference (“cf. Simpson, 1975”) relates to an article which examines the effectiveness of a lottery selection process for medical students, which

again connects findings with the credibility of the medical profession. The transactive process reflected in Extract 8 emphasises consideration of the “lottery system” (Participant) upon “applicants, trainees, and ultimately to service users” (Participant) which indicates consideration to the stakeholders of the selection process. This is one of few occasions where service users are mentioned within this article.

- **Discursive Practices in article**

The five extracts from the peer-reviewed article reveal a discourse around transforming the DClinPsy selection process to improve fairness, inclusion and equity by utilising academic and professional means. Consideration of radical alternatives to the selection process implies this is unfair for some, revealing the fairness, inclusivity and diversity discourse. Yet, this is only revealed towards the end of the discussion, without any insistence of how the lottery system could be trialled in the DClinPsy selection process. The placing of this alternative and the posing it as a question fits with Gilbert and Mulkey’s (2003) statements of proto-jokes that fit within an academic discourse. In their revealing analysis of the biochemistry literature, Gilbert and Mulkey (2003) offered a two column table, where the first column represented utterances from scientific literature (e.g. “It has long been known that ..”) and the second column emphasised the informal, idiomatic alternative (e.g. “I haven’t bothered to look up the reference”). Hence, posing a question without rigorous use of their academic skill to unpack the next steps can be understood as Nominalisation (Fairclough, 2003). The authors introduce vagueness and obscure the agency they have which is revealing given that the main author is the head of the largest DClinPsy programme in the country, and hence holds power and academic standing to pilot an alternative approach. Despite the vagueness, there is also a discourse around diverse contributions which is evident in the suggestion of a lottery system, with the consideration that this could be fairer to service users as well as applicants.

Through the rest of the article, an academic discourse is used to persuade the reader of the robustness of A-levels as predictors of success in DClinPsy training. A professional discourse is also present, which indicates that quantifiable academic performance is associated with competence, suggesting that academic performance indicates success in clinical practice over other forms of skill such as social or cultural.

- **Social Practices in article**

The discourses revealed within the article reflect the sociocultural practices within which the article was written. A meritocracy ideology is revealed whereby quantifiable academic achievements are privileged as markers of success. This fits with Bourdieu's (2006) perspective of meritocracy being an illusion and a legitimising ideology which sanctions the reproduction of social inequalities. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (1986) is also pertinent to these discourses, emphasising how applicants from privileged backgrounds have greater access to resources that stand them in better stead for A-level achievements.

- **Connecting to the Narrative Analysis**

The narrative analysis revealed the theme of 'hidden inequalities' within which Clinical Psychologists from working-class backgrounds raised concerns about the overemphasis on A-level results within the DClinPsy selection process. They emphasised how this narrow measure minimises the lack of social and educational capital available to those from working-class backgrounds ("social deprivation"; "bullied"; "chaotic"). Prioritising A-Level results also contrasts with the suggested intentions of the Course Centres which were proposed on the Clearing House selection website to be considering contextualised selection processes (Extract 1).

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Implications

5.1. Implications

This CDA of working-class experiences in the Clinical Psychology profession highlights pervasive, often invisible, class-based inequalities. These barriers manifest in limited access to critical resources, identity challenges, unpredictable professional pathways, and difficulties in discussing social-class within professional contexts. This section considers the professional implications within education and clinical contexts, arguing for action at multiple levels (local, community, social, cultural, and political) within the profession and educational systems. Addressing these complex issues requires a multifaceted approach guided by critical theory tools and a persistent, allied approach to facilitate social change.

5.1.2. Equitable Access to Resources

The study highlights persistent and often unseen inequalities in accessing the Clinical Psychology profession. Bourdieu (1977, cited in Riddell, 2009) emphasised that ignoring barriers to education reproduces inequalities by treating symptoms rather than causes. Undergraduate programmes, doctoral training programmes, and professional organisations must enhance the social, cultural, and economic capital of those from working-class backgrounds by providing access to mentors, financial support, and insider knowledge. This aligns with Bourdieu's concept of capital (1986), emphasising the need to redistribute resources to foster inclusion. Effectiveness of equality interventions should be evaluated based on the experiences and outcomes of those from working-class backgrounds, not just the narrow measure of gaining a place in training. Regular surveys and DClinPsy mid-placement reviews can help in measuring 'equality of outcome' over 'equality of access', addressing system flaws that reproduce inequalities (Riddell, 2009).

5.1.3. Transforming Recruitment Processes

The findings indicate that current recruitment processes, which heavily favour academic achievements, require transformation. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power (1995, cited in Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014) shows how privileging academic achievement favours middle-class candidates who have access to social, economic, and cultural capital. Marginalised groups, like working-class applicants, are influenced by this power and attempt to conform to these values. Clearing House should expand data reporting on applicants' demographics and socio-economic backgrounds. Alternative methods, such as prioritising social and cultural capital (e.g., contextual recruitment), should be explored to create more inclusive selection processes. Power held by Course Centres and qualified psychologists must be balanced by involving marginalised groups in transforming recruitment processes. Individuals from working-class backgrounds should contribute to wording application documents and interview questions to highlight broader, non-academic skills.

5.1.4. Support for Identity Development

Findings indicate that working-class psychologists experience a mismatch in their habitus (Bourdieu, 2002) before and after entering the Clinical Psychology profession 'field'. Training programmes should create safe, reflective spaces for working-class trainees to explore and integrate their personal and professional identities. This fits with the Fabian idea of developing 'critical self-consciousness' as a tool for challenging and disrupting social norms and facilitating system change (Horkheimer, 1937). Supportive supervisory or mentoring relationships can be valuable resources. The Social GRACES (Burnham, 2013) framework could help working-class psychologists understand and leverage their embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Recognising unique abilities to appreciate service-users' socio-economic challenges, develop trusting relationships, and exhibit resilience can help working-class psychologists connect with their rich history and culture. Creating safe spaces for these stories can reduce pressure to conform to professional norms, fostering a more inclusive approach.

5.1.5. Encouraging Conversations about Class

Professional environments need to facilitate open and inclusive discussions about social-class. This requires revealing and addressing hidden power dynamics that silence these conversations. Freire's (2000) concept of dialogical action emphasises critical reflection and dialogue to navigate identity challenges within oppressive structures. Wood and Patel's (2017) experiences of DCLinPsy 'whiteness workshops' could offer a valuable framework here. These workshops shared the history of racism, addressed invisible Whiteness, and co-created anti-racist practices with DCLinPsy trainees. Similarly, narrative therapy interventions like 'Theatre of Life' (Marfleet and Duncan, 2024) can explore unique identity stories, holding space for these within the programme. Group-based interventions can transform the 'field' (Bourdieu, 1986) by recognising and embracing everyone's unique contributions.

5.1.6. Policy and Structural Changes

The findings indicate a need for policies supporting genuine inclusion to dismantle middle-class hegemony. Campaigns to include social-class in the Equality Act (BPS, 2022) should be supported by the Clinical Psychology profession. Recognising the

inequalities impacting those entering the profession and their experiences can lead to better services for users and improved wellbeing in the workforce. Course Centres and employers should seek feedback from their workforce and develop policies reducing inequalities for those from working-class backgrounds, such as prompt reimbursement of expenses. Publishing targets on workforce representation should ensure those from working-class backgrounds are involved at all levels, from interview panels to guest lecturing. Addressing barriers and appropriately reimbursing travel and time for Clinical Psychologists from working-class backgrounds to be involved in these roles will ensure better representation.

5.2. Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

This study is the first known CDA to unveil the systemic and power influences underpinning working-class psychologists' experiences within the Clinical Psychology profession. The study offers a critical understanding that can inform actions towards inclusivity within clinical and educational contexts. Limitations of this study were related to the tight timescales and limited resources of this being a small-scale investigation as part of a Masters project. This reduced opportunities for collaboration with those who produced the data. That said, using pre-existing data and the CDA method were strengths as these allowed for rich and diverse data, with the analysis being visible for the reader to ascertain validity. Using CDA to analyse a peer-reviewed article and website is a novel approach within the profession. This provides a foundation for future researchers to move beyond an individual approach to understanding experiences of those from marginalised backgrounds, towards an approach that places inequality within the social and political context. Future research should seek to use CDA, or critical approaches, to unveil the socio-political influences that reproduce marginalisation and inequalities in other texts and communications within the profession. A further limitation was the tight focus on discourses relating to being working-class within the profession which excluded opportunities to examine intersectionality and how different aspects of identity intersect to provide or withdraw power and privilege (Bhopal, 2021; Crenshaw, 1989). For example, how discourses around race, class, and disability shape marginalised individuals' experiences of the profession. The current research could be extended to consider how the socio-political

context shape the discourses that are available and the experiences of those from marginalised backgrounds more widely. Considering the narrative analysis theme of 'hidden inequalities', future CDA analysis could include data from DCLinPsy lectures, DCLinPsy or undergraduate psychology assignment guidance, DCLinPsy placement contracts, placement review documentation, job descriptions, and profession-wide and service-level policies.

5.3. Conclusion

This study revealed the multi-faceted nature of the social, political, and economic factors influencing the dominant professional and academic discourses which perpetuate inequalities and marginalise those from working-class backgrounds seeking to join, train, or work in the profession. The dominance of the professional and academic discourses were also shown to be undermining of the inclusion-focused discourse and reduce opportunities for those in power to make assertive steps towards inclusion. These findings highlight the need for continuous reflection and action to address the systemic inequalities which exclude those from working-class backgrounds. This includes ongoing research and dialogue to understand and mitigate the impact of socio-political and economic factors on working-class individuals' experiences. By addressing these implications, the profession can move towards a more inclusive and equitable environment that values diversity and fosters the unique contributions of working-class psychologists. This shift is necessary for individuals within the profession and for the broader goal of social justice and equity in psychological services.

Chapter 6 - Narrative Critical Analysis

Studying EE814 provided me with a critical lens to examine my roles of Clinical Psychologist and psychology lecturer. I began to recognise the hidden oppression and marginalisation within both my profession and teaching contexts. Learning about how critical theory tools have historically facilitated social change (Tarlau, 2014) was particularly inspiring. Through module assessments, I identified a significant lack of diversity within the Clinical Psychology profession (Ahsan, 2020).

The reflective learning process (Appendix C) developed my awareness that I trained in a profession that privileges positivism and objectivism (Rickett, 2020). EE814 helped me appreciate the value of an alternative, social constructionist stance, which acknowledges multiple realities (Gergen, 1994; Soler, 2013). Reading Costley et al. (2010) highlighted the value of drawing on my experiences and insider-knowledge to developing an insider-research project. This contrasted with my previous training, which required justification from existing peer-reviewed evidence. It felt uncomfortable and exciting to focus my interests on an area that was rooted in my own experience of oppression.

My initial MEd goal was to enhance inclusion in my teaching and clinical practices. Studying EE815 deepened my understanding of social constructionism. I learned how dominant socio-political ideologies constrain individuals within the profession (Creswell and Plato, 2011), considering the 'lack of diversity problem' as reflective of the broader socio-political context. Therefore, I began to see the value of using the power inherent in my roles to uncover systemic and socio-economic influences on my practices. This insight has been crucial for my research, as I now see that situating inclusion challenges within individuals or training programmes would limit potential for social change. My goal evolved into contributing to social change within my profession. My research journal highlights how receiving an unfavourable ethics response led me to grapple with the value of looking at problems through an individual or social lens. I had been captured by the power of narrative interviews (Soler, 2013), intending to interview psychology students from working-class backgrounds to understand their perceptions of my profession from an individual perspective. Guided by EE822 TMA01/02 feedback and tutorial discussions, I became interested in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly the shift in focus from individual objective reality (Wiggins, 2023) to a position where reality is co-constructed by language, discourse, and social, political, and economic contexts (Burnham and Parker, 1993). This resonated with my EE815 learning of the dialectic relationship between the individual and the social (McLaren, 2013). I decided to embrace the critical and multiplicity within my research which was exciting and overwhelming, though aligned with what had inspired me throughout the

MEd. I now see potential for applying CDA skills in my clinical practice, such as attending to language in patient or student resources.

Writing up the CDA findings was challenging. Being a new approach for me, I was concerned that the authors of the website and academic article might feel attacked, potentially hindering social change. However, I remain hopeful about circulating my newly acquired knowledge across multiple contexts. My study amplified the multi-faceted nature of the social, political, and economic factors influencing discourses around being working-class within the profession. I now recognise how embracing this complexity led to more robust recommendations for social change and inclusion. My PDP shows my increased confidence and new aspirations to publish my research and join EDI boards to continue advancing these developments.

Word Count

11, 822 words

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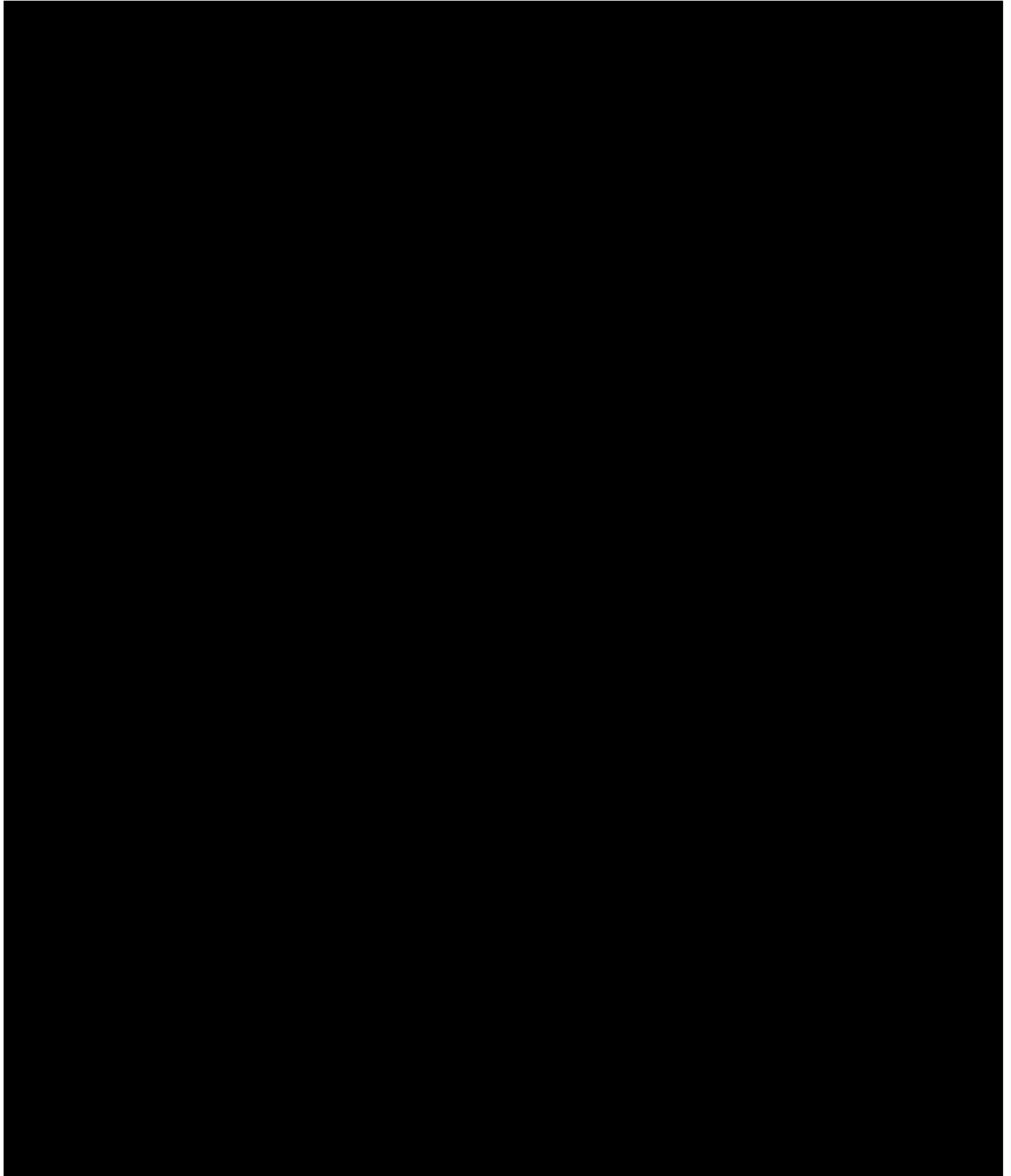
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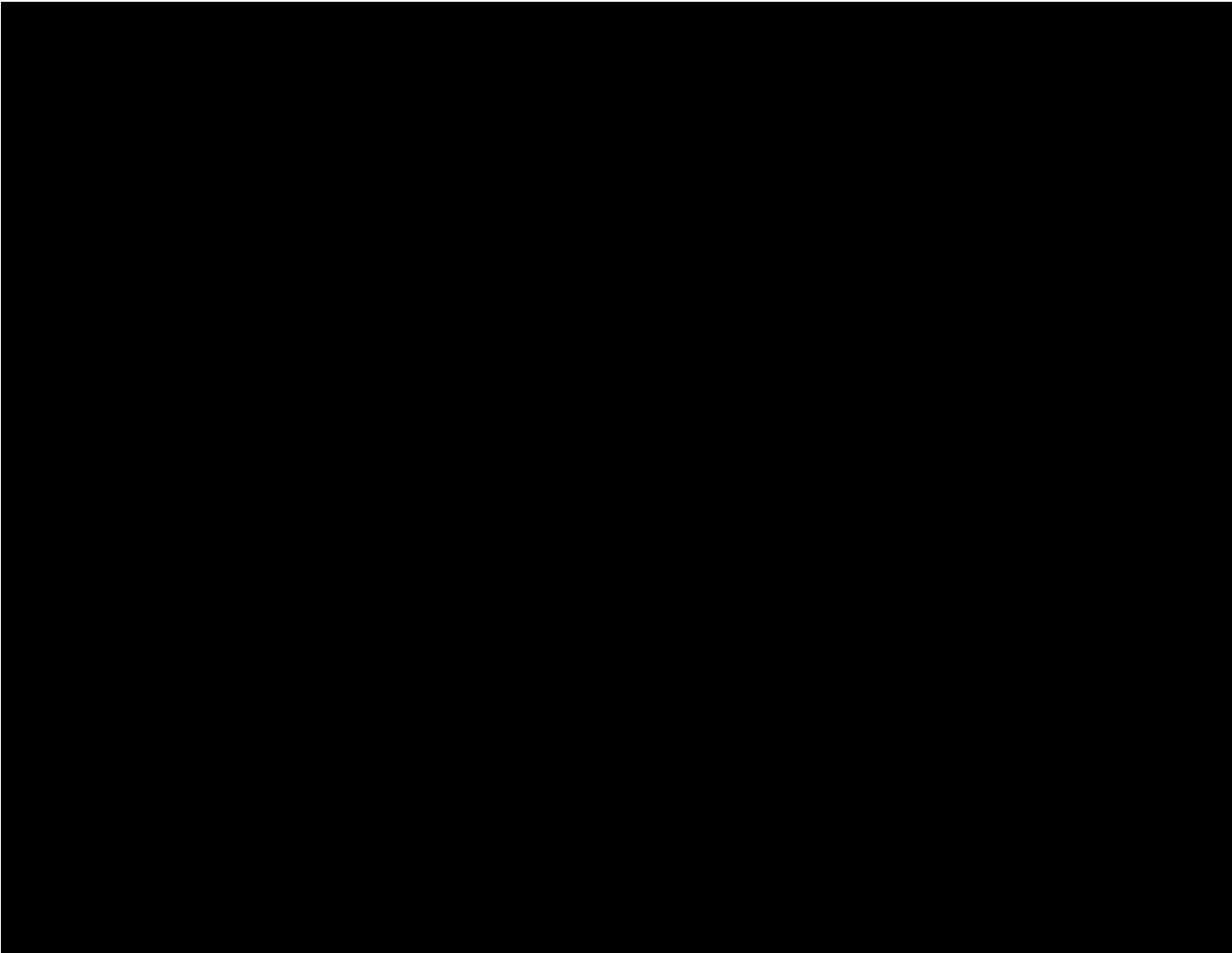
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**Appendix A – AACODS Critical Appraisal of Grey Literature Checklist Applied to
Three Included Studies**

(Adapted from Tyndall, 2010)





APPENDIX A REDACTED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Appendix B - EMA Reflection evidence grid

Category	Feedback received, targets achieved and areas of development worked on	How did this shape my dissertation
Knowledge and understanding	<p>EE815 TMA02 Feedback: “You make some good connections to Bourdieu’s ideas in your discussions regarding working-class trainees.”</p> <p>E822 TMA02 Feedback: “Good to see use of previous module material too.”</p> <p>E822 Study Group Meeting, Tutorials, and Dissertation Analysis Chapter Feedback: “This is a robust critical analysis, exploring deep insights into the data collected.”</p> <p>Ethics Rejection Letter: The ethics panel raised concerns regarding my original intention to recruit OU students from working-class backgrounds</p>	<p>I have found it challenging to integrate module material (which was largely based on primary and secondary education) with my professional context in Higher Education / doctoral programme. I have been reassured by comments which have recognised my achievements and this has given me the confidence in bringing previous module material into my study findings and implications. This helped me root my study findings in wider theoretical literature.</p> <p>Prior to E822, I had never used CDA. I attended the 3 tutorials and read copious amounts of CDA material where the possibilities for using fast became overwhelming. My study group reminded me of the persistent prompts from tutorial tutors to ensure our analysis answers our question. That said, I still undertook almost double the analysis that I could include in the chapter! I was delighted to receive feedback on my analysis chapter that indicated that this work paid off. This reassurance gave me confidence to then consider the implications of these findings.</p> <p>Given my keenness to progress with narrative interviews and recruit OU students, I was disappointed to learn of the rejection from the ethics committee. My tutor and study buddies reminded me of the tight timescales of the project. This taught me academic resilience as I had to quickly shift tack and learn a new approach in CDA. I was supported by my tutor and peers to make the decision to use pre-existing data. This offered me an opportunity to undertake a narrative analysis as well as a CDA. I</p>

	<p>Personal Development Plan</p>	<p>believe this resulted in a project that was more innovative and is more aligned to the inclusion and social justice themes of the module.</p> <p>My PDP highlights my growing confidence in understanding how I can use the power within my clinical and education roles to promote and facilitate social inclusion. This shaped the research questions for this dissertation. Furthermore, I have been so inspired by the project that I am keen to join relevant EDI boards and workstreams to continue to disseminate and engage in this area. This shaped the dissertation as I was able to hold in mind whilst writing that I plan to disseminate e.g. through publication, and hence hold this audience in mind.</p>
<p>Critical analysis and evaluation</p>	<p>EE814 TMA01 Feedback: “It would be interesting to further explore the influence and implications of government funding on such courses for in regard to challenging some of the oppressor-oppressed dichotomies you have discussed in this part of the TMA.”</p> <p>Discussion with E822 Tutor & E822 TMA01 Feedback: “...it might work if you summarise the literature first all together,</p>	<p>This early feedback prompted me to think about the wider socio-political context in which DClinPsy trainees exist within and how this impacts on problems in education.</p> <p>During E822, I received feedback from my tutor to suggest that my critique of literature and practice within my profession might be too harsh. I recognise that my</p>

	<p>to show an overview of the field, then to take a strong critical sledgehammer to it!”</p>	<p>attempts to show the marker of the TMA that I could ‘do’ critical thinking had potential to shut down opportunities for my work to be valued. I have held these valuable comments in mind in writing the dissertation, and now understand the value of placing the problem in the social context (rather than an individual author, professional lead etc).</p>
<p>Links to professional practice</p>	<p>EE815 and E822 TMA Feedback: I have received several comments relating to the dated literature I have drawn on and how practice would likely have developed since. E.g. “Quite old, would the situation not have changed in the past 10 years?” (E822 TMA02)</p> <p>Study Group Meetings: I have been fortunate to have the same study group throughout my MEd, with regular and active meetings.</p>	<p>These comments were challenging to receive owing to the dearth of literature and the significant time I had spend scoping the literature. Through discussion with my E822 tutor and Clinical Psychology colleagues, I was able to consider alternative forms of evidence e.g. including the grey literature in my literature review. This has been influential in using this research to amplify literature that can be marginalised within my profession.</p> <p>Meeting with peers who work/practice in multiple different fields has advanced my understanding of the module material and theories. Peers have generously shared how these fit with their practice which has supported my to make theory practice links in my own work. This was influential in making sense of how my findings connected to theory and what the implications were in my profession and education context (i.e. the conclusions and implications).</p>

<p>Structure, communication and presentation</p>	<p>EE814 TMA02: “It is perfectly acceptable in TMAs and the EMA for this module to use the first person, so you can say here ‘I am a lecturer....’ This would bring greater clarity to your discussions in this part of the TMA.”</p> <p>E822 TMA02 Feedback: “Written coherently and with a logical structure; ideas clearly expressed with a focus on the area of study; used correct referencing, as specified in the Referencing section of this guide.”</p> <p>Dissertation Analysis Chapter Feedback: “Is the data from the interviews in danger of being overshadowed by the analysis on the website and of the article?” and Discussion with tutor regarding the Analysis Chapter Feedback</p>	<p>I have struggled throughout the MEd to write in first person as this is not common practice in my profession or previous studies. I have an engrained sense of this being fluffy and imprecise. It have been valuable to receive and examples of how I can bring myself to the work in clearer and more precise ways. As I hope to publish my research in an academic psychology journal, I have intentionally used a third person position in much of my dissertation. Though, I have made an assertive effort in the introduction and postscript to bring myself to the work.</p> <p>As mentioned above, I struggled to shift my academic style to that expected on the MEd. I worked to address the feedback and recognised that I was attempting a complex project which was often difficult to communicate clearly in the tight word counts of the TMAs. I was reassured to receive feedback on my final TMA that I had written coherently. This gave me the confidence to hold on to a little bit of my style (coherent with my profession) whilst also stepping into the writing style expected on the MEd to ensure my perspectives were also apparent.</p> <p>Discussions with my tutor highlighted that my analysis was ambitious for an MEd project and this posed challenged to the write up in the limited word count. It was valuable to receive feedback relating to the narrative analysis of the interview data potentially overshadowing the CDA. We discussed ways to integrate this for a coherent analysis. From this discussion, I</p>

	<p>Dissertation Literature Review Chapter Feedback: “Is it worth considering doing your review so that it covers the three theses and the ‘grey’ literature together? Was there anything in the BPS reports etc that could be helpfully added here? At the moment these seem to be segregated – suggesting you don’t think as highly of the three theses, this then diminishes their significance for the reader, yet they are actually all robust and useful sources.” And Discussion with tutor and study buddy group.</p>	<p>decided to use the narrative analysis themes as a foundation to consider through the CDA why and how the challenging experiences were able to happen in the social context of the profession. This ‘penny drop’ moment increased my own clarity on how the data fit together and cemented the reason for choosing the three pieces of data.</p> <p>This feedback was invaluable to receive an external perspective from my tutor as to how my write up of grey literature might be perceived by the reader. I recognised through discussion with my tutor and study group that my profession privileges academic peer-reviewed literature, which is not necessarily the case in the education context. To integrate these perspectives, I found a grey literature appraisal tool and used this to highlight the rigor of theses. This developed my confidence in the findings of my literature review and the implications of these that impact of the development of my study.</p>
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Appendix C

E822 Ethical Appraisal Form

E822 Ethical Appraisal Form

Masters: Education, Childhood and Youth

NB: it should be noted that The Open University is unable to offer liability insurance to cover any negative consequences students might encounter when undertaking ‘in-person’ data collection. It is therefore very important that you follow appropriate research protocols which should include seeking Gatekeeper permissions to undertake any data collection within your setting and adhering to ethical principles for the safety of yourself and your participants.

Because ethical appraisal should precede data collection, a completed version of this form should be included with TMA02 for those developing a Small-Scale Investigation (SSI) and as part of the EMA submission for those completing an Extended Literature Review and Research Proposal (EP) form of the Dissertation.

Fill in section 1 of this document with your personal details and brief information about your research.

For section 2, please assess your research using the following questions and click yes or no as appropriate. If there is any possibility of significant risk please tick yes. Even if your list contains all “no” you should still return your completed checklist so your tutor/supervisor can assess the proposed research.

Section 1: Project details

a.	Student name	
b.	PI	
c.	Project title	Being working class within Clinical Psychology: A Critical Discourse Analysis
d.	Supervisor/tutor	
e.	Qualification	Masters in Education X

		Masters in Childhood and Youth
f.	MA pathway (where applicable)	Inclusion and social justice
g.	Intended start date for fieldwork	N/A – using pre-existing / publicly available data
h.	Intended end date for fieldwork	N/A – using pre-existing / publicly available data
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in <i>If you are resident in the UK and will be conducting your research abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk for advice on travel.</i>	N/A

Section 2: Ethics Assessment		Yes	No
1	Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a ‘gatekeeper’ (e.g. Local Authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)?		X
2	Have you checked whether the organisation requires you to undertake a ‘police check’ or appropriate level of ‘disclosure’ before carrying out your research? ¹	X N/A	
3	Have you indicated how informed consent will be obtained from your participants (including children less than 16 years old, school pupils and immediate family members)? Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. ²		X N/A

¹ You must agree to comply with any ethical codes of practice or legal requirements that maybe in place within the organisation or country (e.g. educational institution, social care setting or other workplace) in which your research will take place. If required an appropriate level of disclosure (‘police check’) can be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland, AccessNI (Northern Ireland), Criminal Records Office (Republic of Ireland), etc.

² This should normally involve the use of an information sheet about the research and what participation will involve, and a signed consent form. You must allow sufficient time for potential participants to consider their decision between the giving of the information sheet and the gaining of consent. No research should be conducted without the opt-in informed consent of participants or their caregivers. In the case of children (individuals under 16 years of age) no research should be conducted without a specified means of gaining their informed consent (or, in the case of young children, their assent) and the consent of their parents, caregivers, or guardians. This is particularly important if your project involves participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children under 16 years, people with learning disabilities, or emotional problems, people with difficulty in understanding or communication, people with identified health problems). There is additional guidance on informed consent on the Masters: Education and Childhood and Youth website under Project Resources.

4	Will your proposed research design mean that it will be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)? If so, have you specified appropriate debriefing procedures? ³		X N/A
5	Does your proposed design involve repetitive observation of participants, (i.e. more than twice over a period of more than 2-3 weeks)? Is this necessary? If it is, have you made appropriate provision for participants to renew consent or withdraw from the study half-way through? ⁴		X N/A
6	Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data? If so, have you indicated how you will protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality and how you will store the data?		X N/A
7	Does your proposal indicate how you will give your participants the opportunity to access the outcomes of your research (including audio/visual materials) after they have provided data?		X N/A
8	Have you built in time for a pilot study to make sure that any task materials you propose to use are age appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?		X N/A
9	Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)? What safeguards have you put in place to protect participants' confidentiality?		X N/A
10	Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project? Do you need to carry out a 'risk analysis' and/or discuss this with teachers, parents and other adults involved in the research?		X N/A
11	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X N/A
12	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data?		X N/A

If you answered 'yes' to questions **12**, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-us/committees-and-services/res-and-recs/>).

³ Where an essential element of the research design would be compromised by full disclosure to participants, the withholding of information should be specified in the project proposal and explicit procedures stated to obviate any potential harm arising from such withholding. Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it has been agreed with a named responsible person in the organisation and it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy.

⁴ Where participants are involved in longer-term data collection, the use of procedures for the renewal of consent at appropriate times should be considered.