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Exploring identity and aspiration in the narratives of children with dyslexia through critical discourse analysis

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Abstract:

This investigation uses a range of critical and psychoanalytical theory to deconstruct the narratives of children with dyslexia in order to elucidate the social implications of disablement in secondary education. It examines the ways in which the participants talk about themselves, their relationships with teachers and other students and their experiences of the classroom, and the ways in which these discourses relate to the marginalised position of disabled students in the classroom. These themes are explored through semi structured interview that attempts to give primacy to the accounts of the children interviewed. The findings suggest that disablement should be considered a part of broader, co-dependant oppressions that inform the participants understanding of their individual impairment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The history of mainstream disability inclusion in education is characterised by a view that assimilation and ‘normalcy’ are the highest possible goals. (Knight, 2015) Critical academics in the fields of disability studies and pedagogy seek to challenge this assumption through focusing on the manner in which disability is socially conditioned; the process of disablement is an inherently political one. (Smith, 2009) For children with disabilities, however, impairment is an unavoidable fact of life; a barrier to be overcome to achieve either assimilation or conscientisation.

Cultural perceptions of disability should be noted to explore the manner in which disabilities are perceived in the popular imagination. Media representation of disability focuses primarily on romanticised heroism or tragedy. (Riley, 2005) The heroism of the disabled subject centres mostly around the efforts undertaken to attain two valorised characteristics: assimilation into heteronormative social structures and economic productivity. The tragedies presented in the media centre around these opportunities being snatched from the subject, either through professional intervention, as in *I Am Sam*, (I Am Sam, 2001) or through a lack of personal control, as in *Of Mice and Men*. (Steinbeck, 2001) These discourses are parodied in Devo’s single ‘*Mongoloid*’ (Casale, 1977) in which the subject of the song is celebrated for their assimilation into society, becoming ‘happier than you or me.’ The protagonist’s ability to assimilate is, however, predicated on his ability to contribute to the economy and conform to heteronormative gender expectations:

*“And he wore a hat
And he had a job
And he brought home the bacon
So that no one knew.”*

The parody of mid-century Americana presented in these lyrics highlights the problem of assimilation: when boiled down to their constituent parts, the signs and signifiers of success under capitalism appear completely arbitrary and provide little moral, emotional or intellectual sustenance.

Literacy represents two strands: reading the word and the decoding of text, and critical literacy concerning the decoding hegemonic semiotic structures. Freirean

conceptions of conscientisation and liberatory pedagogy help illuminate the experiences of marginalised children as education can act as a liberatory force. (Freire, 2017) Critical consciousness, a literacy that allows the subject to read the world and understand the ideologies that underpin their oppression, (Freire, 2017) is central to the liberation of those with disabilities and all marginalised communities. By contrast, assimilation may or may not be possible, may or may not be desirable, and is certainly not guaranteed to be meaningful.

This study took place in a large secondary comprehensive school with a Sixth Form in an affluent area in the South East of England, hereafter known by the pseudonym 'The Potter School.' During my study I focused on students in year 10, the beginning of a new National Curriculum Key Stage, in order to focus on how the attitudes of children are shaped and transition with their progression through the school system. While the school does not have alternative provision the proportion of children with SEND diagnoses is slightly higher than average mainstream secondary schools. This may be consistent with the increased likelihood of children and adults being diagnosed with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) if they are middle class both due to monetary barriers to diagnosis and the view of learning difficulties as aberrant in middle class individuals but expected of the working class. (Elliot & Griogorenko, 2014)

In critical pedagogy and sociology, schooling functions primarily to reproduce social relations in future generations both through the primacy of the culture and values of the hegemonic class, as in Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), or through beginning the process of institutionalisation that fosters a dependence on neoliberal social structures. (Illich, 2002) The current English milieu in secondary education indicates that the marginalisation of disabled people continues to be reproduced through GCSE examination results, in which students with SEND make less progress than expected compared to their peers without additional needs. (Department for Education, 2023) In a context in which the number of children with SEND diagnoses is rising, particularly among children in receipt of free school meals and those from racially oppressed minorities, this inequity poses a problem for addressing broader inequalities in education. (Department for Education, June 2023)

By undergoing the process of interrogating discourses around ambition and attainment in the accounts of children with SEND, I intend to illuminate: the manner in which their interactions with teachers and students their experiences of education; their conception of themselves and the manner in which they seek to present themselves in the classroom, and the ways in which children with SEND can be encouraged and motivated in education by identifying demotivating factors.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

2.1: Introduction

A review of the literature was undertaken to elucidate the pre-existing body of work relating to the research question, “what are the experiences of students with SEND needs in mainstream English schools?” This review enabled the establish key themes in extant literature and provided a framework for analysis of the experiences of children with disabilities.

In order to explore the body of work relating to my research questions, literature searches were undertaken using the Open University Library alongside reference to my personal library. Initially, these searches focused on secondary education in the English school system and began to broaden to global studies, drawing specifically on Nordic and American practice, focusing on all stages of education. The initial search terms used were: ‘inclusion’, ‘dyslexia’, ‘marginalisation’, ‘secondary education’ and ‘ambition’, alongside terms relating to both Bourdieuan and Freirean frameworks to explore ideas of social reproduction and liberation: ‘symbolic violence’, ‘field’, ‘capital’, ‘class’, ‘socio-economic status’, ‘conscientisation’ and ‘hidden curriculum,’ each combined with the search terms associated with one or more of the initial search terms.

This review seeks to elucidate the relationships between identity, disability and educational achievement while examining the ways in which critical pedagogy, disability studies and neo-Marxism provide a critical framework to understand the manner in which children with disabilities experience education.

2.2: Models of Disability and SEND in Schools

Essentialist, medical models of disability that dominate institutional understandings of learning difficulties act to render those with disabilities as powerless through the reduction of their experience to an ‘abnormality’ or ‘deficiency’ caused by a medical or cognitive impairment. (Smith, 2009) Disablement is a political and social process imposed on individuals by traditional social relations, whereas physical or cognitive impairments are the difficulties the individual faces. (Shakespeare, 2006) Vehmas and Mäkelä (2009) highlight that solely social models of disability are ‘unhelpful’ and ‘confusing’ as they do not account for the actual difficulties that physical and cognitive impairments cause. This mirrors Shakespeare’s (2014) statement that a

wholly constructivist understanding of disablement fails to account for the effects of disability. In liberatory pedagogy it is necessary to consider medical and social models of disability: the effects of marginalisation as well as cognitive barriers both affect literacy. Therefore, the mitigation of the oppression of disabled students hinges on confronting social and personal barriers to literacy.

Through the accounts of disabled researchers in the field of disability studies, discourses have arisen supporting the need for self-advocacy of disabled people in order to share their heterodox insights into diversity and inclusion. (Smith, 2009) This is consistent with post-modern discourses across sociology and critical theory, in which there is an emphasis placed on authentic marginalised voices rather than gatekeeping by the privileged researcher. (Alcoff, 1994) Habermas's (1992) theory of communicative action positions reason as being understood not empirically but through discourse, necessitating diverse voices. The subjective understanding of reason posed by this theory further problematises the silencing of children with disabilities in schools as their ability to deconstruct their social position and self-actualise is limited by their voicelessness. (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010)

Within schools, these competing models of disability translate into a culture of exclusion and marginalisation. Underpinning this is the pathologisation of the disabled child's relationships from the point of diagnosis, seen in testing undertaken by parents that seek to empirically evaluate gendered characteristics such as the 'warmth' of their mother. (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010, p. 277) Two concepts from 20th Century continental philosophy act to elucidate the nature of children with disabilities interactions with institutions:

The Foucauldian conception of the medical gaze, which acts to dehumanise the patient by focusing only on the disease from which they are suffering and not the individual's individual body and agency. (Foucault, 1989)

Sontag's (2002) exploration of victim blaming in discourses surrounding Cancer (and later AIDs) and those who suffer from the disease – in which the diseases are seen as symptomatic of personal or social failings.

The lens established by these critical perspectives edifies the links between professional discourse and the oppression of disabled children – through the perception of disability through pseudo-empirical social signifiers, the child is

stripped of their agency and individuality. Children with disabilities are aware of their oppression, and are in danger of internalising the dehumanisation of these discourses. (Apsis, 2013, pp. 127-128)

The marginalisation of children with disabilities is not intentional, but is caused by the diminished agency of the child in formal institutions. Where previously the term 'Special Educational Needs' has been seen in schools as a euphemism for incapable and unwilling, the assumption among professionals now is that the decisions made on behalf of disabled children has their best interests at heart. (Slee, 2010, pp. 567-568) These factors also problematise the position of the researcher, as the researcher's position as an Other may inadvertently replicate the silencing of children with disabilities. (Barton, 2005, p. 325) The disabled child is made invisible, in some cases dehumanised, by the interventions of well meaning adults; the voices of disabled children are, therefore, imperative to the research that should seek to serve them in improving the conditions of their education. (Oliver, 1999, p. 185)

This study will consider the social conditions of disablement rather than the effects of individual literacy difficulties. This is not to deny the effects of cognitive impairment on the individual, but rather to consider the factors that exacerbate or mitigate individual difficulty.

2.3: Intersectionality

Since its initial inception three decades ago in the work of black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality has altered the lens through which all oppressions are analysed. (Cooper, 2016) Intersectionality is the idea that systems of power interact with one another to support one another and, by extension, those oppressed by more than one power structure are uniquely dominated and marginalised. (Cooper, 2016, p. 385) Experiences of disability are culturally relative: they are not fixed to impairment, but rather social attitudes and mechanisms of domination. (Barton & Armstrong, 2008, p. xiii) The social relations found classrooms represent a microcosm of the oppressions and privileges of wider society; hierarchies of gender, class and impairment permeate all interactions between children and adults, whether conscious or not. The English education system does little to address these hierarchies, whether they are enforced by the discourses of teachers surrounding parental involvement, (Reay, 1998) the ways teachers refer to

the children in their care, (Reay, 2001) or the manner in which adults perceive the abilities and ambitions of marginalised children. (Reay, 2017) Consequently, the experience of children with disabilities must be understood through the lens of wider power dynamics that effect social structures – not all children experience disability in the same manner.

The construction of gender expectations and norms presents a double bind for the girls with barriers to engagement: they do not follow the rules of the school or the rules of their gender – as girls are expected to be resilient, able and diligent, those who are unable to meet these expectations are further marginalised in the classroom. (Lloyd, 2005, p. 4) Typically, girls tend to receive less teacher time than boys as a consequence of the male dominated discourses in the classroom, an inequity that particularly disadvantages girls with SEND and can cause negative-attention seeking behaviours. (Clarke, et al., 2011; Lloyd, 2005) Conversely, for boys, monopolisation of teacher time is seen much more as a symptom of conforming to gender expectations as ‘boys will be boys’ discourses allow for low level disruption beyond that of girls. (Kenway & FitzClarence, 1997) Clarke, et al. (2011) through their interviews with girls at a Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist school, highlight the role of the voice in the classroom – with the children they interviewed repeatedly highlighting that their initial ‘problem’ behaviours were resultant of feeling unheard in class and including this as part of a process that lead to violence. These girls desire to be heard, and feel that they are not heard through conventional means, leading to them seeking attention through alternative means: ‘If they don’t listen, I shout, and when I shout, they listen.’ While the girls in this special school seek to carve their own space in discourse and assert their voice, studies have highlighted that marginalised girls are likely to seek to fit into pre-existing discourses, whether they seek the approval of teachers or their peers. (Fisher, 2017; Reay, 2001) The silencing of girls with disabilities leaves them vulnerable to an unstable identity that undermines their development of critical, emotional and functional literacy.

Socioeconomic background has significant impact upon the outcomes of individuals with learning difficulties in heavily class-stratified societies compared to those in which class distinctions are lessened by social democratic reforms. (Finnvold, 2021, pp. 18-19) Another determining factor in deciding the expectations is inclusion in

mainstream classrooms; Finnfold concludes that the most significant determining factor of these expectations is their segregation or integration from the mainstream classroom – contributing significantly more than functional ability in the subject. (Finnfold, 2021, pp. 56-58) As this study is concerned with students without cognitive impairment, it provides a useful insight into the effects of marginalisation on expectations as, rather than academic ability, it is the fact of their marginalisation that lowers expectation. Dyslexia itself is problematised by class inequalities in Britain: the difficulty of securing a diagnosis of dyslexia through non private means has led to much lower diagnosis rates among children from low income households. The inequality between dyslexia diagnoses is also influenced by the expectation that middle class children will be more literate than their working class counterparts, and consequently the symptoms of dyslexia are considered aberrant by teachers. (Elliot & Griogorenko, 2014) Individual impairment is inextricably linked to the social perceptions and expectations informed by class and gender inequalities.

2.4: Social Landscapes and Identity Construction

A Lacanian framework can be used to understand the relationships between disabled individuals and society Other and *other*, with the Other constituting an unassailable, unrelatable radical alterity that cannot be assimilated or understood and the *other* representing an reflection of the ego in another person that can easily be understood. (Evans, 1996, pp. 135-136) The relational implications of this between the marginalised subjects and hegemonic forces is that the locus of speech, even directed at the *other*, in this case another person is directed at the unassailable Other and the power that it represents. (Lacan, 2006, p. 358) This relationship is elegantly summarised by Titchkovsky: “disabled persons are deciphered, not understood;” the disabled subject is Othered by the social forces of disablement and alienated from their identity and social agency. (Titchkovsky, 2003, p. 162)

The psychoanalytical conception of marginalisation in education is mirrored in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which the oppressed are described as existing in a duality: embodying the oppressor’s consciousness that they have internalised while also simply existing as themselves; within these contradictions, the subject is divided between acting against and assimilating into the structures of the oppressor. (Freire, 2017, p. 48) It is through this dialectical relationship, however, that the marginalised student is imbued with a revolutionary potential – that in the application of the

subject's agency with the guidance of an instructor akin to Gramsci's *organic intellectual* (1998, pp. 3-5) the oppressed subject may reject the 'banked', received wisdom of the hegemon and achieve conscientisation. (Giroux, 1988) For Bourdieu and Passeron, however, the instructor acts as a figure of continued oppression, that through its irreconcilable Otherness towards the child simply acts to reproduce extant class relations through the academe, going as far to call their radical contemporaries approaches – presumably Freire – an arbitrary project that will only serve to assimilate into extant classroom power structures and assume pedagogic authority. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp. 17-18) For Bourdieu and Passeron, schooling is in and of itself a form of symbolic violence – the exercise of the power differential between the dominant class over the dominated class through the imposition of alien norms and ideals. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) This conception of education is, one may argue, rooted in Bourdieu's own traumatic relationship to education – an education in which, though extremely successful, Bourdieu was alienated by the habitus of a class that felt completely alien to him. (Burawoy, 2019, p. 96) Bourdieu's criticism lies, mostly, with the banking model of education: domination through the attempted imposition of social norms hinges on banking, rather than education of itself. (Burawoy, 2019)

Butler's (1999, p. xv) conception of performativity as a ritual, repetitive series of behaviours to assimilate into social schema acts to inform the behaviours of children in the classroom. For children, the social landscape of the classroom takes precedence over the content delivered in the classroom, these social interactions affect both the social development and learning and attainment of the child. (Arnot & Reay, 2007) The choices available to children, with and without SEND, are limited by a restricted field of linguistic possibility. (Butler, 1997, p. 129). Studies indicate that students who feel they identify with the institution of the school show significantly more motivation in school to become involved in leadership roles, which in turn improve their experience of school. (Lizzio, et al., 2011) Those with SpLD are an outgroup in mainstream schools – the curriculum was designed for the 'normal' children and accommodations are made primarily to encourage assimilation. (Slee, 2010) Children with SEND (or that are marginalised in other ways) that feel they do not conform to social expectations, rather than eschewing them, pursue discourses that relate closely to the expectations they feel they can live up to. Students with

SEND are seen in aforementioned studies (Slee, 2010; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010) to experience a crisis of identity as a result of their diminished agency, leaving them vulnerable to pursuing behaviours that pull them further away from their intended goal of assimilation. (Berlant, 2011)

These constrained social expectations reflected in Willis's (1977) ethnographic investigation into the 'lads' of disadvantaged West Midlands schools who strictly policed gender norms among boys in order to create an anti-school counterculture. Later investigations into the 'lad' phenomenon have highlighted the 'lad' persona as a defence mechanism and cover for a fear of academic failure. (Jackson, 2003) Ideas around 'normality' and 'abnormality' are underpinned by constant testing, assessment and stratification in English schools. Setting is observed as early as Early Years and Key Stage 1 provision, having significant impacts on the confidence of the children that are cast as 'monkeys,' 'marmots' or 'tortoises' from a very young age. (Reay, 2017, p. 79) The impact of attainment on identity formation carries on into KS2, with Reay (2017, p. 82) citing conversations with children in which they express fear that substandard SATs results will result in them being 'a nothing.' For children with SEND, the desire to avoid marginalisation drives a desire to cement identities in something other than attainment, be this: 'helpfulness' (Fisher, 2017), 'laddishness' (Jackson, 2003) or adopting the cultural signifiers of the dominant group. (Pinkett & Roberts, 2019, pp. 48-51)

The desires formulated through ego construction in childhood experiences coupled with the field and habitus implicit in class identification and stratification are closely linked to educational outcomes. The symbolic violence of the relationships between disabled children and the institution of school and the social milieu of the classroom significantly impacts their identification and ambitions, which in turn can exacerbate or mitigate their experience of school.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1: Background

My small-scale investigation was influenced by Diane Reay's longitudinal ethnographic studies of class and gender on the educational experiences of working-class children and their parents. (Reay, 2017) The focus on socio-economic circumstance in determining the nature of interactions with professional institutions is rooted, in part, in Latin American critical pedagogy in which professional institutions are positioned as an institute of oppression (Freire, 2017) going as far as calling for their complete disestablishment to prevent the violent reproduction of social relations. (Illich, 2002) Reay's research in the sociology of education employs a Bordieuan framework to explore the nature of social reproduction in the classroom. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 2010)

Extensive work has been done on the sociology of disability focusing on the political nature of disablement and the pathologisation of impairment (Shakespeare, 2014; Vehmas, et al., 2009) The British Journal of the Sociology of Education, in which Reay was a contributor, included frequent articles detailing the sociological implications of disablement on children in education. (Barton & Armstrong, 2008; Arnot, et al., 2010)

The scale of the study prevented a longitudinal study in which the experiences of children with disabilities could be recounted as and when they happened. The time scale also limited geographical scale in the study, as the accounts of the children involved, by virtue of attending the same school and living in the same area share some elements of their habitus and educational experiences. The approach taken in the study was designed to create a 'thick description' of the educational narratives of the participants by seeking an understanding of the discourses that shape the experiences and ambitions of the participants to increase transferability with other disabled children. (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2019) The participants took part in semi-structured interviews in which they were asked to speak about a small range of topics pertaining to their experiences of education. This approach was chosen in order allow for the participants to express in their own words the nature of their experiences of school while producing a range of data exploring the nature of several aspects of school life. (Cohen, et al., 2007)

My research, including the review of the literature, centred around three research questions:

What discourses are present in the dialogue of students with SpLD in their accounts of their experiences of education, and how might this inform the positionality of these students?

How and why does self-perception affect the experiences and aspirations of children with SpLD in education?

In what ways are the experiences of children with SpLD influenced by separate oppressions and privileges based on class, gender and race?

3.2: Positionality

Positionally, Reay inhabits several ambiguous spaces in her research as a working-class female teacher investigating the experiences of working class children and mothers. (Reay, 2017) Through adopting an approach that focuses on hearing and understanding the perceptions and narratives of her participants, she mediates her own experience and perspective with theirs while centring the discourses of the participant.

In my study, I am also positioned as an insider and outsider: I am a teacher at the school attended by each of my participants (though I do not teach any of them), as well as having a specific learning difficulty that has affected my experience of education. My positionality was the impetus for my choice of dissertation topic due to the difficulty I experienced in school and the demotivation I felt throughout my time in primary and secondary school. My interest in academia was precipitated by informal skills exchange that took place during the reaction to the election of the Coalition government in 2010 and the subsequent implementation of austerity on social media which led to my engagement with critical literature. (Illich, 2002) Though I had identified with radical politics prior to this, the academicization of my understanding of class relations improved my engagement with literacy and changed my ambitions. Consequently, I was interested in deciphering the nature of engagement in school for children with disabilities and the manner in which the relationships of the participants with school influence their engagement.

Due to my position, it was imperative to avoid editorialising based on my own outdated experiences of education. (Costley, et al., 2010) In order to maintain the authenticity of the children's voices, I ensured that my transcription was as close to the spoken grammar of the initial response as possible. (Alcoff, 1994) While conducting the interview, I tried to keep my prompts minimal as possible, waiting for significant pauses or indication from the participant that they were finished before responding.

3.3: Semi-Structured Interview

As a result of this positionality and time limitations, the use of narrative inquiry based on semi-structured interviews was chosen to provide an insight into the experiences of disabled children in education. The accounts given by the participants enable researchers to explore the commonalities between personal experiences and the manner in which structural inequalities impact upon the child's perception of them – helping illuminate the impacts of societal and interpersonal contexts on the experience of disablement. (Soler, 2012) The semi structured approach allows for clear links to be made between the discourses of individual students while maintaining the centrality of the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants, to amplify their voice in the educational environment in which they are voiceless. (hooks, 1989; Alcoff, 1994)

Semi-structured interview was chosen as the primary model of data collection to allow for the participants to give free and broad answers to questions without the imposition of external narratives, while also providing sufficient data to allow for a focused, detailed range of data exploring their experiences of the classroom and self-perception. (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 353) Children differ from adults in their cognitive capacity for recollection and their attention spans (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 374; Messiou, 2006), as a consequence of this I chose to provide a loose structure to the interview so as to limit the pressure put on children by me due to the position of authority I hold as a teacher in their school. (Costley, et al., 2010) While I had considered focus groups as a means of 'ice breaking' and allowing participants to contribute as much or as little as they wished, I felt that the sensitivity of the information being shared by the children as well as the social element of the classroom being a key consideration of the discussions precluded this approach. (Cohen, et al., 2007, pp. 376-377) During the process of interviewing, while it was

necessary at some points, I tried to remain indirect in my approach though several instances of probing were necessary. When probing earlier statements I aimed to do this in follow up interviews so as to allow the children to provide an uninterrupted narrative and so that I could formulate questions in a manner that did not prejudice their responses, i.e. asking 'How do you think teachers view you?' at the beginning of a second interview rather than bringing up the question immediately after the child had spoken about a tense situation they had experienced. (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 362) By preserving the agency of children in interviewing them, I aimed to preserve the narratives experienced in school as they were spoken by children.

In analysing the data collected during the study, I employed a hermeneutic analysis influenced by critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to deconstruct the internalised power structures and ideologies implicit in the discourses of the participants. CDA is a linguistic approach that uses the frameworks of critical theory to deconstruct the signs and signifiers language and the information that is illuminated through this process. (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, pp. 2-3) Language is as much a means of domination as it is a means of liberation; a medium through which to internalise oppression as to reason an identity to challenge hegemonic discourses. (Habermas, 1992, p. 165) Mediated discourse analysis, an offshoot of CDA, is also employed to explore the nature of agency, action, and choice in deconstructing the discourses of the participants in the study. (Scollon, 2001) Through this approach, the agency of the child is maintained as well as providing a means to explore the ideological and dominating forces that may be implicit in their actions. (Hui, et al., 2017)

Initially, I had intended to undergo a set of narrative interviews due to the aforementioned concerns around agency and the authenticity of voice. During my first interview, I had created a set of questions in order to conduct a semi-structured interview after the initial question: 'Tell me about your experience of education so far?' During this first interview, it became clear that a model in which prompts were used to extrapolate more information relating to the initial question would likely lead to me guiding the interview more than using a loose structure in which the child was able to respond to a range of key points discretely. As a result, I used the follow up questions to conduct the rest of the interviews. This allowed a reflexive response

that, in turn, acted to preserve the agency of the children and allowed them to construct a narrative they thought reflected their own experiences.

3.4: Participants

Data was collected from three participants who were enrolled in The Potter School, a large mixed comprehensive in the South East of England. Information packs were given to five students with additional needs, of which three responded with completed consent forms. Each of the participants are between the ages of 14 and 15 and are diagnosed with dyslexia, with one participant also diagnosed with ADHD and another with a Speech, Language and Communication need. All three participants are British and speak English as their first language. One participant is Mixed Race (White British and Black Caribbean) and two are White British. Two of the participants are on the Pupil Premium register, indicating that they have been in receipt of Free School Meals within the past 6 years. So that their experiences can be understood in the context of their impairment and social circumstances, I will detail each candidate's demographic information that led to their choice for the study:

Isabelle: Isabelle is a 15 year old girl diagnosed with multiple learning difficulties. She is Dyslexic and is listed as having a non-specific learning difficulty that affects her cognition and learning. She was diagnosed with both of these in Primary School. In May 2023, she was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD.) Isabelle is in receipt of the Pupil Premium grant (PP) because she has been in receipt of free school meals in the past 6 years. Isabelle has 86% attendance.

Natalie: Natalie is a 15 year old girl diagnosed with Dyslexia and a non-specific learning difficulty relating to her working memory and communication. She was diagnosed with both learning difficulties in Primary School. Natalie is also in receipt of the PP grant because she has been in receipt of free school meals in the past 6 years. Natalie has 97% attendance.

Robert: Robert is a 15 year old boy diagnosed with Dyslexia. He was diagnosed with Dyslexia in primary school. Robert is not in receipt of the PP grant. Robert has 96% attendance.

Potential participants were identified through the school's information management system and were then discussed with the SENDCo, who identified those in the shortlist they thought may be harmed by their inclusion in the study and those for

whom they thought the opportunity to express their ideas in an interview might be helpful. This identified five students, of which three completed consent forms. I intentionally did not identify participants based on self-identification of whether they were, or were not, disabled, but instead focused on discrete diagnosis, so as to ascertain the nature of identity construction in those who do, and may not, self-identify.

3.5: Ethical Considerations

As a teacher interviewing students within my own setting, it was imperative to consider the impact of extant power relations and how they may impact on the participants' narratives and the manner in which they shared them.

As a result, I created a shortlist of children in year 10 listed as having SEND needs that I had never taught before then taking out any students that I had contact with during duties or cover lessons. I also, after obtaining initial consent from students and from gatekeepers in the institution (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2018, Article 8), stated after each interview that the participants were able to withdraw their consent up to the 31st August. (BERA, 2018, Article 31) Within information sheets and in individual conversations with the participants in the study, I explained the nature of the study and its intended outcomes, as well as explaining my positionality and interest in the topic as someone with SEND. (BERA, 2018, Article 9) As I was interviewing children under the age of 18, I gained assent from the child and parental consent for their taking place in the investigation.

The privacy and confidentiality was vital to maintaining confidence in the study and, consequently, all data from participants was anonymised from the point of transcription. (BERA, 2018, Article 40) As the study was related to experiences of disability, a protected characteristic, anonymity was particularly important. (Equality Act, 2010, c2) Participants were given the opportunity to choose their pseudonym in order to personalise the research and provide empower those involved, though only one student wished to choose their own pseudonym and others were chosen at random by me before the names were offered to the participant during the second interview to veto. (Allen & Wiles, 2016) All members of staff mentioned in the participants' narratives have been anonymised. When removing students from

lessons, I was careful to keep knowledge of the scope of my investigation limited to the gatekeepers so as to not jeopardise confidentiality.

Considering research design and the context of the participants, it was vital to avoid an extractive model of research in order to minimise harm to the participants. (BERA, 2018, Article 34) To avoid 'paracritical research' (Oliver, 1999), I have arranged for dissemination of some of the findings of my study within my context in order to help amplify the voices of disabled children in the school. In doing this, it is imperative to limit the information provided to ensure that anonymity is retained in a context in which those reading the information know the children well enough to deduce where the quotations may have come from. As such, the findings will be presented without direct quotations, despite the anonymity of the participants and the teachers they mention.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1: Introduction

Three central themes arose in the data provided by the children that participated in the study:

The manner in which the participants perceive themselves, and the ways in which they believe they are perceived will form the first strain of my analysis. To explore the discourses around **Identity and Apperception** I will use a post-modernist framework drawing on psychoanalytical approaches to identity construction alongside neo-Marxist reading to explore the ways in which power dynamics affect the formation of identity.

The day-to-day **Experiences of the Classroom** described in interview show ways in which these identities are applied and the motivating and demotivating factors described in the classroom. Through the deconstruction of the power dynamics implicit in these interactions I intend to edify some of the ways in which children are marginalised in the classroom, and the interactions that support classroom inclusion.

Self-Advocacy and advocacy for others with disability will form the third strand of my investigation. In conversation with the participants, several discourses arose around feeling a duty to serve other disabled people once they had finished secondary or tertiary education. Points were also made about the humanity and voicelessness of those with disabilities. Self-advocacy is crucial to the liberation of disabled people, as in challenging oppressions they both change attitudes and address the internalisation of their oppression.

The data will be presented in the form of a continuous critical discourse analysis (CDA) drawing on qualitative data taken from all three participants. This approach will enable the accounts of the three participants to be considered within the same space and draw on commonalities and contrasts that highlight the intersectional nature of experiencing disability.

4.2: Identity and Apperception.

In Lacanian Psychoanalysis, the conception of the self developed in the mirror stage is central to the formation of the ego and lays the groundwork for the participation in the symbolic order of communication: the social and cultural framework of society

that shapes through which identity and desire must be understood and mitigated. (Lacan, 2006, p. 75) Identity is, therefore, inextricably linked to an opposition against the Other, the unassailable symbolic authority that permeates interactions with people and institutions.

Identity is presented to the outside world through discourse and action, but also reasoned and understood through spoken discourses. (Habermas, 1992) In discussing their experiences of school, the participants elucidated the ways in which they identify themselves and how this impacts on their experience of disablement.

During interviews, each child was prompted to explain how they think teachers view them. Isabelle, who has exhibited challenging behaviours in the past, responded initially negatively before hedging her initial answer:

“They see me as annoying. Effort. But some of them might see me in a good way, that I sometimes try my best and stuff”

Isabelle

Robert assumed that teachers view him similarly negatively, before then acknowledging the difficulties he can face in the classroom:

“Probably, like – annoying. Like, quite confident. Erm, they know I struggle.”

Robert

Both students leading with the idea that they may be seen as ‘annoying’ by teachers suggests a level of alienation from teachers and school for the two students.

Isabelle’s use of the colloquial term ‘effort’ acts to suggest that, she assumes that teachers view her presence in the classroom as difficult and in some way problematic when teaching other students. Both children indicate that they have internalised the discourses that oppress them, by referring to themselves as a burden on teachers rather than an active participant in the class – reflecting Slee’s (2010) commentary on young disabled children. It is, however, questionable how much these identities are linked to disability, while Robert acknowledges that he ‘struggles’ and Isabelle’s statement that she is ‘effort’ suggest that there is an element of their additional need causing these labels, it may simply be a manifestation of the power imbalance inherent in banking models of education. (Freire, 2017)

Natalie's self-perception differed significantly from the other participants, as she consistently referred to wishing to be seen as 'independent' and living up to expectations placed on the majority of children:

"I want them to see me as anyone else. I don't want them to give me special treatment: I do want them to help me but if anyone else wants special treatment I don't want them to just be left to sit there. I want them to treat us all equally"

Natalie

In contrast to the other participants, Natalie is explicit that her identity is, in some way, grounded by her disability. She does, however, reject the expectations that accompany her disablement; her primary wish is not to be perceived as in anyway different from anyone else. The importance placed on assimilation for those with disabilities may inform this thinking, as the 'good' disabled subject is one that overcomes their disability without displaying frustration. (Riley, 2005) Natalie's desire for teachers to view her in this manner should, then, be viewed through an ideological lens, exploring the manner in which her identity construction hinge on her position at the intersection of differing oppressions. On a less pessimistic note, Natalie has experienced success in school and feels confident in the support she finds in teachers and those around her – consistent with the emphasis placed on the social experience of the classroom on attitudes to school (Reay, 2001; Arnot & Reay, 2007)

Within her narrative, Natalie referred repeatedly to discourses around what is and isn't 'normal,' and the manner in which she may or may not be perceived as a 'normal' student.

"On the outside I don't seem any different to anybody else, but like, they wouldn't know that I have dyslexia because I'm normal. But, then after they get to know someone with dyslexia they will realise the issues we face.

[Someone who is 'normal'] like, they wouldn't struggle as much – I get that they will struggle in life but if you have dyslexia you'll struggle a lot more than anybody else."

Natalie

The dichotomy between the 'normal' and dyslexic student drawn by Natalie may be interpreted as an internalisation of essentialist models of disability. (Smith, 2009) Natalie, unlike the other participants, refers to herself as 'disabled' rather than referring more loosely 'struggles' during her response. Through her adoption of these phrases, Natalie constructs an identity that is tied closely to her position of disablement in society. (Habermas, 1992; Butler, 1997; Clarke, et al., 2011) It is through this, however, that she begins the process of celebration and advocacy for the disabled, including herself, and creates an identity that may challenge social preconceptions and resist silence. (Vlachou-Balafouti, 2013) By tying her identity to disability, the medical gaze is resisted as the experience of disablement is inextricable from the personality, and consequently the process of objectification by professionals is resisted. (Foucault, 1989)

Children act in ways intended to create desired identities based on discourses around their actions. (Reay, 2001) The roots of these desired identities are varied: they may be out of obligation, or desire to rebel, or to mask elements of themselves they are insecure about. (Fisher, 2017) What is consistent are the tensions and insecurities around shifting social perceptions and the need to partake in discourse seeking behaviours in order to avoid the discomfort of being 'found out'. (Jackson, 2003)

Where in older studies the identities sought by children reflected discrete, monocultural reference points to construct identities, such as 'Spice Girls' (Reay, 2001), my findings with relation to identity were similar to Fisher's (2017), that the discourses sought by children were based more around generic descriptors. This change may be attributed to the decentralisation of culture enabled by internet technologies. (Sholz & Rennig, 2019) The passive and active voices of the participants' accounts act to draw a distinction between 'being' and 'doing' – the elements of identity that are viewed as fixed and immutable contrasted against those that can be constructed through action, starting with Natalie's understanding of herself as disabled. In Isabelle's recount of past misbehaviour she refers to 'being naughty' repeatedly, as well as repeatedly linking this her experiences of negative emotions. At only one point, when prompted, does she specify what 'being naughty' constitutes in terms of action:

“One time I got into an argument with this girl and I got, like, really angry and I started chucking chairs and stuff around the room, so I had to get sent home because I wasn’t... I was getting sent home all the time because I was being too naughty to be at school.”

Isabelle

For Isabelle, ‘being naughty’ is not a permanent state but it is one that does form a fairly large element of her perceived identity. Her experience of school is defined by periods of being ‘alright’ and periods of being ‘naughty,’ with distinctions between the two characterised by her external perception by teachers rather than her actions or the actions of others towards her. Isabelle’s ‘naughtiness’ appears to arise from silencing and failure to reason constructively due to the linguistic constraints placed on her by both her marginalised position and the linguistic limitations arising from her communication need. (Habermas, 1992) Victim blaming is also evident in this account: Isabelle refers to her emotional responses as being made more extreme by her ADHD, and consequently by becoming ‘too naughty to be at school’ she is being denied her place in the classroom and further marginalised. (Sontag, 2002; Lloyd, 2005) The function of misbehaviour, in this account, also acts as a self-protection strategy, diverting attention away from difficulty in the classroom through removal from the site of oppression. (Jackson, 2003)

Identity, for the participants in the study, is a nexus of ‘beings’ and ‘doings’ influenced by self- and external perception. Through the construction of their identities, each child constructs a persona that protects them in some way from the dehumanising effects of the Other’s gaze – retaining agency over individual desire and ego. (Lacan, 2006, pp. 685-686)

4.3: Experiences of the classroom

Classrooms in critical pedagogy represent a range of clashing possibilities: at once it is a site of hegemonic domination, (Illich, 2002) yet at the same time there must remain in it an enabling, liberatory potential. (Freire, 2017) For children with disabilities this problematic role of the classroom is only made more problematic. The child is disabled by the gaze of teachers (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010) yet, practically, their subjectivity and means of mitigating their impairment can be reached through their contact with school. (Vlachou-Balafouti, 2013) These problems

go some way to explaining the experiences and tensions of schooling experienced by children.

Enthusiasm is, and has always been, a strictly taboo characteristic for children at school. Willis's (1977) seminal study of disadvantaged schools in the West Midlands highlighted the dichotomy between 'lads,' who conformed strictly to the rules of a masculine counter-culture, and 'ear 'oles,' those boys who had the temerity to show enthusiasm for school. For Willis, the lads rebelled because of the repression and boredom – an attitude succinctly summarised by Robert at the beginning of his interview when asked to describe his experience of school:

“Err... Pretty boring, to be honest. I'm not really a fan of school, to be honest.

I just – I don't know – I'm just told to go, I have to.”

Robert

This initial response is consistent laddish discourses around school – particularly with the idea that school ultimately acts as a means of constriction, preventing him from exercising his agency because he 'has to go.' It is, however, not entirely consistent with his later responses, suggesting that despite his profession of 'honesty' in this statement his view of school and learning is not (or rather, is not *necessarily*) entirely summarised by the word 'boring.' Elsewhere in his interview, Robert states he wishes to be seen as 'willing' and expresses his enthusiasm for discussion tasks in English Literature and a broad humanities lesson that was timetabled during year 9. This penchant for discussion directly contrasts most research into 'lads' and their attitudes towards school, as he has shown an active interest in being seen to contribute and be seen to exert effort in lessons rather than hoping to be seen as effortlessly able. (Martino, 1999) There is, then, in Roberts account a distaste for some aspects of school, particularly banking models of instruction that will be explored later, but generally a desire to balance the 'laddy' expectations he is expected to live up to as a popular, sporty boy with his desire to do well in spite of his disability. Robert's initial characterisation of school is, therefore, a shield of 'laddishness' that acts to protect him from both peer pressure and the fear of failure to live up to mainstream expectations, despite his effort. (Jackson, 2003)

For Natalie, school is an enabling influence in her life, allowing her to develop schema to mitigate the effects of disability:

“I started struggling in, like, year 3 in primary school. The teachers gave me test and I found out I was dyslexic and they were really supportive and helped me through it and gave me, like, mechanisms that would help me with my reading and with spelling and they gave me a special teacher to help with that.”

Natalie

The overwhelmingly positive discourses around Natalie’s experience of education present a stark difference to Robert’s account. Natalie said this in response to the same prompt to speak about her experience of education so far – suggesting that she has had an overall positive experience and that her interactions with educational institutions have enabled her meaningful engagement with the world through the establishment of schematic ‘mechanisms’ that have allowed her to overcome her difficulties. It is, however, worth looking at this response through the lens of discourse seeking behaviours, particularly with a focus on ‘helpfulness.’ Natalie, through the information sheets provided, was aware of the remit of the study and, consequently answered with a deliberate focus on her experiences of academic support related to SEND. Her immediate response in this manner suggests that her desire was to provide as useful a response as possible – something that is desirable for a researcher but suggests her testimony was affected in part by my position as a research, teacher and authority figure, but most importantly my position as the Other. Through attempting to please me by being the most compliant research participant possible, Natalie acts to reveal the importance of being known as compliant and helpful, and that the pursuit of these identities dominates her actions and interactions. (Berlant, 2011)

In her accounts, Isabelle rarely mentions boredom when describing adverse experiences of schooling, but focuses instead on perceived injustices in the classroom and interactions with pastoral staff:

“I think, as well, it’s like: when I try to speak to teachers about it they don’t really understand and it makes me angry that teachers, like, think because they’ve got the label ‘teacher’ that they can, like, be disrespectful towards you and you don’t have any say just because they’re the teacher.”

Isabelle

This discussion of labels points to a conception of teachers as irreconcilable Others, that are impossible to be understood or related to. In discussing these labels, Isabelle points to power imbalance that alienates learners by denying children agency. This echoes the Freirean interpretation of the banking model of education, in which the instructor treats learners as ‘empty vessels’ and forces them to conform to extant social relations and, in turn, internalise their oppression. (Freire, 2017, p. 48) Isabelle is clearly critical of traditional pedagogies and the manner in which they deify the teacher, and repeatedly emphasises that she feels she has productive relationships that ‘listen’ and are patient with her. Further criticism of banking models of education is found in Robert’s interview:

“[Teachers expect me to] just to shut up and copy the work, I think [smiles]”

Robert

While clearly said with a hint of sarcasm, Robert had previously stated that his engagement in certain subjects has dropped off while studying them for GCSE as the focus on content meant that teachers are inclined to sit at their desk and ‘flick through the slides.’ Robert shows a desire to be able to exercise his agency in learning and to shape and reshape the content around his individual perception of the topic. (Freire, 2017) The denial of agency acts to marginalise the already marginalised child, particularly as the process of copying is inherently exclusionary of those with Dyslexia due to the neurological effects of the condition. (Townend & Turner, 2000)

British children are among the most tested in the world; (Reay, 2017, p. 82) those in year 10 live in the shadow of their impending GCSEs. In 2015 a modular system of examination was scrapped in favour of final exams (for many subjects) that hold all of the weight of two (or three) years’ study. GCSE assessments and curricula were mentioned across each of the participants accounts. Isabelle referred to the class dynamics she experiences in Maths, focusing in particular on the use of exam pressure as a motivator by the teacher:

“... he gives us like a lecture every five minutes, like: *[affecting a rhythmic tone]* “you’re not gonna get anywhere in life,” “you’re not gonna get where you wanna be,”

and stuff... when the teacher's telling you you're not gonna get anywhere and people are messing about it's hard to do it... he's sat there talking to other people and he's telling you you're not gonna get anywhere – it's not really, like, making you believe in yourself and stuff.”

Isabelle

Two fundamental problems are highlighted by Isabelle's account of these lessons: the problem 'bottom sets' and the problem of exam-centric teaching. Isabelle had been moved into her current class due to a disagreement with a student in her previous one. While she expressed that she was not happy in the class she had been moved to, she was aware that she would not be able to move to another class as there were only two bottom sets. Her anxieties around maths and her attainment in the subject were clearly exacerbated by the discourses in the classroom, the focus on exam failure as a catastrophic moral failing on the part of the children rather than a potential eventuality of disengagement. As with students previously studied in year 6 who feared that getting a below a grade 4 in their SATS would lead to them being considered 'a nothing,' Isabelle's fear of failure leads to her internalising the claims that she 'won't get anywhere in life' rather than using this fear as a motivator, as intended by the teacher. (Reay, 2017, pp. 82-83) Isabelle's discourses around attainment throughout the interview did tend towards negative perceptions of what she will achieve, despite her having received the top grade in her class in a formal examination she had sat earlier in the year. When discussing her intentions after school, she appeared very uncertain, knowing that she would like to go into something that would be beneficial to others but unable to make plans due to her lack of confidence in her own ability.

For Robert, grades also constitute a part of his identity, particularly in determining which subjects he engages enthusiastically in:

“I wouldn't say I'm a negative person, but I'm quite negative in, like, if it doesn't go well then I just think, “well, if it's not going well already, what's the point in trying again?”

I give up too easily. I'd say the new teacher's been more positive with me, and that's helped me improve.”

Robert.

Robert identified as achieving top grades in two end of term Geography tests as among the achievements during his time at school that he was most proud of, before then exploring the basis of his improved attainment in the subject. He drew a distinction between his attitude in year 9, during which he had been achieving 2s in his end of term tests to year 10 in which he had achieved 8s and 9s, identifying the teacher being 'positive with me' as the impetus for his improved engagement and attainment. While a different context, as Geography is an options subject that Robert has chosen to study, this directly contrasts Isabelle's account of her Maths lessons. Grades, for both students, have contributed to the construction of both children's identities as learners. External influences have also, however, rendered both children without agency in their accounts. For Robert, his achievement is put down to the introduction of a new teacher rather than being internally motivated. By contrast, Isabelle does appear to have internalised the criticism of her Maths class, leading to further alienation and dejection. On both accounts, then, there is a powerlessness to the manner in which children talk about their attainment and their identities as learners are, therefore, unfixed and in danger of change.

Among the participants, the classroom is not defined by symbolic violence and domination, (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) but rather an environment in which the desires of the *I* are mediated against the rationale of the Other.

4.4: (Self-)Advocacy

For disabled researchers, self-advocacy fulfils two roles – it serves to empower the speaker and amplify disabled voices, as well as eliminating the mechanisms of silence that disempower disabled people. (Smith, 2009) During discussions with the participants in the study, several points were made about the positionality of disabled children and the manner in which they seek to prove themselves through their post-school ambitions.

The subjectivities of students with SEND must be understood within a wider social milieu that influences decisions, discourses and ambitions – students with SpLD may or may not identify as disabled, and do not centre the identities they construct solely around disability. Ambitions help to edify the manner in which children with disabilities relate to their disability and the social expectations placed on them.

Robert's interest and outlet in football has clearly positively affected his confidence. Robert is driven by the 'urge to go pro' in football, and this has provided him with a developed outlook for his future:

“When I turn 18 I've got a scholarship in America that I'd like to do which is going out there, doing a college course where you pick two subjects as your main – you can pick engineering or anything - and you pick a football college and play for them.”

Robert

For Robert, his success in football not only gives him a sense of confidence and a stable, assured identity, but also leads him to aspire towards Higher Education through opportunities presented by his extracurricular football. Robert plays in a prestigious Premier League academy, through which he intends to attend a private sixth form and proceed find academic successes from there. Through pursuing success in football, Robert is providing himself with a skillset that acts to compensate for any difficulties he may have in formal, academic education.

Natalie and Isabelle's ambitions are, by contrast, strongly situated within their own experiences of SEND:

“Erm, well I’d like to pass the GCSEs I need to go into working... I don’t want to work in a school but I want to, like, work with kids or help kids that need, like, help or someone to talk to and stuff – basically like a counsellor or a nurse or something. I don’t know, I want to go into that sort of stuff.”

Isabelle

“Well, I would love to work with, like, children and help them. Because I’m quite good with working with kids and helping them understand because of where I’ve struggled in the past, especially if they have, like, disabilities. So I’d like to help them work things out.”

Natalie

For both Natalie and Isabelle, despite their differing attitudes to school, entry into the work place presents an opportunity to address the inequalities that children with disabilities face. For Isabelle, this is more defined by her experiences of SEMH difficulties and her desire to help fill a role that she has not always felt was filled for her. By contrast, for Natalie, her ambition is to pay back what she felt was the enabling force of school by providing the same support to future children with disabilities.

Both Isabelle and Natalie’s ambitions, as well as being a response to their experience of SEND, are also emblematic of the expectations placed on working class girls to fulfil caring roles once they have left school. The expectations of their gender and the act of aspiring to moving into these caring roles is reminiscent of the year 7 girl participants in Fisher’s (2017) exploration of the identity construction of girls in receipt of free school meals. The discourse seeking behaviour of the ‘good girls’ in Fisher’s study often focused on gaining teacher attention through administrative tasks, namely cleaning classrooms, undertaken for teachers in order to gain their approval in place of academic success. For these girls, their habitus leads them to undertake activities that will not benefit them, but they feel implored to do by the expectations of their gender and class. The girls are clearly motivated by a desire to address symbolic violence and to, particularly in the case of Isabelle, prevent the reproduction of dominating social relations. The approaches through which they seek to prevent this are informed by their habitus, the remnants of traditional class and gender roles that weigh upon their decision making.

Similarly, Robert's expectations of success in football indicate a gendered habitus that informs his decision making, as engagement in physical education is, historically, the remit of boys. Consequently, Robert's pursuit of football, and particularly of his consideration of Higher Education only in relation to sports scholarships, acts to suggest that he is experiencing the same level of peer pressure and the historic weight of gendered expectations as Isabelle and Natalie. (Pinkett & Roberts, 2019)

For the participants, identity within school is as much related to gendered and class expectations as disablement. This is not surprising: the social milieu of the classroom inherently reproduces the social relations of the outside world, in which marginalisation on the grounds of gender and class strictly dictates the construction of ambition. (Bourdieu, 2010)

Beyond individual ambitions, discourses of solidarity were implicit in the participants' contributions suggesting a communal element to their self advocacy.

4.5: Conclusion

For the participants, the construction and preservation of identity as children with disability hinges upon their position within wider social structures and oppressions. Despite the range of identification among the students, they each display an propensity towards the expected signs and signifiers of their gender so as to assimilate into the norms of the ingroup. The experiences of the children in the study appear to contribute further to the idea that traditional banking models of education are particularly disengaging for children with SEND – acting to further marginalise them.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

To conclude this investigation, two final aspects must be considered: how these findings can be used to improve the experiences and outcomes of children with SEND in secondary education, and the further questions that have arisen and how they may be explored.

5.1: Improving experiences and outcomes

Setting was regularly presented problematically in these discussions both because it creates a sense of hopelessness and frustration as well as the participants' narratives referring to dependence on other students in the class for clarification and support. The problem of setting is not a new one, and has been criticised repeatedly in recent popular pedagogy. (Pinkett & Roberts, 2019; Reay, 2017) This investigation have further supported these findings, noting that setting constitutes an educational ghettoization – the further marginalisation of already marginalised groups that merely serves to cement existing inequities. While setting is not universally applied in the school in which I work, it is used in most core subjects. For the participants in the study, this provides a significant problem in their attainment and engagement in school and diminishes their agency and opportunities to engage.

Across the accounts, criticisms of banking models of education were implicit in the accounts of the classroom. In negative accounts of experiences of the classroom, lecturing and 'copying down' were referred to as disengaging and disaffecting factors in the students' experiences of education. This may hinge on the social implications of banking, as by being treated as an 'empty vessel' the child is denied agency and consequently feels unheard – an position repeatedly cited by the students as alienating. For children with dyslexia, the banking model presents an insurmountable barrier to education: these methods of instruction were formulated for neurotypical students for whom the process of reading is not made difficult by neurological impairment. Where some adaptations are made to allow easier access to banked learning, such as coloured overlays to prevent eye strain, the model is inequitable and does not enable dyslexic learners. Banking education is, in the accounts of the participants, found more in lessons leading up to final examinations – suggesting that the GCSE system is directly disadvantaging children with disabilities.

For the children in the study, class and gender expectations seem to inform their responses to their individual responses to impairment. This is to say that disability and the act of disablement is experienced differently according to other oppressions. This is consistent with contemporary theory, particularly critical race theory and intersectional feminism, but requires interrogation when applying it to understanding the experiences of disabled children in education. Work has been done on this already, exploring the impact of gendered oppressions on experiences of disability (Clarke, et al., 2011) and racialised marginalisation. (Mitchell, 2013) A holistic approach is, therefore, necessary in improving the experiences of children with SEND needs in schools to mitigate the effects of gendered expectations on their experience of education. The internalisation of gendered oppressions among those who are marginalised in other ways has been observed in other studies. (Messiou, 2006; Fisher, 2017) Fundamentally, there can be no 'easy fixes' that may be instituted as a result of this study, but rather it contributes to a body of research that works to criticise the social reproduction of contemporary education.

5.2: Further research questions and opportunities

In order to explore the nature of identity construction for children with SEND and the ways that this affects experiences and outcomes, a longitudinal study could be conducted in order to explore the ways that children develop identities within education using a similar apparatus of critical discourse analysis informed by psychoanalysis.

This investigation would be expanded to include children without SEND diagnoses in order to provide both a control variable to explore the similarities and differences between those with and without SEND, as well as allowing some investigation into children who may have not received a diagnosis but may suffer from some form of disability.

The exploration of identity construction and literacy is a fruitful one as it provides insights into the impacts of socioeconomic, cultural and ideological conditions on the educational narratives of children. In the current educational milieu of shortening attention spans, children aspiring to emulate misogynistic scam artists and persistent inequalities this provides a useful insight into contemporary experiences of

childhood, particularly after the pandemic and the affects this has had on socialisation.

To continue exploring this nature of identity construction and the ways in which this informs childhood experiences of school, I would like to eventually pursue a PhD or Ed Doc exploring the media consumption of children and the manner in which this affects their voices.

5.3: Conclusion

This investigation indicates that the experiences of children with SEND are inextricable from their experiences of gender and class expectations. Disablement as a social and political process is somewhat neglected in secondary education in exchange for focusing on medicalised impairment and the means of mitigating the effects of impairment to enable engagement in traditional pedagogic practice. The pressures of examination on students and teachers act to exacerbate these relations and further marginalise children with SEND through the diminished voice of students. Using mixed methods based in critical theory has allowed for the deconstruction of the identities and experiences that inform the participants experiences of education. Through this process of deconstruction, the nature of the intersections between disability, class and gender and how they affect the experiences of children are illuminated, edifying the manner in which education is socially experienced by children with disabilities.

Post-Script Narrative Reflection

I was excited to undergo this investigation as it had been my intention to look into the nature of intersections of class, gender and disability oppression since applying to the Education Masters Inclusive Practice pathway. This choice was due to my own experiences as a student with dyspraxia: while I had no interest in completing an autoethnography, I have had an interest in the different ways in which disability is perceived and affects individuals since eavesdropping on a conversation between two parents while waiting to be picked up when I was in primary school in which one asked if the other's child had been diagnosed with dyspraxia like her child had, to which the response was, "no, he's got ADHD," to which the first responded, "but that's the same thing?"

While anecdotal – and it is, of course, very hard to properly reference something you overheard as a child 20 years ago – this has always come to mind when considering individual experiences of disability. Substantively, for the parents and children in this context, the diagnoses may have been similar – disaffection and underachievement will have been explained and possibly mitigated by the diagnosis. Similarly, accounts of both parents, particularly their lack of knowledge of the individual conditions, appear consistent with the treatment of parents observed in academic studies. My personal response at the time was upset, based on an internalised oppressive belief that to have ADHD was 'bad' or 'naughty' and, consequently, being considered the same as those with ADHD was a mark of a personal inadequacy.

I am happy with my choice of enquiry, focus in on the narratives of individual students – though I feel that my approach was rushed. In completing interviews in a hedged semi-structured interview, I fear there may have been topics that were not explored in enough depth that may have been explored in greater detail in narrative interviews. This was necessary, to an extent, as the overall time scale of the inquiry was limited and the participants were interviewed during lesson time, so it would have been ethically questionable to remove the students from more lessons than needed. While analysing and writing up my data I have had questions over the contribution this investigation is making to the body of knowledge on inclusive education, feeling as if there should have been some moment of epiphany where a clear answer arose. There was not (as is to be expected) but I have come to terms

with the presentation of differing experiences of children with similar conditions that are contingent on other oppressions and privileges contributing to a body of understanding of the inequities within the English education system.

Prior to conducting and analysing my interviews, I had inadvertently predetermined themes that may arise in the students' narratives, particularly focusing on ideas of alienation and boredom. I was able to be reflexive when my data focused more on other themes, and was able to adapt my literature review accordingly. The intersection between experiences of disability and gender proved an extremely interesting in analysing the discourses of the participants, and could prove an interesting investigation in the future. I have, at points, fallen into victimisation of the students in the study. I have attempted to neutralise some language in response to this, however the nature of the enquiry necessitates the assumption that children with disabilities are oppressed by normative expectations in mainstream schools.

My own experiences in this process, as a student with similar disabilities to the participants in the study, have informed my understanding of the role of research as a liberatory process and as an end of itself. Ultimately, the process of undertaking this research has presented several challenges in terms of project management and executive function, but I feel it has allowed me to gain a greater understanding of what research as someone with processing issues looks like and how to become a researcher. While I do not intend to undertake a PHD or Ed Doc for a number of years, the skills learned in undertaking this task will inform my day to day practice and help me continue to promote inclusive practice.

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Appendices:

1.1 a: Isabelle Interview 1

Harry: This is Isabelle's first interview as part of my dissertation fieldwork. Hello, Isabelle: how many years have you attended [REDACTED]?

Isabelle: Erm, 4 years

H: So you've not attended any other secondary schools. Which primary school did you go to?

I: [REDACTED].

H: Can you tell me about your journey in education so far?

I: Erm, well – at the start it was good and I enjoyed school but then I started getting – I started being a bit naughty – I'm not sure why that is, just people being rude and everything – I wasn't getting along with teachers and stuff. Then I kind of, like, got on better in everything.

[Pauses, indicates she has finished]

H: Could I just ask what you mean when you say 'naughty'?

I: I don't know, I just was always, like, getting sent home because I'd be too, like, angry and, like, starting arguments and being rude to teachers and stuff and not going to my lessons.

[pause]

H: Can you think of any examples where that's happened?

I: Erm, one time I got into an argument with this girl and I got, like, really angry and I started chucking chairs and stuff around the room, so I had to get sent home because I wasn't... I was getting sent home all the time because I was being too naughty to be at school.

H: What kind of age was that?

I: I was in year 9 I think

H: When you said that you felt angry, would you be able to explain what made you feel angry in those situations?

I: I don't know, I just always get really angry or really sad for no reason. I can't, like, explain it. It's sad – I can't control it.

I think, as well, it's like: when I try to speak to teachers about it they don't really understand and it makes me angry that teachers, like, think because they've got the label 'teacher' that they can, like, be disrespectful towards you and you don't have any say just because they're the teacher.

H: That's an interesting idea. With that, would you say there are any teachers (remember that this is anonymous so you can be honest) you can think of where the way they've approached your relationship has made you more angry, more frustrated or the other way?

I: erm, well, Mr [REDACTED] was really good with me and when I was annoyed or frustrated he would help me, but now when I go to head of year and stuff they just make it feel, like – they're just, like, "oh, go away" and they don't really care. Like, when I'm sad and stuff and I go to them they're like "oh, well, counselling's booked up until September so there's nothing we can do" they don't, like, hear you out or anything. They said to my friend the other day that "this is not a mental health

place, this is a school.” So they can’t do anything but they make out it’s like a safe space – so that’s what makes me angry. They don’t really listen to you and they just, like, care about expectations and making the school look good.

You can go to them upset and stuff and they won’t even be focussing on that and they’ll point out that you’re wearing white socks and you’ve got jewellery on. You need someone to talk to and they don’t really care. Or they don’t seem like they care.

H: Thank you for that – and I’m sorry that you’ve felt like that before.

Is there anything in school that you would say does make you feel angry or sad, because you’ve identified this in a few points?

I: I don’t know, I just – I, like just get really angry or really sad and I don’t even know what it is- I just can’t control it or, like, explain it really. It’s like, only if you was in my head you would know. Does that make sense?

H: Yeah, it does – but also, it’s that thing of – not that I want to get ‘in your head’ with this, it’s not an interrogation, but the idea is with this interview that you can talk through these feelings. Can you think of the last time you had these feelings and what was it that started that and how did that carry on and escalate to the point where you were properly angry or sad?

I: Erm, I don’t know, it’s just like little things and they all build up and they just kind of explode -like, when you don’t talk about stuff and you’ve got no one to talk to it just builds up and you can’t hold it in and it comes out.

H: Thank you. Would you be able to tell me about any subjects you’ve particularly liked and how they’ve helped you along that journey. You’ve mentioned Mr Benjamin as someone you really engaged with – what was it about him that helped you feel more engaged?

I: Erm, I think it’s just more that he, like, listened to me. He wasn’t just, like, “there’s nothing I can do,” he’d hear me out and listen to me... I don’t know, help me. When you talk to him he made you feel like he was actually listening. Because most teachers, when I talk to them, I feel like they don’t want me to be there and they’re just, like, “when are you gonna go?” but he would actually seem interested in what I had to say and stuff.

He was my form tutor, but there’s also [REDACTED], she’s very good with me too and knows how to deal with when I’m, like, angry or sad or something like that. I have her for performing arts and health and social – and I actually really enjoy health and social care. And English! But I don’t like my teacher in English – but I do like the subject.

H: That’s good to know that you like English! We’ll stick with health and social care and what you like about that at the moment: with that good relationship, how would you say that motivates you in lesson? Would you say that’s a subject you’re doing particularly well in?

I: Erm, yeah, and I think it’s also because I want to, like, go into, like, I want to work with, like, kids when I’m older or something to do with health and social care – I think that’s more the reason. And also, because I get along with the teacher I feel like it’s easier to be able to get things done and everything because I get along with her.

If I’m angry or upset and I go to her she won’t get annoyed with me for saying the wrong thing or being angry because I’m doing something wrong – she’ll help me out or give me something to fiddle with or squeeze or something to calm me down and stuff. Because she, like, understands it a lot.

H: Just to go back to English – you say that you like the subject but not the teacher – what is it you like about English?

I: Erm, I don't really know: sometimes it's hard but, especially when you get to do stories and stuff, it's freeing and you can – I don't know – it just interests me more than other subjects. I enjoy it.

H: Where do you see your journey in education going?

I: erm, well I'd like to get, like, a good relationship with all of my teachers so then it isn't as hard in lessons when I'm in there - if I enjoy lessons, like how I enjoy English. But me and my English teacher, we don't get along. It's something I enjoy but I don't enjoy it as much because I don't like my teacher so it makes me not want to go to her, even though I do like English. It makes me not want to go to it because I'll have to see her. So I'd rather just get along with them all and everything.

H: What do you think is causing the difficult relationship with your English teacher?

I: I don't know but, like, me as well – I get very, like, angry and wound up very quickly so even the littlest things annoy me. I try not to be rude and stay calm but I feel sometimes that teachers have a way of doing things and saying things that, like, get to me and annoy me so I end up arguing with them and it's not nice that we both can't really like... I don't know, it's hard to explain. But, like, I just wish that sometimes teachers would understand that, just because they're a teacher, they've got to know I'm a person too and I've got feelings.

And with my ADHD and stuff, I don't know, it's hard to explain. It's uncontrollable.

H: Just try to explain as best you can – what does having ADHD look like for you in a classroom?

I: well, most people say ADHD means you're all hyper and stuff but it isn't like that for girls – it's low moods and stuff. The tiniest things, even if they're not a big deal to anyone else they're a big deal to me. And I struggle to let go of things. If a teacher might try to apologise I can't let go. I just can't

I think it's really hard sometimes when teachers don't understand what it's like. It's hard to explain too so it's just annoying, like, yeah.

H: I appreciate that, Isabelle – it's a hard thing to say sometimes but that experience you have described, coming from my position when I was in school as well, it's hard to acknowledge that difficulty when you're sat in a classroom, particularly that others may not understand it.

We've spoken about that as the first part in your journey, looking to the end of GCSEs and year 11. What about beyond that, what do you think you can see in your future at the moment? What would you like to achieve and how would you get there?

I: Erm, well I'd like to pass the GCSEs I need to go into working... I don't want to work in a school but I want to, like, work with kids or help kids that need, like, help or someone to talk to and stuff – basically like a counsellor or a nurse or something. I don't know, I want to go into that sort of stuff.

I want to help people. I feel like I've not got much help and there's loads of people who struggle with mental health and stuff like that but people don't really listen to them until it's too late, or they have to tell them that, like "you need to listen to me. "I want people to know that there are people who care and who listen and who will help them. To help people as best as I can – just so people know there's always someone there that's listening. Obviously, you can't completely help someone if they're struggling because, like, no one else can help you but yourself but, I don't know, I want to try my best.

H: What do you see yourself doing in Education to get there and what do you want the rest of your time in education to look like?

I: I'm not actually sure what I want to do yet – whether I want to stay at sixth form or go to college. I don't know at the moment.

H: That's ok, you don't need to know that yet and you've identified the big picture. Thank you for participating, Isabelle and I will terminate the interview now.

1.1 b: Isabelle Interview 2

H: I'll just be asking some follow up questions based on our last interview. My first question, Isabelle, is: how do you think teachers see you and what do you think they think of you?

I: Erm, I don't know. They see me as annoying, effort but some of them might see me in a good way. That I sometimes try my best and stuff

H: what do you mean when you say 'annoying and effort?'

I: Cos, most teachers when I talk to them they just seem, like, that way. Like they just can't be bothered to speak to me and stuff.

H: you've mentioned this other side, that some see you as working hard. Who do you think would see you in this way and why?

I: So Mrs Horton will see me as working hard because I try for her, and Mrs Young sometimes because I do a lot of work in her lessons and stuff. Erm, I don't know who else.

H: What makes you think these teachers see you in this way?

I: When they come over and they're like, 'well done, you're doing loads' and stuff. Them appreciating that I've done it.

H: It's definitely nice to feel appreciated.

I: Yeah

H: My next question is linked to what you've just said: how do you want teachers to see you?

I: Erm, in a good way. And, like, see that I'm actually trying my best.

H: could you explain what you mean by trying your best? Do you think that's always recognised?

I: No. I mean, like, trying in school to do things, but I don't get things as fast as other people: but I still try my best.

I dunno, sometimes I think when I'm like really slow at getting things and other people do I feel like I'm taking half my time reading the question rather than doing the work and they probably think "oh, she's not doing it" and all this but actually it's going into my head cos I can't, like, do it so fast.

H: Thank you for that. This next question, again, links to the last one. What do you think teachers expect of you in lessons?

I: erm, to do all the work and do good and not talk and not get distracted.

H: do you think teachers expect you to meet those expectations?

I: yeah.

H: Thank you. This next question is looking at the classroom as a social space. As much as you have the teacher speaking to the students and that is the central point, there are also the relationships between the students and lots of small interactions going on all the time. What would you say your relationship with other students in the class is like?

I: Erm, well, I like working with someone sometimes because it makes me want to do it, but when there's loads of people in the classroom and there's loads of speaking and miss is talking I can't focus on like one voice, I'm focusing on everyone else's. Even if it looks like I'm listening because I'm looking I'm not because there's too much to focus on. So sometimes other people in the class can make it difficult and I prefer a quiet room on my own.

H: Would a completely silent room with the same number of people feel as easy to work in as a room on your own?

Isabelle smiles and quickly shakes her head

H: why not?

I: I dunno, it would feel weird! Like, I don't know how to explain it. For example, when I've been in SSU [internal exclusion for behaviour management] I've worked so quickly and gotten everything done because, like, there's literally no one in there annoying me so it's so much easier to get it done than if I've got someone next to me distracting me and I can't, like, hear the teacher speaking.

H: Thank you for that, and I very much understand what you're talking about – no matter what learning alongside someone else can be irritating! So this next question is looking at how you feel now but also into the future and what you want to achieve: What does success look like to you?

I: It will make me feel successful if I pass some of my GCSEs and, like, even when I've got good, like marks and grades in my tests [*tone markedly changes, becomes more flat*] but I don't.

H: you don't feel like you do?

I: no.

H: do you not feel like you can be successful in that way?

I: no.

H: why is that?

I: cos I don't think I'm gonna pass anything. I dunno, like: I haven't once even passed a maths test or something, and like – but I do try, but I don't get good enough. I got moved maths class because in the other one someone was being rude to me and I didn't get along with the teacher but it's not really any different, there's people in there that are talking, um, and, um – sorry I got distracted, I saw someone through the door – there's people in there that are talking and my maths teacher always says we're gonna fail and get nowhere in life.

Like, it's [redacted] – he's nice but, like – in our lessons we have, like, five – he gives us like a lecture every five minutes, like: [*affects rhythmic tone*] "you're not gonna get anywhere in life," "you're not gonna get where you wanna be," and stuff. And, like, it puts everyone else in a bad mood because you're being told that you're not gonna get anywhere.

And then I've got [REDACTED], or whatever her name is, and she's not very good with the class. Like, she doesn't really know how to control the people in there so we just sit there not doing anything all lesson. But I can't move maths class because I can't go back in there.

H: That is a hard situation to be in. You've spoken about that kind of success – GCSEs and the very formal measures of success that are encouraged by school – is there anything you would say you've been particularly proud of so far in school, in or out of those formal measures?

I: I was actually proud that I did actually pass my Health and Social exam, because we do half now and half in year 11, and I got a distinction so I was proud of that cos that's like the one subject I really like as well so I was proud that I, like, did well.

H: So if you think about it: in all of your GCSE formal exams so far you have a 100% success rate! That's very good! Did you think you'd get that grade when you went into the exam?

I: [shakes her head]

H: did you think you'd get a passing grade?

I: erm, yeah, like, I thought I'd get a pass – that's it. I didn't think I'd a distinction which is really good.

H: so you were a bit more confident than, say, maths, but not fully confident in how good you could be?

I: yeah

H: so what makes you more confident in Health and Social Care than in Maths?

I: cos I enjoy Health and Social Care, so, like, it's easier to block everybody else out and, like, write loads and get what I need to get done. But, like, in maths, when the teacher's telling you you're not gonna get anywhere and people are messing about it's hard to do it. And especially because I'm not very good at maths, so – it's not one of my strongest things, so I need help on the work and I can't just sit there and do the work. But he's sat there talking to other people and he's telling you you're not gonna get anywhere – it's not really, like, making you believe in yourself and stuff.

H: do you feel when he says that that it's directed at you?

I: erm, I dunno, he just looks around the classroom and then he, like – he just looks at us and is like "you're not gonna get anywhere if you act like this," and "I'm here to help you pass your GCSEs, I don't care if you don't cos it's not me" and "everything you dreamed of doing when you leave school you can forget about that," and stuff like that. It's not very, like – I dunno – it doesn't make you feel good about yourself.

1.2a: Natalie Interview 1

H: Hello Natalie, how long have you been at the [REDACTED]?

N: I've been here for 4 years

H: Which Primary school did you go to?

N: [REDACTED]

H: Can you tell me about your journey in education so far?

N: I think it's gone pretty well other than a bit of struggling but teachers have helped me go through that and, sort of, get over those bumps with my dyslexia. They've helped me with my spelling and shown me how to correct it.

H: Where you've said that you've struggled: at what point did you feel like you were struggling and what did that look like at the time?

N: mainly in English I started struggling in, like, year 3 in primary school. The teachers gave me test and I found out I was dyslexic and they were really supportive and helped me through it and gave me, like, mechanisms that would help me with my reading and with spelling and they gave me a special teacher to help with that.

H: are there any specific relationships with teachers or teachers that you have felt really supported you to be able to move forward?

N: not really, I think that all of my teachers have been supportive and help me go through it.

[interview paused to allow access to a teacher that needed resources stored in there]

H: is there anything you'd like to add to what you've said about relationships with teachers?

N: not really, because all my teachers have helped, like I've said. They've really helped me with my education, especially in secondary school and especially with my mocks coming up.

They've given me readers to help me with test and they've given me a spelling corrector on the computer and they've allowed me to use them in class if I've been doing a lot of writing to go over with and I've had, like, extra classes with my reading and writing on main topics in English and Maths.

H: where do you see your journey in education going?

N: I don't know what industry I want to go into after I leave school but I think with everyone supporting me around my I will be able to get there in the future and they will be able to help me and the others around me to see the different perspectives and how people learn.

I struggle with my learning and people around me won't be able to see that because on the outside I look like a normal person, but if they understand that I will struggle and they'll need to have patience with me it will help my education as well as them to learn how to support us.

H: where you say about patience, what does that look like in a classroom?

N: well, they have to have a lot of patience with us, especially when we have to read something out loud they have to take their time. If we do struggle a lot they will step in and help us be they need to make sure we're ok with what we're doing. Also students around us will have to cope with us because we'll struggle but it might also affect their learning... I don't know how to explain it though.

H: you've just said students around you need to be understanding of your needs and how they relate to their needs – so I understand where you're coming from that they need to be patient and understand that when you need assistance you might take up more of the teacher's time. Do you feel like students always are understanding of this?

N: yeah, the students I've met have been very understanding and they've also helped me if the teacher is busy with someone else. They'll step in and help me, coach me through my education.

H: so you're not 100% sure of what you would like to do overall, but in terms of school and after year 11: what routes do you feel are open to you – what routes would you like to go down?

N: Well, I would love to work with, like, children and help them. Because I'm quite good with working with kids and helping them understand because of where I've struggled in the past – especially if they have, like, disabilities. So I'd like to help the work things out. Or I'd like to work in a hospital and help peoples.

H: Thank you for that. Where you've detailed where you would like to end up, what route do you think you will be able to take to get there?

N: I'd like to go to Sixth Form and see from there. If decide now to go to university I might not then want to do it but if I see when I'm in Sixth Form then I can see. I can see Sixth Form leading to me being able to go to university when after I get my A-Levels.

1.2b: Natalie Interview 2

H: I'm just going to ask you some follow up questions based on our last interview. So, Natalie, the first question I'm going to ask you about something you said last time, which was, I've got the quote here, "on the outside I look like a normal person." That was to do with how other students in the room see you. I just wanted to ask what you meant by that?

Z: yeah, like, on the outside I don't seem any different to anybody else, but like, they wouldn't know that I have dyslexia because I'm normal. But, then after they get to know someone with dyslexia they will realise the issues we face.

H: and when you say, 'normal' – what do you mean by 'normal'?

Z: like, they wouldn't struggle as much – I get that they will struggle in life but if you have dyslexia you'll struggle a lot more than anybody else.

H: thank you very much for that. I think that will lead into some of the next group of questions that are based on what you and other interviewees have brought up. The first one is, how do you think that teachers see you? Both as a student, but also as an individual.

N: well, I think they'll treat us as normal but then they'll help if we ask for it.

H: so you've said about treating, but what about seeing as well: you've explored how they treat you but what about what they expect of you?

N: I'm not sure what they expect of us but I hope they don't, like, think of us lower than anybody else. We can learn the same as everyone else.

H: you've said 'us' a few times there, I think it's fairly clear why you're saying it, but could you just explain what you mean when you say 'us'?

N: like, anyone with special needs, that need a little bit more help and a push to go in the right direction

H: and you've looked at everyone with needs, all together. That is important, but I want you to think now about you as an individual with a special educational need. How do you think that you are viewed as an individual?

N: I'm not quite sure how they see me as an individual, but I do quite well with my learning because of how much support I've got so, I'm not quite sure.

H: that's ok, don't worry about that. The second one is possibly slightly easier as that was hard. How do you want teachers to see you?

N: I want them to see me as anyone else. I don't want them to give me special treatment: I do want them to help me but if anyone else wants special treatment I don't want them to just be left to sit there. I want them to treat us all equally.

I try to push myself really well to do work independently, but if I can't, I will ask for help from someone. IOther than that, I do try and do everything myself and achieve my goals.

H: do you think you're seen as quite an independent person?

N: yeah.

H: The next questions link into that last one as well, you have already partially answered it, but: what do you think teachers expect of you? Both in the classroom and also looking to the future.

N: I think they expect me to, like, reach my goals, but also as well help. They keep asking if maybe I need help, but I am an independent person so I can just stick to what helps me reach my goals.

I don't mind when they ask if I need help but then there are other people around me that might also need help. I don't feel singled out though because there are other people in my classes with dyslexia who might also need help so it's not just me.

H: what is your relationship like with the other students in the classroom?

N: I get along with most of the other students, especially people I know and they know about my dyslexia because they will help if there's not a teacher around or if they're helping someone else. Especially my friends.

H: based on what you've told me so far, I just wanted to ask, what does success look like to you?

N: success looks to me like reaching your goals and trying to push yourself to go higher, but then it could also mean helping others. I'm an independent person, like I said, but then I also like helping people around me and helping them reach their goals as well.

I'm not quite sure what my goals are. I think they're mostly about helping people around me and helping them see points of view, and different perspectives – helping them understand how I'm not any different to anyone else. That I can still get places by myself and like show that because I have a disability doesn't mean that I learn any different to anyone else.

H: that is a noble goal to have! This last question is just going to ask you think back through all of Primary and secondary. Are there any times you can think of where you were particularly successful?

N: Not that I can think of, because through growing up from primary to secondary I've been able to do a, like, step by step, with help around me and by helping myself – to reach the goals I have chosen. I would say I've been successful in that.

1.3 a: Robert Interview 1

Harry: Robert, how long have you been at [REDACTED] ?

Robert: three years.

H: so did you attend another school before?

R: Oh, no – so is it four?

H: Yes

R: [laughs] four then.

H: and which primary school did you go to?

R: [REDACTED]

H: So, Robert, could you tell me about your journey in education so far?

R: Err... Pretty boring, to be honest. I'm not really a fan of school, to be honest.

I just – I don't know – I'm just told to go, I have to.

H: so what is it you find boring about school?

R: Erm, it just drags on really. Just, like, I like lessons that – not go quickly - but interest me. Like, in English I find it quite boring because it goes on and on but stuff like Geography I get on with it cos I like it and stuff. Like, a subject I liked in year 9 but they stopped doing it – I can't remember what it was called, they changed the name to it – it used to be about medicine and stuff, it was a different topic every week: mental health one week, Russia and Ukraine the next week – I can't remember what it was called.

H: so why was it that you enjoyed that lesson?

R: Cos it's all about what's going on at that moment, and it's quite nice to catch up on stuff and talk about it.

H: That sounds great. So where you've said that you find English boring, and that you've enjoyed this other subject (which I think was called humanities)...

R: Yeah, that's the one, yeah yeah yeah.

H: ... so where you've brought up English being boring – what is it that you find boring about English? What is it that you find difficult to engage with?

R: I'm not sure, it's just like – I don't mind English it's just different subjects if you know what I mean – I quite like the literature bit where you read a book and talk about it but the language part is quite boring cos it just, like, drags on. I'd rather talk about the lesson than sit there and write it down in a book cos I don't really learn much.

H: So you prefer discussion and working through ideas together?

R: yeah, but I don't mind listening, then talking, then writing - but I'd rather not sit there, look at the board and write it all down.

H: do you feel there are a lot of lessons where you are expected to just copy from the board?

R: Yeah.

[Interruption]

H: Could you explain which lessons they are and what you find difficult about those lessons?

R: Erm, they do it a lot in history – cos I though history would be a lot more talkative because it was – my teacher's on maternity leave and she was really good, I had Mrs. Newman who'd put things on the board and then ask, like, "what are your thoughts on this?" "how do you think they could change it?"

And now we've got [redacted] who just sits at her desk and flicks through the slides, she does it to quick cos, like, I don't mind cos some flick through and wait until everyone's done. I don't mind cos I'm quite a slow writer and reader – I'm, like, [rhythmic tone] writing, looking up, writing, looking up and it's switched.

H: do you feel that you're not being thought of as an individual in that class?

R: Erm, I don't like to value myself better than other people, but: yeah, sort of.

But, like, there's a lot of people who have the same issue as me – the people who sit next to me and behind me also have the same problem.

H: So, if you struggle to get something down in time: what happens in that lesson?

R: Well, I do ask Miss to go back a bit and she does, but if it's quite important, like, "we need to get through it" if you know what I mean, she won't.

H: do you feel confident and comfortable asking to go back?

R: yeah, I don't mind doing that.

H: I want you to think now about the subjects you have enjoyed more, particularly those with discussion – how do you feel in those lessons?

R: I dunno, I just feel more involved, like: when you're in a classroom and you're copying off the board you're sort of, like, your own class, if you know what I mean – it feels like a one to one with the board. If you're in a class and it's talkative you feel like you're actually in a class and if you don't agree with something you can put your hand up and say you don't agree. I just feel more involved.

H: So, thinking about your journey in education so far – what are you most proud of from your time in school?

R: Erm, probably captaining the football team. I've been captain for all of year ten (we had a different one from year 7 to year 9) He said he didn't want to do it and the coach picked me.

H: How do you feel as captain of the football team?

R: Like, I get to represent the team.

H: That is a big achievement, do you think that has raised your confidence in school?

R: yeah, I mean I do think I've got quite a lot of confidence generally – but yeah, it's definitely raised it more. I'd probably say I'm quite big headed

H: [laughs] I don't think you're big headed – look at what you said about earlier about not feeling you're more important than anyone else. I'd like to move on now to where you see your journey in education going? What do you want to do in the future?

R: Erm, to be completely honest I'm not entirely sure. But, I've got – I play in [Local Professional Football Club] They've got a thing where after you leave year 11 it's like sixth form but you go there and you do two or three days of school work and then you play football three other days. It's a bit like a football sixth form.

After that, if it goes well, you can be pushed up to [football club's] proper thing or you can just end it there. But when I turn 18, I've got a scholarship in America that I'd like to do which is going out there, doing a college course where you pick two subjects as your main – you can pick engineering or anything – and you'd pick a football college and play for them.

H: That's great. So with going on to college, what kind of subjects do you think you'd be interested in?

R: erm, I'm quite interested in Geography. So that probably. Like I said Humanities, but that probably won't be a subject

H: It is, and Geography is part of it.

R: so looking at those then.

H: so what is it that draws you to Geography?

R: I don't know, it's quite talkative and the writing part is also quite fun. And you're quite up to date, with climate change and all of that.

H: brilliant, it's very important. Going back to football, and particularly looking at motivation – you're a motivated person, we were talking about revision on the walk over here and you're invested in your studies – what is it that inspires you in football?

R: the urge to go pro, because everyone wants to go there but only the best of the best get there. I've always wanted to go pro from when I was really young so it's just the will to get there and do it.

H: is there anyone you particularly admire in that way?

R: probably Ronaldo, he's just been my favourite since I was really young – he's just done everything and been so successful.

1.3 b: Robert Interview 2

H: So, Robert, as this is our second interview I'm going to ask some follow up questions based on what you said last time, as well as other conversations I've had with interviewees where I would like to compare your responses. The first question I'd like to ask you is: how do you think teachers see you as a student and as an individual?

R: I'm not sure, really. Probably, like – annoying. Like, quite confident. Erm, they know I struggle. I'm not really sure though.

H: that's ok, when you say annoying – why do you think they view you in that way?

R: Because I'm quite a talkative person, like... I don't know, I'm not really sure.

H Ok, and when you say they know that you struggle – what kind of things tell you that? Why is it you think they think of you as struggling?

R: Because they always, like, come over to see how I'm doing and if I'm understanding it and trying it.

H: do you ever feel singled out by that?

R: No, I don't mind it to be fair. I know that they're not just caring about the whole class they're caring about me as an individual.

H: So when you say, just going back to the last question, you said that you feel you're annoying because you talk too much: do you feel that you talk too much in lessons?

R: No, I don't think I do. I don't talk in lessons which, like – I don't know, it depends what day I'm having and it depends how involved in the lesson I am. Because, like, if the lesson just drags on things get a bit boring and I start talking to my mate about something that happened yesterday but, like, if it's engaging I probably won't talk.

H: you said about it depending on the day you had, that's quite interesting – how would you describe a bad day?

R: Probably, just, not paying attention, being tired. Like, once I have a disagreement with a teacher in the first lesson it drags on through the whole day because it puts, like, a downer on me. It's the same with football: say, like, the ref said something or did something early in the season that my team or me didn't agree with then I normally feel like the ref is against us. Yeah.

H: so, with teachers you have felt are against you – what kind of things happen that makes you feel those teachers are against you? What causes those disagreements?

R: Like, I understand if I was only talking and if it was just me, but – the worst one is if I'm sat at the back and there's people in front of them and they're talking but I'm at the back and they have a go at me for talking, but, like, there's people right in front of them talking.

H: Thank you. We'll move onto the second question now: how do you want teachers to see you? Is there anything that you really feel you need to live up to or that you want to come up when your name is said, like "oh, Robert, he is so..."

R: Erm, I quite like being seen as confident and willing to do stuff. I just want them to see me as they see anyone else.

H: That word confident is interesting, and you've brought it up a few times. What kind of things do you do so that you appear confident?

R: Mainly sharing my opinions and answering questions or, like, getting answers right and saying you got it right.

H: Show showing enthusiasm in lessons

R: Yeah

H: Do you think that teachers reward that confidence?

R: [hums] I'm not sure really. I mean we don't really have -- I mean in year 7, 8, probably even 9 they used to ask you questions and let you answer it but you don't really get that anymore. It's more, really, just, like, "you've got to get down this." Especially in these last few weeks because we've got mocks coming up -- it's really all its been is just, "open your book and write it out." You don't really get questioned anymore.

H: Do you feel like you're learning enough in those sorts of lessons?

R: No, because I -- I actually think stuff goes in my head when I talk about it more.

H: Do you think you can communicate that to your teachers?

R: Yeah, and when I do they will let me.

H: So, to move onto the next question: What do you think teachers expect of you at the moment?

R: Really just to shut up and copy the work, I think [smiles]

H: [laughs] I can see that, but I think as well that's the whole class expectation isn't it? What do you think they expect for you to achieve?

R: Erm, probably just, er -- I'm not sure. They expect me to be like everyone else really.

H: Moving onto the next question: What would you say your relationship is like with other students in your classes? In classes you have the teacher, and each individual student and all of those relationships there but every relationship between every individual can also have an impact on the learning can affect how you learn. So what would you say those relationships are like?

R: I would say probably pretty good, I think I'm friends with quite a few people and, erm, most of my lessons I'm with boys and girls I've grown up with so they know a lot about me and I know a lot about them -- we understand each other and stuff.

H: do you think that helps you focus?

R: Erm, yeah – because if I don't understand something I don't mind asking because they know I struggle with it and they also understand if I didn't get the answer. But they know I've also got, like, other strengths and that I try.

H: So do ever rely on other students and ask those questions of the people around you?

R: Erm, yeah so it actually depends on what lessons, sometimes. Like, I'm alright at geography and I don't really need to ask questions but, say, in maybe Science, because now it's just that you copy it, and I often don't see all the words in time so I'll have to ask the person next to me and they're happy to help.

H: Brilliant, thank you. Are there any lessons you'd say you're in with people where you would say that your relationship with those students does impact on your work?

R: Not anymore, cos, there was this one, where me and him – let's just say we haven't been friends – we didn't like each other at all. He's left the school but he was in some of my lessons and I didn't get anything done because, like, I couldn't settle because I didn't like him.

H: So this next question – you gave quite a lot of detail in your answers last time so you might feel like you're going over things you have gone over before, don't worry if you do. What does success look like to you, both in the short term (end of year 10 and 11) and the long term (looking to the end of your education journey as a whole)?

R: Hmm, probably success in the short term is getting at least a 4 in the subjects I want to do well in, so Geography and English, Maths and Science. Getting the grades you need.

Long term, [pause] probably making it as far as I can in football.

H: You've said making it as far as you can in football: do you have a particular goal in your sights?

R: Erm, obviously making it pro is the dream. But I think America is where I would like to go to do college and after I've done that I'd stay out there, do a couple years out there and then try to go back and play for teams locally and not go too far.

H: So staying local is important?

R: Well, I'd go far – if the offers there.

H: Thank you. So moving onto the next question, it's another one where you gave a good amount of detail last time so don't worry. Are there any times in your whole school career where you've felt particularly successful?

R: Yeah, I'd probably just say captaining the football team.

H: Is there anything you'd like to add?

R: Erm, yeah – I think getting a 7 and an 8 in Geography. Because, like, last year I was at a 2 and I've got that this year and getting those marks in end of term tests is a big achievement.

H: That is a wonderful achievement. You said you didn't think you could do it, why was that?

R: Because, like, I would say it was down to the teacher a little bit, but last year – year 9 – we had a different teacher but, like, she left. I was getting twos and I was thinking, “ah, why did I pick this? I’m clearly not very good.” But then, with this new teacher that’s come in, she’s really helped me and now I’m getting 7s and 8s and stuff.

H: That’s brilliant to hear. So you’ve said it’s partly down to the teacher, is the other part down to you?

R: Yeah, a bit, because I’d say – I wouldn’t say I’m a negative person, but I’m quite negative in, like, if it doesn’t go well then I just think, “well if it’s not going well already, what’s the point in trying again?” I give up too easily. I’d say the new teacher’s been more positive with me, and that’s helped me improve.

2: 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

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.

participants.

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 | Harry Moriarty | |
| b. | PI | | |
| c. | Project title | Exploring identity and aspiration in the narratives of children with dyslexia through critical discourse analysis | |
| d. | Supervisor/tutor | John Eastwood | |
| e. | Qualification | Masters in Education | / |
| | | Masters in Childhood and Youth | |

| | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| f. | MA pathway (where applicable) | Inclusive Practice |
| g. | Intended start date for fieldwork | 15/05/2023 |
| h. | Intended end date for fieldwork | 10/06/2023 |
| 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> | United Kingdom |

| 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)? | / | |
| 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 | / | |
| 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 | / | |
| 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 nonpublic places)? If so have you specified appropriate debriefing procedures? ³ | | / |

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.

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.

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 | | / Two interviews took place over a period of two weeks for each participant. Repeated reminders were given that consent could be withdrawn. |
| 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? | / | |
| 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? | / An information sheet will be produced for circulation within the school in which I work reporting the findings anonymously. | |
| 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? | | / |
| 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? | All participants are anonymised and distribution among teachers will be limited to an information sheet | |
| 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? | | / |
| 11 | Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? | | / |

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.

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---|
| 12 | Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data? | | / |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---|

If you answered 'yes' to questions **12**, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (<http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/>).

3: Participant Information Sheet

E822 Information letter for children and young people (pre-18): Interviews

What is the aim of this interview?

The aim of the interview is to gain an understanding of the story of your journey in education, with a particular focus on what motivates you, what makes you feel happy in school and how you view yourself and your place in education.

Who is conducting the research and who is it for?

This interview is part of my studies on a masters-level course at The Open University in which I am carrying out a small-scale investigation. I am using a range of ways of collecting information to answer the following question: How do children with Special Educational Needs talk about education, motivation and their relationship with teachers? This is aimed to help me better understand and develop strategies to help engage students with Special Educational Needs here and to share my findings with others for whom the findings will be relevant to changing how teachers approach teaching and their relationships with students.

My interest in this topic comes from my experiences as a teacher trying to raise the confidence of students with Special Educational Needs, as well as my own experiences growing up with a Dyspraxia, a learning difficulty that effects organisation and processing. At many points when I was at school, I felt like I was not able to succeed in academic subjects. This changed, however, through the help of some patient teachers who celebrated my strengths I began to feel more confident.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been chosen because your views would be valuable in answering the question set for the study and I hoped you might be prepared to talk to me about your experiences and opinions.

If I take part in this research, what will be involved?

The interview should take no more than 45 minutes and I will make sure that I have checked with your teachers that when and where we talk is the most convenient for you and them. Permission has been given from Ms Meloni for me to invite you to this interview.

I would like to ask your consent to make an audio recording of our discussion so that I can refer back to what was said more accurately than would be possible just from my notes. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, I will accept your wish, and rely only on my written notes. Only I will have access to the audio recording. I do not need to share this with those at the University or in this practice setting. In any part of the interview which will be shared with my tutor or form part of the final dissertation report you and anyone else you name during our discussion will be referred to by a false name (pseudonym) and you will be asked if you would like to suggest what name I use. I will also refer to the school by a pseudonym to ensure you are completely anonymous.

What will we be talking about?

In the interview I will ask you questions about your experience of school. So that you are able to lead the discussion, these questions will be very open. I may ask you to a second interview in which I ask you to clarify and expand on your ideas from the first session. The questions are below:

Can you tell me about your journey in Education so far?

Can you tell me about where you view your journey in Education going?

These questions are deliberately open to you giving me your own views and experiences: this is so that my research is led by your lived experiences instead of you being led into giving particular responses. As outlined in the next section, everything that you say will be kept in the strictest confidence and will not be traceable back to you.

Will what I say be kept private?

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). No personal information about you, such as contained in your consent forms, will be shared more widely. In the case of the audio recording and my notes of the interview, these will be kept private only to me and typed up as soon as possible. However, if you let me know anything during your interview which I consider means that you might be unsafe or have been involved in a criminal act, because this is a safeguarding concern, I will need to pass this information immediately to the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer. When I make anonymised records of the interview, as outlined above, these will be stored securely on password protected devices and the original notes and recording will then be destroyed. I can confirm that neither you as an individual nor the setting will be identifiable in my submissions to the University or any presentations I make of my findings to interested audiences.

What happens now?

After reading this information sheet with your parent/carer, please read and complete the consent form. This means that you and your parent/carer sign your and their names and the date to say you are all happy for me to set up a time and place for the interview. Whether you agree or not is entirely up to you and your parent/carer, as the invitation is for you to take part voluntarily. You can change your mind later and withdraw from the study by letting me know and I will destroy the information (consent forms and interview files) I have created. This will be possible up until the time I am using your information as part of my assessment which is to be submitted on the 31st August 2023

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions about the study, I would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me at harrymoriarty@gmail.com

4: Example Consent Form

ECYS/WELS

E822 INTERVIEWS CONSENT AND ASSENT FORM

(to be completed by all participants and, if the participant is a child/young person under age 18, with and by their parent/carer/guardian)

If this request relates to a child/young person under the age of 18 and a child or young person would benefit from this, please would a parent, carer or guardian read these questions to them and, if necessary, complete the replies for them.

Please indicate YES or NO for each of the questions below and return the completed form by 05/05/2023 to Harry Moriarty.

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Have you read (or had read to you) the information about this interview? | YES | NO |
| Has someone explained this interview to you? | YES | NO |
| Do you understand what this interview is about? | YES | NO |
| Have you asked all the questions you want? | YES | NO |
| Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand? | YES | NO |
| Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time? | YES | NO |
| Will you have an adult present with you? | YES | NO |
| Are you happy for the interview to be audio recorded? | YES | NO |
| Are you happy with how your data will be stored? | YES | NO |
| Do you understand that your and any other real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the interview? | YES | NO |
| Are you happy to take part? | YES | NO |

If any answers are 'no' you can ask more questions. But if you **don't** want to take part, please let me know and **don't** sign your name.

If you **do** want to take part, please write your name and today's date

Your name _____

Date _____

If the person to be interviewed is a child or young person under 18 and you are happy for the child or young person you are responsible for (as their parent, carer or guardian) to participate, please could you also sign and date below.

Print name _____

Sign _____

Date _____

Thank you for your help.