AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WITH DYSPRAXIA IN UK SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

Volume 1 – Thesis

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Abstract

Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, DCD), a neurodevelopmental motor disorder, is characterised by difficulties with the acquisition and execution of coordinated movements which are markedly lower than expected (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The prevalence rate is between 5% and 10% of the population (Wright & Sugden, 1996; Lingam et al, 2009 and Meachon, 2017) with 1 in 10 students in the UK being affected (Colley, 2006; HDCD, 2017).

Previous literature in the area has largely been medically based (Esser, 2012) and lacks the voices of children and young people, however more recently this gap in knowledge has begun to be addressed (Lingam, Novak, Emond & Coad, 2014; Payne, Ward, Turner, Taylor, & Bark, 2013; Payne, 2015; Kane & Farrants, 2018; Kane-Hamer, 2018). Whilst there has been a vast array of literature looking at dyslexia, Autism and ADHD in education there remains a significant paucity of literature that focuses on dyspraxia in education and the literature that is available indicates a significant lack of knowledge and understanding (Stordy and Nicholl, 2000; Peters, Henderson & Dookun, 2004; Devonshire, 2017) and is not from the perspective of the child. Therefore this study adopts an interpretivist framework using a qualitative methodology to provide much needed research focusing on the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in education in the UK.

Eight young people aged between 11 and 18 were interviewed and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to explore their lived experiences of dyspraxia in education with 5 superordinate themes identified; “I struggle a bit with it, but not really” – Complexity and internal conflict; “I get twitchy when I’m nervous” – Recognition of incongruence & identification of Otherness; “I can’t be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand” – Need for empathy and understanding; “I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility” Identity formation; “I can go at my own speed” – Right kind of help needed.

The findings were then considered and interpreted through a humanistic psychology and Critical Disability Studies (CDS) lens. Concepts of cognitive dissonance; corporeal or embodied experience; psychoemotional disablism; internalised oppression; distributed competence were identified and finally the young people’s experiences were considered in relation to Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and Carl Rogers (1951) core conditions of worth, suggesting that in education these young people’s experiences negatively affect their psychological development and development of self.

Declaration

I declare that the main text of this thesis is entirely my own work. This work has not been previously submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature	Date
Casey Olivia Jane Edmonds	February 2020

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Abbreviations

ABA – Applied Behavioural Analysis

ADHD – Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

ALSPAC – Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children

BPS – British Psychological Society

CDS – Critical Disabilities Studies

DA – Discourse Analysis

DCD - Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

DfE – Department for Education

DSM 5 – Diagnostical and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th revision

DSM-111-R – Diagnostical and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 3rd revision revised

DSM-IV-TR – Diagnostical and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th revision text revision

EEG – Electroencephalogram

EFD – Executive Functioning Deficit

EHCP – Education, Health and Care plan

FE – Further Education

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IT – Information Technology

LA’s - Local Education Authorities

LDA’s – Learning Difficulty Assessments

LSA – Learning Support Assistant

MRI – Magnetic resonance imaging

NA – Narrative analysis

PE – Physical Education

PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education

SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

SEN – Special Educational Need

SENCO – Special Educational Need Coordinator

SEND – Special Educational Need and Disability

TA – Thematic analysis

TD – Typically developing

UEL – University of East London

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UPIAS – Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation

UREC – University Research Ethics Committee

US – United States

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Firstly, and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the young people and their families for their time and involvement in this study. For trusting and sharing their experiences with me and for sharing their stories so that we may better understand dyspraxia and what it is like to live with it.

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night you called to tell me that you had won the Head Teachers Award/‘Oscar’ for biggest transformation in your year group and you sounded so amazed, shocked and excited, I was so happy for you to have been recognised in front of your whole year group and again so proud.

I continue to watch you find ways around your dyspraxia, and now you laugh and embrace the bits you cannot change – you are a true inspiration. I began this journey on my PhD because of you – because I’d watched you grow up and struggle through school when people did not understand and sometimes did not seem to want to understand how it affected you, when a little care and compassion would have gone a long way and when sometimes there was not anything that could have been done but to listen and accept. There were some good teachers who did get this, who just seemed to get you and made school ok and who believed in you and still do to this day. So this PhD is for you – my determined and wonderful young man and I hope it helps others to understand how children like you experience having dyspraxia and help them to support such children to have a more enjoyable time at school. For you the world is your oyster now and you will go on to do great things, I love you.

Precis

Personal background

The aim and purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of secondary school aged children with dyspraxia in the UK. As such, the thesis examines the intersection of dyspraxia, adolescence and lived experience, with particular reference to educational lived experiences.

My interest in the topic of this study has developed over many years and through many personal experiences. I have an older brother who has a severe form of Epilepsy, known as Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome, learning difficulties, Autism and complex health needs. As a family and from early in my childhood, we became members of a charitable organization called “Kith and Kids”. Kith and Kids was set up by parents of people with disabilities to support not only the person with disabilities but also their whole family. It was through my involvement with this charity through all of my life that I met many other people of differing ages who had a variety of disabilities, as well as their families including siblings like myself.

What became apparent to me through these experiences was that for many people with disabilities, like my brother, there were a plethora of professionals who, as experts in their field, would claim to know what was best for these young people. Whilst this may be true medically, they did not often appear to elicit, or try to elicit, what the young person themselves felt might be best for them. Naturally these experiences were most strongly witnessed through observing my brother and his experiences of the professionals who surrounded him. As a family we knew his feelings and experiences, because we asked and we listened. The professionals, for whom his care was often entrusted (from the age of 11 he had to live in residential care) there seldom seemed to be a humanistic approach to understanding his experiences and his thoughts on his different disabilities or the approaches to his care. This has been consistent throughout his life with at times professionals talking *about* him, rather than *to* him, despite him being in the room. I have found this to be deeply dehumanizing and sadly have seen and heard it as a common experience for many other people with disabilities and their families.

In contrast I have also seen incidents where people with disabilities are included and supported in discussions that affect them and have seen how powerful this can be, both to them, by being ‘given’ a voice, but also to those who hear their voice, by gaining a deeper understanding. However, sadly these experiences have been far too few and are usually driven by families themselves, such as ours, or by organizations set up to advocate for those who have disabilities. From these experiences, I have over the years developed a desire to pursue my professional path in an area that aims to contribute to knowledge surrounding disabilities and those who live with them.

My interest in dyspraxia developed initially through my studies in Psychology at undergraduate level and further at Masters, and became ignited when my son was diagnosed with dyspraxia and dyscalculia at the age of 10. During my undergraduate level studies in Psychology, my interests lay strongly in developmental psychology, cognitive psychology and neuropsychology. It was not until my Masters studies in Applied Psychology that I became aware of dyspraxia and my interest in it was sparked. Throughout my son’s childhood (from birth) I had been aware of his difficulties but it wasn’t until studying at Masters level that I became cognizant exactly what it was my son was struggling with. During one of the lectures, which focused on developmental disorders, we were introduced to dyspraxia, it was then that I knew what my son had been struggling with all of his life and I began a journey of exploration to source as much information, advice and guidance about the disorder. At this time, I was also working as a research assistant, and whilst I was not researching developmental disorders, I used the skills and resources available to me to research as much as I could about dyspraxia in my spare time. This soon developed into a passion and area of research I wanted to pursue, both personally and professionally.

Throughout my journey, both personally with my son and through my research on this topic, I learned a great deal about dyspraxia, its prevalence, symptomology, comorbidity and areas of difficulty for those who live with it. However, I noticed that like many other developmental disorders and disabilities, there was a significant paucity of research which identified how those who have dyspraxia actually experience it. With my new found interest and passion for researching dyspraxia coupled with my experiences of those with disabilities not often having a voice, it followed that the focus of my Masters dissertation would address both of these areas. I conducted research into the experiences of adults recollecting their childhood experiences of dyspraxia (Edmonds, 2012). An unexpected finding was the negative experiences all the participants had at school due to their dyspraxia. The research I was conducting at the time did not allow for a strong focus on this one area and the participants in my study had all left school, some a long time ago. I wondered if the experiences described by these adults were similar or different to those that may be experienced by children going through education now. At the time of conducting my Masters dissertation there was only one other study which had tried to elicit the views of those with dyspraxia (Dixon, 2003), this study also elicited the views of parents and professionals. Whilst this was useful in that it showed that there were differences between the views, it did not go as far as to solely focus on the views of the person living with dyspraxia and as such did not, in my view, provide enough depth and detail of their experiences.

After witnessing my son go through some horrendous experiences in school due to his dyspraxia, my passion became even stronger that people with disabilities should be given a voice to explain how their lives are for them, especially within the education system. I also became passionate about the importance of allowing children a voice, especially children with disabilities, and as such, my desire to link these areas together and focus my research on the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in education grew.

Structure of thesis

Chapter 1 introduces dyspraxia, providing a report on the issue of terminology, prevalence, comorbidity, causation, assessment & diagnosis, symptomology, physical and mental health. Chapter 1 then looks at the historical context of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) within the UK, looking at how the Warnock Report affected policy and practice before focusing on how dyspraxia fits into such policies. Finally, chapter 1 finishes by looking at recent changes to UK SEND policy providing a context with in which the study is placed.

Chapter 2 begins by providing an overview of the models that have historically been used to understand disability before focusing specifically on the bio-psycho-social model and the emerging Critical Disability Studies model. Chapter 2 then provides a comprehensive review of the literature on dyspraxia, focusing on the experiences of dyspraxia, dyspraxia in education, peer relationships and bullying before focusing on literature that explores pupil participation and the voice of the child in education. Next, this chapter provides a systematic literature review of children's experiences of dyspraxia in education, before introducing the current study's aims and purpose of research and finally setting out the research questions.

Chapter 3 begins by detailing the theoretical stance for the study focusing on humanistic and person-centred psychology, specifically looking at the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, as well as briefly stating the influence of the models of disability, particularly the Critical Disability Studies model and how it informs the current study. Then the ontology and epistemology is set out before literature focusing on conducting research with children and the need for individual experience is presented. Chapter 3 then provides a detailed account of the chosen methodology for this study, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and explores in depth the philosophical underpinnings of the approach. Issues of sample size, research design and ethical considerations are explored before the participants identification, access and selection are detailed, presenting the selected participants and their details. Chapter 3 then provides a detailed account of the method of data collection and data analysis, setting out the six steps suggested when conducting IPA analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Finally chapter 3 provides a reflexive account of the data collection process and a discussion on credibility and trustworthiness.

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and research findings. It begins by presenting the themes before going on to explore the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data in detail. Five themes and 17 subthemes are presented and explored across cases, theme by theme, to provide a comprehensive account of the lived experiences of these young people in education. These themes are presented as a thematic account of the experiences of the young people in this study, which is in keeping with the idiographic element of IPA.

Chapter 5 then presents the discussion which explores the interpretative element of the findings. There are 5 psychological concepts detailed and explored in relation to the findings drawing on Critical Disability Studies and humanistic psychology. The chapter then considers the limitations of the research, limitations of IPA and discusses recommendations for future work.

Chapter 6 gives an account of the contribution this study brings to knowledge of dyspraxia in education and more specifically to children's lived experiences of having dyspraxia and the affects and impact this has on their educational experiences, and it considers the findings in relation to previous research and literature on the topic.

Chapter 1: Dyspraxia and Education - Historical overview & current context [1]

In order to provide a background to this study Chapter 1 will provide a historical overview and report of the literature, policy and legislation providing some context for this study. Beginning with an explanation as to what dyspraxia is, the chapter defines the diagnostic criteria, history of the disorder and issues with the language used to describe and define it before exploring what is known about dyspraxia from the literature. A history of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy in the UK is presented with particular focus on the Warnock Report (1978) and its seminal work, before focusing on the place of dyspraxia in SEND policy and legislation in the UK. Finally, current practice of implementing SEND educational policy, along with recent changes to SEND policy and legislation in the UK is presented in order to contextualise this study.

1.1 What is dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia comes from the Greek words ‘dys’ meaning abnormal or impaired and ‘Praxis’ meaning doing, action, deed or practice (Pauc & Norris, 2008). Practice involves knowing what to do and how to do something; it is especially pertinent here as those with dyspraxia have difficulties in both of these areas. Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, DCD)

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[1] With reference to the literature discussed in Chapter 1 – Introduction:
The literature briefly covered in the introduction is a report based on literature gathered over a number of years beginning in 2009 and gathered in a number of different ways. As explained in the precis, having a personal interest in the topic of this study I have gathered research over a number of years. Once I began exploring dyspraxia as a topic of interest for research, I gathered more literature through my work as a Research Assistant, and later a Research Fellow, accessing library resources & online resources. I also gathered literature by visiting different university library’s; by attending conferences and speaking with other academics; and lastly by spending 5 days in residence at the Dyscovery Centre, part of the University of South Wales, accessing their online and hard copy journal articles and resources.

is a developmental disorder, considered to be a chronic neurological disorder (Stansell, 2007), which begins in childhood (differing from acquired dyspraxia) that affects the planning of movements and co-ordination which occurs due to messages from the brain not being transmitted accurately to the body (Dyspraxia Foundation, n.d)[2].

Dyspraxia itself is not a new diagnosis, it was first documented in the 1900's by Collier who used the term 'Congenital maladroitness' (Ford, 1996, Cited in Stafford, 2003), however the term dyspraxia (including DCD) is relatively new. In 1949 Annell described this disorder referring to the 'clumsy child' as "awkward in movements, poor at games, hopeless in dancing and gymnastics, a bad writer and defective in concentration. He is inattentive, cannot sit still, leaves his shoelaces untied, does buttons wrongly, bumps into furniture, breaks glassware, slips off his chair, kicks his legs against the desk, and perhaps reads badly" (Annell, 1949, cited in Thambirajah, 2011, p. 219). The Dyspraxia Foundation, a UK based charity, defines it as "an impairment or immaturity of the organization of movement. Associated with this may be problems of language, perception and thought" (Dyspraxia Foundation, 2013) which highlights the additional difficulties faced by those with the disorder.

Dyspraxia (referred to by its alternate name of Developmental Coordination Disorder) in the most recent revision of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013) is cited as a motor disorder with the diagnostic criteria being;

A. *The acquisition and execution of coordinated motor skills is substantially below that expected given the individual's chronological age and opportunity for skill learning and use. Difficulties are manifested as*

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[2] https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia/

clumsiness (e.g., dropping or bumping into objects) as well as slowness and inaccuracy of performance of motor skills e.g., catching an object, using scissors or cutlery, handwriting, riding a bike, or participating in sports).

B. *The motor skills deficit in Criteria A significantly and persistently interferes with activities of daily living appropriate to chronological age e.g., self-care and self-maintenance) and impacts academic/school productivity, prevocational and vocational activities, leisure, and play.*

C. *Onset of symptoms is in the early developmental period.*

D. *The motor skills deficits are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or visual impairment and are not attributable to a neurological condition affecting movement (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, degenerative disorder).*

(DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 74)

The changes seen from the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) to the DSM 5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) include a change in category placement, from the category of Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence in the DSM-IV-TR to the DSM-5 category of Neurodevelopmental Disorders. The diagnostic criteria remained essentially the same, with the addition of Criteria C, which states that this is a developmental disorder beginning in an early developmental period. However, there were some additional elements which included the expanded explanation about the impact the difficulties have on the person. There was also a shift in language where “Mental Retardation” (DSM-IV-TR, American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 58) was replaced with “intellectual disability” (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 74). Lastly, there was no mention of Pervasive Developmental Disorder in DSM-5 as there had been in DSM-IV-TR. Despite these few changes and amendments, it is clear that the essence of the criteria for dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder) has not changed in the intervening years.

1.1.1 Terminology

Historically, children with coordination difficulties have been described in a number of ways since the early 1990's (Ford, 1996, cited in Stafford, 2003) where dyspraxia (or Developmental Coordination Disorder, DCD, as it is also known) was first termed as 'congenital maladroitness' by Collier (Ford, 1996, cited in Stafford, 2003). There were a variety of often deficit laden and pejorative terms used to describe the disorder, such as: 'clumsy child syndrome' (Gubbay, 1975), 'physical awkwardness' (Wall et al., 1990), 'Motor Morons', 'minimal brain damage', 'motor dysfunction', DAMP (Disorder of Attention, Motor control and Perception) (Gillberg, 2003) and specific developmental disorder of motor function (WHO, 1993). More recently the terms Developmental Coordination Disorder (Kirby, 1999) and dyspraxia (Denckla, 1984) have been used.

In the United Kingdom (UK) the Dyspraxia Foundation defines dyspraxia as: "Dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination, in children and adults. While DCD is often regarded as an umbrella term to cover motor coordination difficulties, dyspraxia refers to those people who have additional problems planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations. Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought." (Dyspraxia Foundation 2013).[3]

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[3] Sourced at: https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/

Dyspraxia was formally recognized (as Developmental Coordination Disorder) when first included in the DSM-111-R in 1987 and has remained in all revisions since then to the most recent revision DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (WHO, ICD-10, 1992a; 1992b; 1993). Whilst it is recognized that dyspraxia is the more commonly used term for this disorder, the more “recent, formal and widely internationally used term to describe these children is DCD” (Kirby & Sugden, 2007, p. 182). Polatajko et al, (1995) suggest that the term DCD is also largely used in research and certainly remains the preferred term in clinical settings.

In 1994, during an international consensus meeting held in London, Ontario Canada, an agreement was reached to use the term DCD and to define it as:

"DCD is a chronic and usually permanent condition characterized by impairment of both functional performance and quality of movement that is not explicable in terms of age or intellect, or by any other diagnosable neurological or psychiatric features. Individuals with DCD display a qualitative difference in movement which differentiate them from those of the same age without the disability. The nature of these qualitative differences, whilst considered to change over time, tends to persist through the life span" (Fox & Polatajko, 1994, p. 92).

Despite this consensus statement the issues with terminology remain. In 2011, Miyahara & Baxter identified that out of 118 respondents in New Zealand 84% were diagnosed with ‘dyspraxia’ while 25% were diagnosed with ‘DCD’. In 2001, Peters, Barnett & Henderson reported on how health and education professionals used the terms ‘clumsy’, ‘dyspraxia’ and ‘DCD’ and identified that of 234 professionals all provided a definition for ‘clumsy’ but 7% were unfamiliar with the term ‘dyspraxia’ while 32% were unfamiliar with the term ‘DCD’. When these professionals were asked about associated problems 15% of respondents identified there were academic problems associated with ‘dyspraxia’ while less than 6% identified academic problems as being associated with ‘clumsy’ and ‘DCD’ (Peters, Barnett & Henderson, 2001). Both of these studies, occurring after the consensus statement, suggest that the term dyspraxia appears to remain better recognized and used more often, than the term DCD.

For the purposes of this study, the term dyspraxia is used rather than DCD. This is because it has been recognized as the more commonly used (Kirby & Sugden, 2007) and seemingly, more prominent term in the UK. In addition, a survey conducted by the Dyspraxia Foundation in the UK identified that 12 out of 14 teenagers prefer the term dyspraxia over the term DCD (Dyspraxia Foundation, 2011). As this study is focusing on children’s experiences and views of their dyspraxia in the UK, it seems respectful to use the terminology they prefer. Furthermore, DCD is predominantly a US medical term and as such is cited in the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) locating it within the medical model of disability. As discussed later, this study’s theoretical stance, informed by humanistic and person-centred psychology, identifies with a Critical Disability Studies model of disability, it therefore seems inappropriate to use a medical model term. Additionally, this study aims to highlight the experiences of those who have dyspraxia, not to label them using negative connotations such as ‘disorder’. Therefore, this study emphasizes that concerning the many debates of the possible distinctions between DCD and dyspraxia; the term dyspraxia will be used within this study as being synonymous with DCD.

1.1.2 Prevalence, co-morbidity & causation

Studies suggest that the prevalence rate for dyspraxia/DCD is between 5% and 18% of the population in the UK (Portwood, 1996; Dixon, 2003). Wright & Sugden (1996), Lingam et al (2009) and Meachon (2017) however, suggest a more realistic prevalence figure would be between 5% and 10% of the population, with 1 in 10 students in the UK being affected (Colley, 2006; HDCD, 2017). As with some other developmental disorders, a higher proportion of those diagnosed with dyspraxia are males with figures suggesting rates as high as 70%-80% (Missiuna & Polatajko, 1995; Caçola, 2016). Dyspraxia is thought to be highly co-morbid with other disorders such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders (MacNeil & Mostofsky, 2012), and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with some studies suggesting rates as high as 50-60% (Portwood, 1999; Rasmussen & Gillberg, 2000; Williams, Omizzolo, Ga- lea, & Vance, 2012; Goulardins et al, 2015; Meachon, 2017). In addition, Kaplan, Wilson, Dewey & Crawford's (1998) research shows an association with reading difficulties of 55%, whilst Pauc (2005, cited in Sanfilippo et al, 2019) suggests the rate could be as high as 85% comorbid with dyslexia and Losse et al (1991) identified an 82% comorbidity level with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Dyspraxia is considered a neurological disorder (Stansell, 2007) that can affect the planning of movements and co-ordination as a result of brain messages not being properly transmitted through the body (Polatajko, Fox, & Missiuna, 1995; Dyspraxia Foundation, 2013). It is thought that it presents difficulties in two distinct areas; one being a difficulty with planning a sequence of coordinated movements, known as ideational dyspraxia and the second being a difficulty in executing a plan, despite it being known; this is known as ideo-motor dyspraxia (Udoh & Okoro, 2013). Some have described this as a difficulty in getting your body to do what you want it to do, when you want it to do it (Ripley, Daines & Barrett, 1997).

Despite much literature attempting to progress theories of causation, there remains no known cause (Meachon, 2017). Neurologically it is thought to be a result of immaturity of neurone development in the brain (Colley, 2006; Newman & Newman, 2012), however no apparent brain damage/lesions have been noted in MRI scans (Hall, 2000; Stansell, 2007). Some studies have compared the perceptual and motor processes of those with dyspraxia to those who have acquired apraxia (caused by left hemisphere brain damage) finding the behaviours of the two groups were very similar and therefore concluding neurological delays in the left hemisphere may be indicated in dyspraxia (Poole, et al, 1997). Some literature suggests a link between abnormalities of the corpus callosum, prematurity and children with dyspraxia (Mercuri et al, 1996), whilst other research suggests there may be a link with poor cerebellum function and that this may well be the cause (Leiner, Leiner & Dow, 1989; Sanes, Dimitrov & Hallett, 1990; Ivry, 2003; Sigmundsson, Hansen & Talcott, 2003; Cantin, Polatajko, Thach & Jaglal, 2007). As the cerebellum is the brains skill centre (Stoodley, 2016) it is thought it may not be communicating well with the cerebrum which is the thinking centre of the brain. This would correlate with suggestions in some literature that there may be a link to premature birth (Holsti, Grunau & Whitfield, 2003) as many children with dyspraxia were born prematurely and the cerebellum is particularly vulnerable to premature birth (Volpe, 2009), whilst others suggest there may be a link with birth trauma (Stansell, 2007).

Dyspraxia is a lifelong condition (Gomez & Sirigu, 2015) and despite there being no concrete cause yet known, it is evident from the literature that the prevailing hypothesis is that it is developmental and neurologically based. As such, it may be considered as one of the disorders encompassed by the term, neurodiversity. The term neurodiversity, despite being controversial, has become an increasingly popular term used to refer to a spectrum of neurological profiles that involve differences in information processing and as such encompasses certain disabilities and special educational needs such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. The term is designed to regard "atypical neurological development as a normal human difference" (Jaarsma & Welin, 2012, p. 20) and whilst developed in the 1990's by online groups of high functioning autistic people, it is now associated with many neurological and neurodevelopmental disorders and the pursuit of civil rights for these groups (Jaarsma & Welin, 2012). The literature relating to neurodiversity is a rapidly growing area, involving suggestions and implications for education (Cigman, 2007; Griffin & Pollak, 2009; Pollak, 2009) and supports the Critical Disability Studies model (explored in more detail in Chapter 2, section 2.2.1) that inform this study, recognising the real experiences of impairment as differences associated with having a brain which is wired differently (Runswick-Cole, et al, 2016).

1.1.3 Assessment and Diagnosis

Identification, assessment and diagnosis of dyspraxia have been notoriously difficult (Gibbs, Appleton & Appleton, 2007). One cause of this difficulty is the current DSM-5 (2013) criteria of the performance in daily activities that require motor co-ordination being below that expected for the person's age and measured intelligence. Measuring intelligence in a clinical setting does not routinely take place due to issues with access to professionals, time and cost; therefore, often the measure of intelligence is whether the child in mainstream education is identified as having additional educational needs or not (Sugden, Kirby & Dunford, 2008). However, this is a very subjective and potentially misleading approach to diagnosis. For example, children *without* additional educational needs can at times, due to other factors in their lives, present as though they *do* have additional educational needs. Similarly those who do have additional educational needs can at times get missed or go unnoticed, especially if they are exhibiting frustration for example, which may lead others to focus on their behaviour rather than what's causing it. Additionally the average, or above average, intelligence that often accompanies dyspraxia may mask the difficulties and prevent or delay a consideration of a diagnosis for the child (Kirby, 1999; Walker et al, 2018).

Healthcare professionals who do not have adequate knowledge about dyspraxia may further hinder the identification and diagnosis of the disorder, especially if a better-known comorbid disorder is present, giving little to no consideration of dyspraxia (Kirby, Salmon & Edwards, 2007; Salmon & Kemp, 2002). Kirby (1999) suggests that more recognition and knowledge is required for an early identification of the disorder and timely intervention to improve outcomes.

Currently in the UK, the main assessment tool used for diagnosis of dyspraxia is the standardized Movement Assessment Battery for Children – Second Edition (Movement ABC-2, Barnett, Henderson, & Sugden, 2007) with a diagnosis confirmed if the child falls below the 5th percentile. This assessment is designed to identify the acquisition and execution of coordination motor skills and is usually carried out by an occupational therapist of physiotherapist. The results and report from this assessment are then used in conjunction with a paediatrician's (or paediatric neurologist's) assessment of the child to ensure that the motor difficulties present are not caused by any other intellectual disability, visual impairment or neurological condition. As such a diagnosis of dyspraxia in the UK consists of at least two professionals working together, but can include other professionals working as part of a multi-professional team to ensure that any other comorbid disorders are also diagnosed.

However, some literature highlights concerns with the lack of advanced neuroimaging technologies used, such as the MRI and EEG, in screening for dyspraxia (Peters & Henderson, 2008; Scarbar et al, 2006). These concerns stem from the potential to misattribute serious medical illnesses (which are identified through neuroimaging technologies) as dyspraxia, as well as the potential to not recognise the comorbidity of other conditions that may require a different approach to be taken (Peters & Henderson, 2008; Scarbar et al, 2006). A multidisciplinary team assessment would potentially be more suitable for assessing a child’s difficulties across many areas, giving a holistic sense of the child. This coupled with a historical account from the primary care giver and assessment/observations of the child in their natural setting may help to establish an accurate and informed diagnosis (Christmas & Van de Weyer, 2019).

1.1.4 Symptomology

The literature surrounding dyspraxia identifies that children with the disorder, as with other developmental disorders, do not fit neatly into one group (Kirby, 1999). The severity and range of difficulties in this disorder vary widely, making this disorder complex (Henderson, 1987; Udoh & Okoro, 2013; Meachon, 2017). Research suggests that the symptoms of dyspraxia can include, in addition to deficits with the coordination of eye and body movements’ (Avila-Pesantez, et al, 2018), problems with perception such as visual perception, tactile perception and auditory perception, coupled with issues with proprioception (body awareness) (Christmas, 2017; Christmas & Van de Weyer, 2019). Cognitive and neuropsychological literature suggests that a neurological immaturity, such as the delayed maturation of the axial structures, can cause difficulties with body spatial awareness and have an adverse effect on spatial perception (Ishpanovich-Radoikovich, 1993).

There may be poor registration and interpretation of messages received from the senses coupled with a difficulty in translating the messages into appropriate actions (Udoh & Okoro, 2013; Meachon, 2017). Additionally, children with the disorder are also reported to have difficulties with posture and movement control (Losse, et al 1991; Colley, 2006; Meachon, 2017). These immature patterns are often retained and further cause difficulties in developing complex coordination skills (Peters and Wright, 1999; Stafford, 2000). Those who live with dyspraxia tire easily due to having to work much harder with everyday tasks and can become withdrawn and exhibit behavioural problems as secondary symptoms (Rasmussen & Gillberg 2000; Gibbs et al, 2007; Summers et al 2008a; Kirby et al 2011).

People with dyspraxia are often of average or above average intelligence, however can have great difficulties with planning and organising thoughts (Dyspraxia Foundation, 2013). Difficulties with controlling eye movements can also be an issue; they may find it difficult to track a moving object or look quickly and effectively from one object to another, such as copying from the board at school on to paper, which can have a great effect on hand-eye coordination (Hurst, et al, 2006; Udoh & Okoro, 2013). Articulation of language may be immature, though not in all cases (Pedro, et al, 2019). Additionally, there may be other specific learning difficulties, such as problems with reading, writing, spelling and mathematical concepts proving immensely difficult yet not always constituting another diagnosis even though causing significant difficulties (Goulardins et al, 2015; Meachon, 2017). Issues with personality and behaviour, for example restlessness, unhappiness, loneliness, poor self-esteem, lack of confidence and behaviour problems due to frustration have also been linked to dyspraxia (Ball, 2002) which can develop into secondary emotional problems (Cassidy et al, 2006; Walker et al, 2018). It is clear the consequences of dyspraxia are complex and far-reaching, affecting the child's social, emotional, motor, language, perceptual skills and reasoning abilities and having implications for low self-esteem and self-confidence. Dyspraxia, despite being well documented, remains poorly understood and often referred to as the 'hidden handicap' (Kirby, 1999) as the child looks the same as their peers but have many difficulties which are especially evident at school and at home. Because of the lack of understanding and the hidden nature of dyspraxia many children go through life without appropriate support and intervention often being labelled as stupid, clumsy and/or lazy (Pedro, Goldschmidt & Daniels, 2019).

1.1.5 Physical and mental health

As dyspraxia involves difficulties with coordinating gross motor body movements, and the literature reports lower levels of engagement in physical activities, a review of the literature surrounding physical health and dyspraxia is important. The literature in this area has focused primarily on the impact motor difficulties have on the participation in physical activities (Barnhart, Davenport, Epps & Nordquist, 2003; Evans & Roberts, 1987; Mandich, Polatajko & Roger, 2003; Missiuna, Rivard & Pollock, 2004). It has also been concerned with policy and practice, providing a framework for allied healthcare services for those with dyspraxia (Forsyth, Maciver, Howden, Owen & Shepherd, 2008). Assessment, screening and intervention within the NHS formed the basis of a review aimed to inform non-experts of the issues facing those with dyspraxia (Bowens and Smith, 1999). This highlighted the lack of knowledge of the disorder within the primary care setting, suggesting that GP's and health visitors were largely unaware of the disorder and as such of the health implications. Furthermore, the review suggested that due to this lack of knowledge, healthcare providers tend to attribute parental concern with over-anxiety (Bowens and Smith, 1999). Dyspraxia is associated with many health concerns including issues of obesity and heart problems due to inactivity or difficulty with physical exercise (Cairney et al., 2010; Hendrix, Prins & Dekkers, 2014) as well as issues of mental health (Pratt & Hill, 2011; Hill & Brown, 2013; Caçola, 2016; Harrowell et al., 2017; Pedro et al, 2019).

Due to the complex nature of dyspraxia and the potential for many secondary emotional and behavioural symptoms, it is important to explore the psychosocial aspects of dyspraxia, the implications for mental health, and to consider these in the context of education in order to understand a more holistic view and background for this study. Selikowitz (1992), for example, suggests, "other children, teachers, relatives and society in general, play an important part in determining how a child sees himself and how well he copes" (p. 101). Therefore, others may contribute, unintentionally, to the child's diminishing self-esteem and confidence through their lack of understanding and unrealistic expectations (Edmonds, 2013). Children with dyspraxia are known to have difficulty in organising themselves (Peters, Barnett & Henderson, 2001), potentially making them stand out from their peers and this could result in teachers becoming frustrated (Edmonds, 2013). The child can feel humiliated when being reprimanded and/or compared to their peers (Kendall, 2016). Children may experience this as humiliation, rejection and mistreatment, often being excluded rather than accommodated (Payne, 2015; Ruiz-Perez, et al, 2018). Ridicule and humiliation can take many forms and even if not intended, is still detrimental (Edmonds, 2012). Another area where teachers can effect a child’s self-esteem and confidence is when dealing with the child academically. Children with dyspraxia are often slower to finish tasks, especially writing as this requires a lot of their concentration and physical effort. The teacher may make the child stay in to finish work and comment on their slowness in front of their peers (Edmonds, 2012). There are many ways in which teachers can affect a child’s confidence and self-esteem, especially when they have a disorder such as dyspraxia, however it is also important to consider the impact that these actions have on the peers of the child (Edmonds, 2013). If other children are witnessing the dyspraxic child being reprimanded by an authority figure for such things as slowness, messy writing, disorganisation and inability to participate effectively in physical activities, it may be that they mirror this behaviour and tease or bully the child. Furthermore, it is recognised that children with dyspraxia can be extra sensitive and emotional compared to their peers (Kirby & Drew, 2013; Chen, Tseng, Hu & Cermak, 2009; Piek, Bradbury, Elsley & Tate, 2008). It has also been suggested that when children are less accepted by their peers this has a negative impact on their grades and teachers perceive them to be more anxious, fearful, and depressed when compared to their peers (Cook & Cook, 2009). Additionally, research has identified correlations between peer rejection and higher rates of delinquency, arrest, violent behaviour and substance abuse (Kupersmidt & Coie 1990; Ollendick et al. 1992). Furthermore, longitudinal research has highlighted that 58% of children diagnosed with ADHD and DCD aged 7, were unemployed, had a criminal record, were alcohol or drug users or had mental health issues by the age of 22. This contrasted significantly with the study's control group (who did not have ADHD/DCD), where by only 13% had these outcomes (Rasmussen & Gillberg, 2000).

Many researchers suggest that the psychosocial problems associated with dyspraxia are of considerable concern and have identified issues of low self-worth in children with this disorder (Rose, Larkin and Berger 1997; Skinner & Piek 2001). Furthermore, issues with low self-esteem have been reported (Kalliopuska & Kirila, 1987; Cassidy et al, 2016; Poole et al, 2018). Children with dyspraxia are reported to be more susceptible to victimisation and bullying which further affects their self-esteem and confidence (Cairney et al., 2013; Mancini et al., 2016). It is worth considering the role of peer relationships and the effects victimisation and bullying has on children with dyspraxia as the damage can be long lasting and deep, effecting future relationships as well as the future of the child as an adult. Without a positive concept of one's self, good self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities, people might find it difficult to identify and pursue their own goals. Additionally, children may take any inevitable knocks as rejection and a sign that they are not capable. This may have the effect of making them try fewer things, become withdrawn, unhappy and unfulfilled and is very damaging to their emotional wellbeing.

The effects of peer relationships therefore are an important factor in the development of self-esteem and confidence and crucially are indicated in being a detrimental force if the relationship is negative and damaging. Additionally, the psychosocial implications of living with dyspraxia are vast and not only impact on the child, but on their family, friends and society as a whole. As such, a better understanding is required and essential in order to help combat these psychosocial outcomes and reduce the negative impact on the emotional wellbeing of the child.

Crane, Sumner & Hill (2017) note that children with Developmental Coordination Disorder exhibit high levels of psychopathology including anxiety, depression and low self-esteem and as such their study aimed to investigate emotional and behavioural difficulties in these children and controls. They explored teacher and parental views of children aged 7-10 using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) finding higher rates of reported emotional and behavioural problems for those with Developmental Coordination Disorder relative to their typically developing peers. The researchers concluded that there is a need for monitoring the levels of emotional and behavioural problems in children with dyspraxia (DCD) and that it may be beneficial to have multiple informants when doing so. Whilst this study is important in highlighting the psychosocial implications of living with dyspraxia it did so from the viewpoint of the parents and professionals (in this case educational professionals) and therefore lacks input from the children themselves.

A study conducted in 2018 highlighted the disparity between parents and children's views, indicating that the children rarely expressed the same expectations as their parents with regard to their participation and needs, with most children stating they did not want more support (Jasmin, Tetreault, Lariviere & Joly, 2018). This further highlights the importance of exploring the specific experiences of children with dyspraxia to ensure their views, experiences and 'voices' are heard and added to the literature. This is especially important, as it has been shown that there is a difference between parental and professional accounts, needs and perceptions and of those of the children themselves and as such it is essential this disparity is addressed (Jasmin, Tetreault, Lariviere & Joly, 2018).

1.2 Historical context of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

In order to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools it is important first to understand the historical and changing views of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) within the UK before focusing on how and where dyspraxia fits in to this history. There are many issues involved in the study of SEND which are important historically as they have helped shape the way that disability policies have been developed. Furthermore, these issues have, and continue to, influence society's views of disability. Therefore a historical overview of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and its emergence in UK educational policy is pivotal and a focus on key historical events is important in order to reflect and arrive at the present day context.

The emergence of policy and legislation focusing on SEND in the UK is a relatively recent phenomenon in educational policy. Historically the language used to describe those with SEND has been pejorative and deficit laden. Terms such as 'retard', 'backward', 'maladjusted', 'educationally subnormal' and 'feeble minded' have been used, not only publicly but also in SEN policy and legislation just over 100 years ago (Garner, 2009). Additionally, the legislation in the UK, when it did come into effect, has also historically been riddled with negative terminology such as 'feeble minded', 'imbeciles' and 'idiots' (Garner, 2009). The terminology used has been contentious for many reasons, one of which is the indication/apportion of blame which many of the pejorative labels assumed upon the individual. Until the 1970's the implication was that the disability or Special Educational Need was within the child with little or no recognition of causal factors, or the impact of other factors such as the school environment, home environment or social aspects (Garner, 2009).

Historically, those considered to have a disability or a Special Educational Need, were not considered educable and as such schools designed specifically to educate such children are a relatively recent phenomenon (Wearmouth, 2012). Policy and legislation protecting the rights to an education of those with a SEND is an even more recent phenomenon. There were a few schools designed for children who were blind set up in the late 1700's with the first being established by Henry Dannett, in 1791, in Liverpool. However this was not for education as such, rather child labour was the expectation and as such children and adults who were blind were trained in music and manual crafts in order to earn a living (Warnock, 1978).

Many other private establishments followed suit in large cities across the United Kingdom over the following 15 years or so. It was not until 1835 that a school for the blind began to be genuinely educational by introducing elements of arithmetic, reading and writing into the vocational training (Warnock, 1978). At this time these 'schools' were largely called 'asylums' and only a small portion of blind children attended. Similar schools set up for the deaf in the early 1760's provided some places where pupils who paid were taught to read and write. These schools for the 'deaf and dumb' however remained segregated from society (Warnock, 1978). There was no other provision for educating children with other disabilities or Special Educational Needs. Aside from the schools for the blind and 'deaf and dumb' there remained no education for other Special Educational Needs or disabilities until 1847 when the 'Asylum for Idiots' was established and 1851 when the ‘Cripples Home and Industrial School for Girls’ was established, followed a few years later in 1865 by the ‘Home for Crippled Boys’. However not all of these establishments were reported as providing an education and most required payment (Warnock, 1978).

Following on from these private institutions the ‘Lunacy Act’ (1862) in Scotland granted licenses for the care and training of ‘imbecile children’ however in England the Forster Education Act (1870) did not include disabled children. It was not until 1874 that the London School Board established a special class for the deaf, and the education of the deaf and blind from ages 7-16 in elementary school was introduced in 1893 (Warnock, 1978).

The Egerton Commission (1889) set recommendations for compulsory education of the blind, deaf and mentally ‘handicapped’, identifying three groups; 1- ‘idiots’, 2- ‘imbeciles’ and 3- ‘feeble minded’. Groups 2 and 3 were considered to be educable and so the setting up of special schools was recommended. This led to the establishment of a committee on ‘defective and epileptic children’, set up by the Education Department in 1896, which stated that school authorities needed to make provision for all defective children. The Elementary (Defective and Epileptic) Act followed in 1899 granting power to school authorities to determine which children were ‘defective or epileptic’. This act granted parents the ability to present their child for examination by the school authority stating that “and any school authority failing to provide such facilities shall be deemed to have acted in contravention of this Act” (Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, p. 115). It provided all deaf or blind children a right to an education to age 16 which was higher than the provision for ‘normal’ children who could be partially or totally exempt from school from the age of 11. The Act goes on to state that it is “the duty of the parent of any child who may be required by the school authority to be examined to cause the child to attend such examination, and any parent who fails to comply with such requirement shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds" (Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, p. 115). Whilst this act allowed for the provision of special schools and the education of those children deemed to 'defective or epileptic', it could be said that it also placed parents in a position which gave them little or no control or decision making regarding their child's examination and therefore subsequent diagnosis and education and allowed for segregation of those deemed to be 'defective or epileptic' from other children their age.

The Education Act in 1921 identified four categories of 'handicap'; blind, deaf, defective (which included physical and mental disabilities) and epileptic (Warnock, 1978). In 1924 a mental deficiency committee ahead of its time suggested that those with a metal deficiency should not necessarily be separated from mainstream education. Butler's 1944 Education Act emphasised that the effective education of those considered to have a 'handicap' was to provide special education in special schools and continue segregation into secondary education but did allow for those considered to have less serious 'handicaps' to be educated within ordinary schools. This Act increased the categories of disability to ten which were "identified as: blind, partially sighted, deaf, partially deaf, delicate, educationally subnormal, epileptic, maladjusted, physically handicapped and speech deficits" (Gibson & Blandford, 2005, p. 6). Despite the many different acts throughout history, the provision of special education for all 'handicapped' children no matter how severe their disability only became concrete in legislation with the introduction of the Education (Handicapped

Children) Act of 1970 and the Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act of 1974.

1.2.1 Warnock Report (1978)

In 1973 (after consulting with the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales and the Secretaries of State for Social Services and Employment) the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, Margaret Thatcher appointed Mary Warnock to appoint a committee and chair a review of educational provision in England, Scotland and Wales. The proposed review was “to review educational provision in England, Scotland and Wales for children and young people handicapped by disabilities of body or mind, taking account of the medical aspects of their needs, together with arrangements to prepare them for entry into employment; to consider the most effective use of resources for these purposes; and to make recommendations” (Warnock Report, 1978, p. 1).

Importantly, the Warnock report identified a shift in thinking, recognizing other factors influencing educational difficulties and identifying the potential that ‘familial or wider social deficiencies’ may have on children with educational difficulties. The report commented that “While for most children their family life enhances their development, others show educational difficulties because they do not obtain from their families or their social circumstances the quality of stimulation or the sense of stability which is necessary for proper educational progress” (Warnock Report, 1978, p. 4). Warnock (1978) also recognized the differences environment could have on ‘disabling’ a child educationally; “Schools differ, often widely, in outlook, expertise, resources, accommodation, organization and physical and social surroundings, all of which help to determine the degree to which the individual is educationally handicapped”, (Warnock, 1978, p. 37). Importantly the report identified, possibly for the first time in legislative history, the need to consider the child as a whole person. This lead to the suggestion of a more positive approach, putting forward “the concept of SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED, seen not in terms of a particular disability which a child may be judged to have, but in relation to everything about him, his abilities as well as his disabilities - indeed all the factors which have a bearing on his educational progress” (Warnock, 1978, p. 37). The Warnock report (1978) therefore can be seen as an important and significant shift in thinking regarding Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), one that identified that potentially 1 in 5 children could need provision for Special Educational Needs. These needs however could stem from many different causes and may not all be long term, but that without appropriate provision their difficulties could be prolonged and reinforced by repeated experiences of failure. Issues of labelling (or categorization) began to be discussed through the process of compiling this report. This identified the problematic nature of such labels, especially as many children with SEND do not have just one diagnosis, but also importantly recognizing the stigma labels attract. The report recommended the abolishment of the single categorization of ‘handicapped’ stating the most important argument for the abolishment was due to the distinction it created of there being just two groups of children, ‘handicapped’ and ‘non-handicapped’. It did however recognize “for the sake of convenience” (Warnock, 1978, p. 44) some descriptive terms would be required and as such recommended the term ‘children with learning difficulties’ which could be defined as mild, moderate or severe, as well as the term ‘specific learning difficulties’ for children with specific difficulties such as with reading. The changing of label’s suggested that emphasis would be placed on the specific nature of the child’s difficulties (and therefore the type of special education required) and would be less likely to stigmatize.

The Warnock (1978) report identified the need for a new system to record children’s Special Educational Needs which placed the obligation of providing special educational provision with the local authority, basing that provision on the assessment by a multi-disciplinary team of the child’s profile and needs, but also stipulated that the child’s parents be included as fully as possible. The report’s emphasis appeared to be moving away from an individual deficit model of disability to include the recognition of a more social and environmental model of disability.

Throughout the historical changes in legislation and policy regarding Special Educational Needs and Disability, no reference is directly made to dyspraxia (or DCD). However, the Warnock report (1978) did recognize the educational difficulties faced by children who would now most likely be referred to as having dyspraxia; “a child with impaired fine motor movements in his fingers has a physical disability which, though far from obvious and possibly not significant medically, may constitute a considerable handicap educationally since he will find great difficulty in writing”, (Warnock, 1979, p. 36). Again, although not directly identifying dyspraxia (or DCD) in the legislation at the time, the change in terminology created by the Warnock report (1978) which recommended a new term of ‘specific learning difficulty’, identifies a point in history where dyspraxia (DCD) could have fitted in with the legislation.

1.3 The current context of Special Educational Needs and Disability - policy and practice

There is no doubt that the Warnock report (1978) was a significantly influential report which changed the shape of Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) provision and which influenced, changed and shaped thinking leading to the current context. Certainly, many of the recommendations within the report can still be seen every day in mainstream schools throughout the country, for example, a lead person within every school (at the time it would have been the head teacher most likely, now it would be the SENCO) or every child having a folder in school recording their progress and achievements which can be accessed at any time, to name a few.

Since the seminal Warnock report (1978) there has also been a significant shift in the way in which disabled people themselves challenge their isolation and marginalization by “speaking for themselves, demanding civil rights, & refusing to tolerate exclusion and silencing” (Shakespeare et al, 1996, p. 1). For young children it is often the parents who seek the rights for their child and in recent times there has been a change seen in SEND policy and practice within the UK.

Between September and October of 2010, the Department for Education (DfE), under the then new Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government in the UK, began a review of the provision for children with SEND and launched a call for views to feed into the green paper ‘children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities’. The DfE stated that one of the commitments made by the then new Children’s Minister, Sarah Teather, was to improve the well-being and achievement of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as well as supporting their families. As such, parents, charities, teachers and Local Authorities (LA’s) were invited to contribute to the government's SEN Green Paper, which ultimately would outline the UK government's approach to supporting these children and their parents as well as those who work with them. The DfE invited responses on topics raised and indicated that a number of recent reviews, including those by Brian Lamb (2009), Toby Salt (2010), John Bercow (2008) and a review on aiming higher for disabled children (on better support for families) had contributed to their understanding of the issues faced by children young people and their families as well as the services that support them. The purpose of developing the green paper was to consider how they could achieve better educational outcomes and life chances for those with SEND that would focus from the early years through to adult life and employment. They wanted to achieve better early intervention; public services centred on the needs of the family and the child joining up support from education, social care and health, particularly for those with the most severe and complex needs and at key transitions; and finally to streamline assessment systems in order that parents do not feel they have to struggle with the system to get the support that they need. It was reported[4] that 1821 responses to the call for views were received and that of those responses 40% came from parents of children with SEND.

The green paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - A Consultation' (DfE, 2011), following the consultation period was presented to parliament in March 2011. This event marked a significant change in the Special Educational Needs and Disability system within the UK. The Green paper indicated that its inception was due to a recognition that children and young people identified as SEND in the UK were

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[4] 'SEN and disability Green paper analysis of responses to the call for views' sourced at https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=conResults&consultationId=1736&external=no&menu=3

finding it difficult to get the support that they needed in order that they could do well. It also recognized that the families of these young people were finding the prevailing system arduous, complex and overly bureaucratic. Additionally, professionals working to support children with SEND's were working separately which in turn made gaining the required support more difficult and complex. The DfE also stated that they wanted to ensure that the support and services that young people with SEND required to make the transition smoothly from childhood, adolescence and into adulthood was available to them and as such they wanted to introduce a more effective, transparent and accountable system of support within the UK. This was the first time in SEND history that policy and legislation in the UK would be available for all children with SEND from birth to 25 years. The Green paper also indicated the DfE's position on finding ways that would help identify the needs of children and young people earlier than previously had been happening, they wanted to make it easier for families to receive the support required and they wanted to develop a fairer and more transparent arrangement for funding.

Following the green paper in March 2011 a further consultation took place between March and June 2011 on the suggested reforms which received 2378 responses including many from parents. In September 2011, the DfE setup 20 trials to test the reforms proposed in the SEND Green paper (2011) with 31 different Local Authorities (LA's). These were known as the SEND Pathfinder schemes, which included the introduction of the new single assessment process replacing what was known as the Statement of Special Educational Need (which was available for all school-age children from 5 to 16 years), with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (which would be available to all children with SEND from birth to 25 years). Personal budgets were also introduced and tested through these pathfinder schemes. Independent evaluation of the Pathfinder scheme was commissioned by the DfE to identify if the different approaches taken did in fact increase choice and control and improve outcomes for families with a range of backgrounds; make the current system clearer, less confrontational and bureaucratic; use of voluntary sector to make the assessment process more independent; and give value for money. The findings indicated that, overall, parents were significantly more satisfied with assessment and planning processes; thought process to get support were more straight forward; were encouraged to think of their goals; felt they were listened to; and believed their views had been reflected in their child's support provision. There were some findings that indicated that some families reported the planning had not been conducted jointly across services as it should have been and unfortunately findings indicate it had no impact on the need for parents to explain their child's needs on multiple occasions (DfE, 2015). It was stated that this independent evaluation, with feedback from the Pathfinder schemes which identified lessons learned, helped to inform and draft the legislation for the reforms.

In May 2012 the government published their report entitled 'Support and aspiration a new approach to special educational needs and disabilities - progress and next steps' which set out the progress they have made on the SEND Green paper proposals and outlined the next steps they wished to take. In February 2013 the Children and Families Bill was presented to Parliament for debate, which included proposals to change the laws governing the SEND system. The SEND code of practice was consulted on from October 2013 to December 2013, in addition to this a separate consultation was offered to young people with SEND to gather their views. A relatively new and inspiring approach to this current round of changes to SEND policy and legislation was the fact that the government consulted with the people that the policy and legislation directly related to, children and young people with SEND and their families. Following the public consultation the government presented their ‘SEND code of practice; 0 to 25’ before Parliament in June 2014 and the Code of Practice received approval in July 2014, coming into force on the 1st of September 2014 and became known as the Children and Families Act (2014).

From the 1st of September 2014, with the new SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 in force, all children with Statements of Special Educational Needs and young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDA’s) went through a process referred to as a transition. This involved changing their Statements and LDA's to Education, Health and Care Plans (ECHP’s) within the new legal framework under the Children and Families Act of 2014. The duty of this process resided with the Local Authority where the child lived and it was stipulated that this process had to be completed by the 1st of April 2018. Whilst this process was taking place Statements of Special Educational Need would still remain in force. The Local Authorities had their own transition plans and timetables stating when they would transition each child from a Statement of Education or Learning Difficulty Assessment to an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The current study was conducted under the new SEND Code of Conduct, and midway through the transition period of moving those with Statements of Special Educational Need to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP’s). As such, it was possible to ascertain if children did, indeed, feel they were getting the support that they needed and if they felt they were being included in decisions about them.

Chapter 1 has provided a broad overview of research concerning dyspraxia, including a historical and present day contextual account of the policies surrounding SEND in the UK in order to provide a context for this current study. The aims of this current study are to explore the lived experiences of children/young people living with dyspraxia and to focus this on their educational experiences. Whilst there is a wealth of literature on dyspraxia, there is little that focuses on the lived experiences of children/young people. Furthermore, little is known of how these children/young people experience education in the UK. Drawing on the literature and policies detailed in chapter 1 it seems timely that this knowledge be added to the available literature and that children and young people’s voices are heard regarding matters that affect them. Chapter 2 therefore will focus in more depth on the literature that is most relevant to this study before exploring a systematic review of the most specific literature of relevance from the last ten years (2009-2019).

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 will present a detailed exploration and consideration of the literature relevant to this study. Ferrari (2015) suggests that there are two types of reviews, systematic literature reviews and non-systematic, or narrative, literature reviews. Narrative literature reviews are used to identify and summarise literature giving an overview in order to provide a context and background to the overall subject, whereas systematic literature reviews are often given specific guidelines in order to define exactly what literature to include (Robinson & Lowe; 2015; Ferrari, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). Chapter 2 will begin by providing a narrative review of the literature in order to provide a context for the current study, to introduce and summarise what is already known in the literature, identifying the gaps in knowledge and therefore providing the basis for the current study. It will focus on models of disability, experiences of dyspraxia, dyspraxia in education, peer relationships and bullying with reference to dyspraxia, and literature focusing on pupil participation and the voice of the child. Then a scoping review (Munn et al, 2018) of relevant literature from the last ten years (2009-2019) is presented highlighting and discussing in detail the literature most relevant to this study.

2.2 Models of disability

Historically, there have been numerous models of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). These have been the subject of extensive discussion and debate and have attempted to provide a framework of understanding about how people experience disability. Additionally these models have historically provided a reference for society and influenced policymaking. In order to contextualise this study, as well as provide an explanation as to the models informing it, some previous and often prevailing models of SEND are briefly presented.

Previous, and often prevailing, models of SEND include;

- The magical/moral/religious model: which is pre-scientific and views disability as an act of god as a punishment for a particular sin by the person, or even by their parents or ancestors (Retief & Letsosa, 2018; Henderson & Bryan, 2011), or as a test of faith and opportunity of character development (Retief & Letsosa, 2018; Niemann, 2005; Black 1996) with people being feared and literature reinforcing the view.
- The moral model: which links disability with the individual’s responsibility to become as perfect as possible, reducing this to the belief that the person with the disability can do something to remedy it, equating a failure to learn with laziness (Garner, 2009).
- The intellectual model: which has its roots in eugenics suggesting that an individual’s inheritance of intellectual performance was all-powerful and not subject to change (Garner, 2009).
- The social competence model: which emphasises that an individual is accepted in society based on the degree in which they can follow social rules. Those who were incapable of this were segregated (often in asylums in isolated rural locations) for the protection and good of the rest of society (Garner, 2009).
- The social conspiracy model: which is based on notions of normality and abnormality and suggests that what may be abnormal in one situation is not abnormal in another (Garner, 2009).

There have been two main models of disability, which have been influential in informing historic legislation of SEND, these being the medical model and the social model of disability (Garner, 2009). Primarily the medical model has been the most influential historically, while the social model has become more prevalent in current thinking on disability and SEND. A further model of disability, the bio-psycho-social model (Engel, 1977), sought to incorporate elements of both the medical and social model with current disability studies thinking. Each of these three models will be briefly explored before a moving on to a more detailed exploration of the emerging interdisciplinary Critical Disabilities Studies model.

Historically the medical model has been the dominant model in early SEN legislation and has remained a dominant view through the 20th Century (Garner, 2009). In this model disabled people are seen as the problem, the difficulty seen as being 'within' the individual and the expectation is that the individual needs to change and adapt to circumstances around them. There is no acknowledgement that society needs to change at all. If the person cannot adapt, the premise is that they cannot access the services and therefore are excluded. The responsibility for treatment in this model is viewed to be that of the medical profession and individuals with SEND were, and often are still, viewed to be in need of hospitalization, care and protection rather than in need of education. It is often believed that the medical model reduces a person with a disability or Special Educational Need to their bodily (or mind) impairment and as Siebers (2008) suggests "defines disability as an individual's defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the person is to achieve full capacity as human being" (p. 3). Oliver (1996) postulates that under this model the medical professionals maintain power by seeking to "define, control and treat disabled people" (p. 24).

In contrast to the medical model, the social model, created through early disability rights movements, emphasises the barriers that exist in society as being the cause of disability (Garner, 2009). The difference between impairment and disability are emphasised here. The person is considered to have an impairment but it is not this impairment that disables them, rather it is society that disables the person excluding them from participation and involvement. Barnes (1991) suggests that disability is a social construct and due to physical and social barriers preventing or limiting the person's opportunity to participate in what would be considered a normal life and in an equal way to others. Morris (1991) suggests that it is society "which is reluctant to accept disabled people" (p. 34).

The bio-psycho-social model (Engel, 1977) is an interactional model which recognises the strengths and weaknesses of both the medical model and the social model, whilst also encompassing current thinking in the area of SEN and disability studies. This model posits that biological, psychological and social-environmental factors all play a significant role in human functioning and that in the context of disability it is best understood in terms of a combination of the three factors (Engel, 2009). This is a contrasting view to traditional reductionist models such as the medical model, which in the context of disability would pathologize and provide explanations for disability in medical, genetic, developmental or injury terms. The bio-psycho-social model essentially utilises aspects that are useful from both the medical model and the social model and rejects what is counterproductive about each. In this model disability can be considered a complex phenomenon which is compounded by the dimensions involved, these being the dimension of the person's body and complex dimension of the social level. It allows and encourages the examination/consideration of medical, individual, social, and environmental influences on human functioning and disability.

In the educational context therefore, using the bio-psycho-social model, in order to address the full continuum of needs of a child, a teacher would need to work flexibly and creatively to adapt the learning environment so that it is conducive to learning for all children. This is a derived from the social model of disability, which assumes the responsibility lies within society to adapt to the needs of the child rather than the child with SEN needing to fit into pre-existing structures. As such it could be thought of as a relationship between what the child can do and what the teacher must do in order for a child to be successful in the educational environment. A benefit of this model is the way it allows for consideration of psychological factors that impact on the person with SEN/disability and considers them as a secondary symptom rather than part of their 'disorder'. A further model of disability that that has emerged from the field of disability studies, as a divergence from the historically dominant medical model, is that of Critical Disability Studies which will be further explored in detail and will be used as a disability model for this study.

2.2.1 Disability Studies and the Critical Disability Studies (CDS) model

Disability Studies grew as a field of research and education from the 1970's and continues to expand as disability has been raised as a human rights issue in global discourses and various activist movements have emphasised the legitimacy of the need for such a discipline (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). There has been a shift in the physical presence of disabled people within society, with relevance to this study, the growing presence of disabled people within mainstream education particularly, has led to the growing recognition and awareness of responsibilities of educational institutions to those with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. Furthermore there has been a growing need for models of disability which address the limitations of the medical and individual pathology models of disability.

Goodley (2011) suggests that “Psychology has a troubling and troubled status in disability studies. When disability and psychology cross they tend to do so in terms of rehabilitation, treatment, therapy and cure” (p. 85). Certainly this aligns with the medical model emphasis that often prevails in psychology particular with SEND.

Literature in the field of disability studies has attempted to provide a politicised perspective of the emotional and psychological aspects of disability (see Goodley and Lawthorn, 2010; Swain, French, Barnes & Thomas, 2014). Finkelstein & French (1993) postulated a need for a psychology of disability, which Reeve (2008) suggests “focuses on the psychological anxieties and distresses caused by the social relations of disability” (p. 53) and shifts the focus in psychology from that of impairment to that of dis/ability and disablism (Goodley, 2011). Disablism has been defined as “a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being” (Thomas, 2007, p. 73) with Goodley (2014) asserting that “disablism, like racism, can seriously threaten psychological life” (p. 63, in Swain et al 2014).

Goodley and Lawthorn (2010) drew on literature to identify areas where the politicised perspective of disability studies was maintained with a psychological focus of analysis. In their drawing together of such literature they identified various positions which they felt provided a view of “the person’s interiority and their relationship with the exteriority of others” (Goodley, 2011, p. 86);

- The concept of *psychoemotional disablism* relates to the recognition that disablism has internal psychological consequences (Thomas, 2002, 2007; Reeve, 2008) that occur from direct and indirect forms of discrimination and can manifest in many different ways including low self-esteem and psychological distress (Goodley & Lawthorn, 2010; Goodley 2011, 2014).
- The concept of *distributed competence* refers to the way in which psychological competence is facilitated or hindered through ones support networks and perceives that intelligence and capacity are more aligned with the quality of such networks rather than the individuals disposition (Booth & Booth, 1998; Goodley, 2010, Tobbell & Lawthorn, 2015).
- The *corporeal and carnal or embodied* experience focuses on the embodied experience that the disability contributes to the psychological experience of the individual. This incorporates not only the essentialist characteristics of the disability but also the way in which the person relates to their environment (Hughes, 2004; Hughes & Paterson, 2000).
- Areas of the literature focus on the *metaphorical* manufacturing of disability in various arenas where it is used as a metaphor for discourses of psychological, social and cultural 'tragedy', 'lack' and 'flawed' (Davis, 1995; Mitchell & Snyder, 2006).
- The concept of *internalised oppression* refers to the psychological consequences of "the material exclusion of disabled people from mainstream life, including false consciousness" (Goodley, 2011, p. 87; Oliver, 1996). It is suggested therefore that the dynamic interaction of biology, psychology and the environment requires a *relational or interactional* understanding of disability (Shakespeare, 2006).

- There have been *discursive* analysis in the literature which focus on the composition “of the self, body and social world through the practices and discourses of societal institutions and cultural narratives” (Goodley, 2011, p. 87; Corker, 2001; Corker & Shakespeare, 2002; Tremain, 2005).
- *Social psychoanalytic* theory focuses on the relationship between, and dependence of, the psychological and social life that constitute disabled and non-disabled subjectivities (Goodley, 2011).
- Existential and phenomenological literature has looked at our emotions and how these directly relate to how close our desires, hopes and expectations are being met (Shuttleworth, 2000; Michalko, 2002; Titchkosky, 2003) .

Goodley (2014) states that a psychology *for* disability studies seeks to expose the psychological impact of living with an impairment in a disabling world and highlights the view that disability is considered to be rarely the problem of the disabled person, but rather the ways in which others (non-disabled others) respond and react to the presence of disability. As such, the social model of disability is considered outdated, an ideology which does not go far enough and does not recognize the subjective nature or the embodied nature of disability (Meekosha 1998; Thomas 1999). As such, there was a need for a movement, a shift in thinking, which acknowledges the physiological aspect of disability, the recognition of impairment, and the embodiment of disability (Crow 1996; French 1993 Cited in Swain, Finkelstein, French & Oliver, 1993; Thomas, 1998) but acknowledges that it is equally socially constructed through the cultural, physical, structural and prejudicial barriers within society.

For many years now, since the 1970’s, those with SEND’s have begun to challenge the situation they found themselves in which marginalized and isolated them and began “speaking for themselves, demanding civil rights, & refusing to tolerate exclusion and silencing” (Shakespeare et al, 1996, p. 1). Critical Disability Studies is an academic movement that aims to develop its own understanding of disability and dismiss ableist assumptions.

Critical Disability Studies has been an increasing field within disability studies which is said to have “accompanied a social, political and intellectual re-evaluation of explanatory paradigms used to understand the lived experience of disabled people” (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009, p. 49). Critical Disability Studies allows for disability to be understood from the perspective of those who experience and live with it, with a growing emphasis on people with disability being the experts in understanding their own lives (Reaume, 2014) and the “primary agents of change” (ibid. p. 1249). The view that disability is considered to be “both a lived reality in which the experiences of people with disabilities are central to interpreting their place in the world, and as a social and political definition based on societal power relations” (ibid. p1248) is central to the growing prominence of the field of Critical Disability Studies.

The field of Critical Disability Studies seeks to challenge traditional perspectives of disability which some suggest perceive people with disabilities to be “pitiable, tragic victims who should adjust to the world around them” (Reaume, 2014, p. 1248) and instead advocates understanding, accommodation and equality in all areas. This shift in emphasis is being borne by both academics and by disabled activists, challenging the pathologization of difference and striving for universal accessibility (Reaume, 2014; Edmonds, 2012; Goodley, 2011) focusing on all areas which provide barriers to those with disabilities including many public and private services such as education, employment and transportation for example.

2.3 Experiences of dyspraxia

The literature on dyspraxia from the perspective of those who live with it is significantly lacking. Esser (2012) points out the vast majority of literature is predominantly medically based and there is a need to expand this to include individual experiences and narratives. Grant (2010) asserts too the importance of hearing the narratives and experiences of individuals with dyspraxia in order to help develop and shape understanding of the disorder. The few studies that are available on adult's experiences highlight the significant and multifaceted impact dyspraxia has had, and continues to have, on the lives of the adults studied (Werenowska, 2003; Drew, 2005). Grant (2010) suggests "Dyspraxia is similar to an iceberg" (p. 50) in that some elements of the condition are visible, for example the lack of coordination and resulting 'clumsiness', while other aspects of the condition remain hidden, for example the issues with attention, memory and perception. However, whilst some adults with dyspraxia may have self-remediated (found remedies or strategies themselves) or come to accept their physical problems and as such they become less visible, it is acknowledged that the 'hidden' cognitive elements of dyspraxia change very little and remain as problems into adulthood (Grant, 2005; Edmonds, 2012). In a previous paper (Edmonds, 2012) I explored the experiences of adults with dyspraxia recollecting their childhood educational experiences, which sheds some light on early experiences, however inevitably the voices of adults will differ from the voices of children, as will the recollective memories of adults differ from the present experiences of children.

Whilst there is some focus on the experiences of adults with dyspraxia there remains a particular paucity of literature from the child's perspective. This is particularly concerning as Esser (2012) suggests adolescence is a life stage where the range of difficulties associated with dyspraxia can become especially apparent and Brookes (2005) suggests that the needs of children with dyspraxia can be most effectively addressed in the context of education. If we do not understand the experiences of this age group from their perspective how can we begin to support them at a time where it is most beneficial and when their difficulties become particularly evident?

The little literature that is available has either focused on a particular skill or context, such as Penketh (2007) who focused on experiences of drawing and dyspraxia (in both adults and some children); or has been comparative in approach (Dixon, 2003). Dixon (2003) looked at children's perceptions of their dyspraxia and compared them with the perceptions of their parents and associated professionals. Interestingly the findings showed that children viewed their dyspraxia in a more positive light than their parents and professionals, further highlighting the importance of a better understanding of how children experience this phenomenon.

Other studies have similarly involved both the person with dyspraxia and their family member's experiences when looking at other areas of impact. A survey study by the Dyspraxia Foundation (2001) for example asked university students and their families about the challenges of applying and starting university. They found that 60% of dyspraxic students had organisational difficulties and 55% cited social problems. Many described the transition from college to university as being very difficult and overwhelming. This is important as it highlights the ongoing difficulties faced by those with dyspraxia, particularly in educational contexts. However, this focused solely on self-reporting survey answers in relation to a specific aspect of education, applying and starting university, which may be challenging for many, not just those with dyspraxia.

Briggs's (2005) autobiographical account of dyspraxia, 'Caged in Chaos: A Dyspraxic Guide to Breaking Free', offers an insight into the world of a teenager with the disorder which is at times humorous, empathic and identifies the frustrations and pain that teenagers with this disorder experience. Whilst this is a very important and a useful source of information, it is one teenager's experiences and therefore there remains a need to explore if these experiences are shared by others with dyspraxia.

Therefore, despite an attempt by some researchers to begin to understand the experiences of those who live with dyspraxia as mentioned above, the focus has largely been on adults' experiences and where children have been included, the studies do not focus solely on their experiences. As such, the studies mentioned have added little to our knowledge of children or young people's experiences. There remains a significant gap in understanding the lived experience of having dyspraxia from the perspective of a child or adolescent, what this means for them, how this impacts their identity formation and how they navigate their educational experiences?

2.4 Dyspraxia and education

When reviewing the literature focusing on dyspraxia in education it is important to first explore the literature briefly that surrounds Special Educational Needs in general in education. Whilst there has been a vast array of literature particularly in the areas of dyslexia, Autism and ADHD there is a significant paucity of literature that focuses on dyspraxia. Furthermore, whilst studies have investigated the experiences of those with SEN during the transition period from primary to secondary school, (Maras & Aveling, 2006; Hughes, Banks & Terras, 2013) much that is available focuses on quantitative data and are primarily US based. Literature on transitions for those with SEN is heavily focused on the move to Further Education (FE) or work. Additionally there is no literature that elicits the experiences of children with dyspraxia during this transition period or the transition period into work or FE. This lack of research during a major life event for these children adds further to the lack of understanding of their experiences, needs and fears. Whilst there is a need for research looking at the transitional experiences of those with dyspraxia, the need to understand their educational experiences more generally is greater. In this current study the young people being interviewed were able to give insights into their experiences of transition from primary to secondary school having just experienced it themselves but were also able to give insights into other educational experiences as well.

The literature on dyspraxia and education shows that there is a significant lack of knowledge and understanding about dyspraxia particularly within educational settings. Many teachers have not even heard of dyspraxia (Stordy and Nicholl, 2000), are unable to understand and support children who live with it and are unsure of their responsibilities (Peters, Henderson & Dookun, 2004). More recently, Devonshire (2017) reported on a survey of teachers that found that 65% reported very poor awareness of dyspraxia in their school and 71% stated that the lack of awareness affected the children's opportunities and achievements educationally. A lack of specific training for teachers prevails (Devonshire, 2017) although, more recently, practitioner resources and information has begun to be published to provide teachers with relevant information and hopefully, this will begin to be addressed (Grant, 2010; Christmas, 2017). It is suggested that children with dyspraxia often 'fall through the net' in schools due to a discrepancy between their average or above average intelligence and their difficulty understanding some concepts and copying from the board (Kirby, 1999). Research suggests that the challenges facing children with physical difficulties such as dyspraxia in participating fully in school life are significant (Mancinni, Coster, Trombly & Heeren, 2000), with avoidance of the playground being a concern with regard to social interaction and physical health (Bouffard, Watkinson, Thompson, Dunn & Romanow, 1996; Smyth and Anderson, 2000). Furthermore, children with dyspraxia have been found to have the same expectations placed upon them as those of their peers (Kadesjo & Gillberg, 1998). This may be due to the hidden nature of the disorder, coupled with the lack of knowledge and understanding of the disorder. This may also contribute to possible educational disengagement and frustration due to experiences of consistent failure having a negative impact on the child (Paramenter & Knox, 1991).

A relatively recent study (Harrowell, Hollen, Lingham, & Emond, 2018) focusing on the impact of dyspraxia (DCD) on educational achievement in secondary schools compared GCSE results and SEN provision for adolescents with dyspraxia (DCD) (n=284) and controls (n=5425). The researchers used data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), the National General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exam results and Special Educational Needs provision. They identified that for the group with dyspraxia (DCD) there was a median of 2 GCSE's compared to 7 GCSE's for the control group. Of the group with dyspraxia (DCD) 37% were not in receipt of any formal support, indicating that 63% were. This highlights the struggle adolescents with dyspraxia face educationally even with formal support in place. The researchers suggest that 70% of children with dyspraxia (DCD) are less likely to get 7 GCSE’s, and are more likely to have ongoing issues with social communication, reading difficulties and inattention/hyperactivity - all of which would have an effect on educational engagement and achievement. The authors conclude that having DCD has a significant impact on educational achievement and as a result on life chances and is compounded by the comorbid difficulties that are often associated. They note that better understanding of DCD among educational and health professional is essential (Harrowell, et al, 2018).

The literature suggests that children with dyspraxia have to work much harder than their peers to achieve the same level academically and often fall behind (Dyspraxia Foundation, n. d[5]). There has been significant amounts of research conducted looking at other developmental disorders in education, particularly Autism (Wing, 1966; Zager, 1999; Simpson, 2005) and dyslexia (Farmer, Riddick & Sterling, 2002; Mortimore & Crozier, 2006; Gabrieli, 2009), however there remains a significant paucity of research and acknowledgement of dyspraxia in education. However, children with dyspraxia are known to have difficult participating in school life and coping with the work required (Peters, Barnett & Henderson, 2001). These difficulties have been recognised as including handwriting, recreational, social and physical activities as well as schoolwork and self-care (Sugden, 2006; Cairney et al, 2005; Summers, Larkin & Dewey, 2008a; Dunford, Missiuna, Street & Sibert, 2005). This lack of knowledge is of real concern, particularly when considering the prevalence rates suggesting that at least one child in every class may be affected (Devonshire, 2017).

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[5] https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/teachers-help/

2.5 Peer relationships and bullying

Another significant area of research that identifies difficulties faced by those living with dyspraxia in an educational context are peer relationships and bullying. The literature regarding peer relationships suggests that in the educational context such relationships are an essential part of the child's development socially and educationally. The impact of these relationships can vary depending on whether they are positive or negative. Negative peer relationships, especially in the educational context, can be characterised by bullying or victimisation. Bullying or victimisation has been defined as a situation where a child or children repeatedly cause intentional harm to another in a relationship of unbalanced power (Besag, 1989). Direct forms of victimisation include physical, such as hitting, kicking and pushing (Austin & Joseph 1996) and verbal, such as use of threats (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Indirect victimisation is defined as being enacted through a third person or in such a way that the victim is unaware of who the perpetrator is (Björkqvist, Österman & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994). Crick, Casas & Nelson (2002) describe relational bullying as a situation where the perpetrator threatens to damage the victim's relationship with others. Harter's (1987) model of self-worth suggests a relationship between victimisation and self-worth, arguing that it is the perceived regard of others that is a strong predictor of self-worth. Therefore since victimisation and bullying is an obvious consequence of being held in negative regard by others, it suggests that the victimised/bullied child will have lower self-worth (Mynard & Joseph, 1997; Andreou, 2000; Slee & Rigby, 1993). Furthermore, children with dyspraxia are considered to be at risk of both victimisation and low self-worth (Besag, 1989; Kalverboer, de Vris & van Dellan, 1990). Research has found children highly regard the ability to perform well in physical activities, particularly in sports and games (Wall, Reid & Paton, 1990) and these activities play a large part of the school routine. This can leave a child who finds physical activities difficult, targets for victimisation and bullying, which may take the form of being pushed to one side and chosen last in team games (Besag, 1989), or even avoided as a result of the physical difficulties (Rose, Larkin & Berger, 1994). Therefore, for these children, their experiences of victimisation and bullying may be higher due to these differences and not being able to fit in. Kirby (2004) highlighted the difficulties a reduced curriculum in physical activities can have for children and young people with dyspraxia, suggesting that the reduction in participation and practice reduces their ability to improve.

2.6 Pupil participation and the voice of the child in education

The increased acceptance that children should have a say in services affecting them began at the start of the twenty-first century and this acceptance has become embedded in legislations and policies both nationally and internationally (Bragg, 2010). There have been many motivating factors related to this increased interest and acceptance including; legal, political, academic, economic and social reasons. The legal motivations include major legislation such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, accepted by the UN in 1989 and in the UK in 1991). This places an emphasis on the child as requiring protection and provision, but views them as individuals who have a right to be involved in decisions affecting them, calling for the child's right to express their views and for due weight to be given to the child's views in accordance with their age and maturity. Intertwined with legal motivations, policy in the UK has also emphasised the need for the child to have a say in matters affecting them. This has been achieved by introducing policies such as the

Children’s Act (1989) which made it a legal requirement and additionally ensured that professionals whose work affects the lives of children ensure that they pay careful consideration as to how they carry out such work (Davie, Upton & Varma, 1996). Further political legislation which emphasis this position includes the Government Green Paper, Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), the updated Children Act (2004) and publications such as Learning to Listen: Core Principles for the Involvement of Children & Young People (CYPU, 2001), Working Together: giving children and young people a say (CYPU, 2003) and Listening, Hearing and Responding (Department for Health, 2002).

It has been argued that the benefits to children of being consulted and given a say in matters affecting them are largely to do with personal development (Kirby and Bryson, 2002). These personal developments include increased self-respect, competence, confidence, trust in adults, self-trust, self-esteem, social inclusion and a sense of responsibility (Bragg, 2010).

Educationally, political legislation such as the Education Act (2002) has emphasised the importance of children being involved in decisions affecting them while there has been a major focus in research focusing on the participation of pupils (Clark, McQuail & Moss, 2003; Kirby et all, 2003; Ruddock & Flutter, 2004; Hulme et al, 2011; Morgan, 2011). Changes to the curriculum which emphasize children developing skills of participation and addressing the current political citizenship agenda has come in the form of a compulsory subject of Citizenship education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) which can be seen to be contributing to the increased emphasis on children being involved in issues surrounding them (McNeish & Newman, 2002). It has been suggested that consulting children is not just about recognising them as individuals with rights, but is also about helping them to develop skills that aim to achieve a more cohesive society (Osler, 2000).

Educationally this focus has also been increased in the area of Special Educational Needs, both in SEN legislation such as the SEN Toolkit, section 4 enabling pupil participation (Department for Education and Skills, 2001a) and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills, 2001b) and in research (Gersch 2001; Kelly, Richards and Norwich 2003; Norwich, 2007). However, as described earlier, the possibilities for interpretation of these policies and therefore the limitations placed upon the views of the child are potentially more powerful in the area of Special Educational Needs. For example, taking age and maturity, as discussed above, the legislation promotes the issue of age by affording the rights to young children as well as older children; however maturity and understanding are also highlighted and as such remain open to interpretation by practitioners. Worryingly, those with SEN may be perceived to have less maturity or understanding and as such their participation may be refuted (May, 2004).

Benefits of pupil participation in their education have been cited as including increased participation, motivation, self-esteem and increased skills (Warwick, 2007). Some argue that consulting children about their learning will increase their ability as self-reflective learners (Fielding and Bragg, 2003), while active participation and empowerment of individuals is deemed to be a key component in wellbeing and metal health (WHO, 1986).

The principle relating to the rights of children to express themselves, express their views and be involved in decisions regarding their education has become an integral and significant part of UK SEND legislation (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice - Department for Education and Skills, 2001b). This position of children as having rights is underpinned by policies such as the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (1989) and the Children Act (1989). Some research has tried to explore children's perspectives, focusing on practitioners' views of children being involved in decision making (Huddson, 2012) and parent and teacher views of the transition to school of children with developmental disorders (Walker et al, 2012) for example. There has also been an attempt to explore children's views by focusing on differing research methods including; thematic data analysis used to analyse interview data (Mansfield & Doutre, 2011); focus groups (Hall, 2012; Isajlovic-Terry & McKechnie, 2012) and statistical methodologies (Kärkkäinen, Räty & Kasanen, 2010). However, there remains a lack of significant research focusing on children's lived experiences, and as such, there remains an imbalance of voices heard. This study aims to begin to address the imbalance in the literature of voices represented, by deepening the knowledge of the lived experiences of children and young people with dyspraxia in secondary schools within the UK. It aims to empower them as individuals with expert knowledge, which has a right to be shared, in order that they can be fully heard and their views about their experiences contributing to matters that affect them such as in the area of education.

2.7 Scoping literature review of children's experiences of dyspraxia in education.

Whilst there have been many studies internationally on dyspraxia/DCD they have focused largely on the medicalization of the disorder, looking at the symptomology, health issues, comorbidity, parental views and professional accounts. What has received little focus is the experiences of people who have the disorder, with a specific paucity of literature around children and young people’s experiences. In contrast to dyslexia and autism, the literature also lacks a significant body of work that focuses on the experience of dyspraxia in education. In particular, a significant gap remains in the literature that focuses on the educational lived experiences of adolescents with dyspraxia.

The stage of adolescence in a young person’s life presents many significant changes, notably the transition from primary education to secondary education as well as moving from childhood through puberty to adolescence, which presents many opportunities for developing independence. Understanding a young person’s lived experience and educational experiences of their dyspraxia is essential if professionals and practitioners are going to be able to provide the required support to assist children and young people to reach their full potential during this period.

The focus of this study is on the intersection of the lived experience of dyspraxia, adolescence and education. It aims to explore the lived experiences of secondary school aged children, focusing on their informal and formal educational experiences and what they perceive to be their strengths and difficulties in their lives. This study gathers information from young people themselves as well as gathering supporting evidence from their parents. This provides a rich insight into the lived experiences of these young people.

Therefore, in order to contextualise this study a scoping literature review of the pertinent literature specific to this study is presented, drawing on literature published from 2009 to 2019. Using EBSCOhost online databases, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO were searched using specific search terms to ensure that relevant literature that focused on the current study was identified. The search terms were;

- Experiences of dyspraxia

- Experiences of DCD
- Experiences of Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Dyspraxia and education
- DCD and education
- Developmental Coordination Disorder and education
- Adolescence and dyspraxia
- Adolescence and DCD
- Adolescence and Developmental Coordination Disorder

Table 1. below shows the number of items that resulted for each search term, these were then reduced to the dates between 2009 and 2019 and finally selected based on Full Text access. The total number of articles for consideration was 127.

SEARCH TERM	TOTAL ITEMS	ITEMS BETWEEN 2009-2019	ITEMS BETWEEN 2009-2019 WITH FULL TEXT
Experiences of dyspraxia	7	5	1
Experiences of DCD	39	29	9
Experiences of Developmental Coordination Disorder	22	14	3
Dyspraxia and education	187	124	33
DCD and education	181	127	27

Developmental Coordination Disorder and education	222	151	40
Adolescence and dyspraxia	35	30	5
Adolescence and DCD	24	22	3
Adolescence and Developmental Coordination Disorder	38	31	6
			Total = 127

Table 1: results from systematic literature search on EBSCOhost

The same terms searched in Google Scholar did not present any additional literature. Google Scholar was used to search for articles using the following search terms, which did not present anything in the EBSCOhost PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO databases;

- IPA and dyspraxia
- IPA and DCD
- IPA and Developmental Coordination Disorder

The articles in Google Scholar were reduced to those between 2009 and 2019 and were then searched to identify the Full Text articles of relevance.

From all the articles identified from the searches of EBSCOhost PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO databases and Google Scholar detailed above, those that fell within the following criteria were selected for full review;

- Articles that focused on adolescence and dyspraxia/DCD and where dyspraxia/DCD was the main disorder explored

and that in addition to the above criteria met at least one of the following criteria also;

- Articles that explore psychological aspects associated with dyspraxia/DCD,
- Articles that focused on education and dyspraxia/DCD,
- Articles of a qualitative nature,
- Articles that focused on lived experiences of dyspraxia/DCD in young people

Using this selection criteria 11 articles were selected for review, of which 9 were peer reviewed journal articles, 1 was an unpublished PhD thesis and 1 was an unpublished Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology thesis as detailed in table 2 below.

No.	**Selected article**	**Study type**
1	Engel-Yeger, B., & Hanna Kasis, A. (2010). The relationship between Developmental Co-ordination Disorders, child's perceived self-efficacy and preference to participate in daily activities. Child: care, health and development, 36(5), 670-677.	Quantitative
2	Kirby, A., Edwards, L., & Sugden, D. (2011). Emerging adulthood and developmental co-ordination disorder. Journal of adult development, 18(3), 107-113.	Review
3	Edmonds, C. (2012). 'Diff-ability' not 'disability': right-brained thinkers in a left-brained education system. Support for Learning, 27(3), 129-135.	Qualitative IPA

4	Edmonds, C. (2013). Why teachers need to hear the voice and experience of the child with dyspraxia. *Research in Teacher Education*, *3*(1), 5-10.	Theoretical/review
5	Hammond, J., Jones, V., Hill, E. L., Green, D., & Male, I. (2013). An investigation of the impact of regular use of the W ii F it to improve motor and psychosocial outcomes in children with movement difficulties: a pilot study. *Child: care, health and development*, *40*(2), 165-175.	Quantitative
6	Lingam, R. P., Novak, C., Emond, A., & Coad, J. E. (2014). The importance of identity and empowerment to teenagers with developmental co-ordination disorder. Child: care, health and development, 40(3), 309-318.	Qualitative IPA
7	Payne, S., Ward, G., Turner, A., Taylor, M. C., & Bark, C. (2013). The social impact of living with developmental coordination disorder as a 13-year-old. British Journal of occupational therapy, 76(8), 362-369.	Qualitative IPA
8	Payne, S. (2015) How is life experienced by teenagers with dyspraxia? An interpretative phenomenological analysis. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Coventry: Coventry University.	PhD thesis Qualitative IPA
9	Gagnon-Roy, M., Jasmin, E., & Camden, C. (2016). Social participation of teenagers and young adults with developmental co-ordination disorder and strategies that could help them: results from a scoping review. Child: care, health and development, 42(6), 840-851.	Scoping review

10	Kane, P., & Farrants, J. (2018) Social status and the re-framing of identity: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Adolescents with a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). The Dyspraxia Foundation Professional Journal. Pp 16-28.	Qualitative IPA
11	Kane-Hamer, P. (2018). 'Nerds', 'Space-Cadets' and those 'a bit on the odd side': an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experience of adolescents with a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City, University of London)	Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Qualitative IPA

Table 2: selected articles for systematic literature review

It is clear from the selected literature that other researchers and practitioners have also begun to recognise the need for a deeper exploration of the difficulties faced by those with dyspraxia/DCD and have begun to tentatively address this. From the scoping review, it appears that the aim to address the gap in knowledge surrounding experiences of dyspraxia, looking at what it is like to live with dyspraxia, to consider its impact in education and to gather views from different ages has begun.

There have been different approaches to this within the available literature. Some papers provide a thorough scoping review of the relevant literature, providing themes of areas of difficulties as well as suggestions for areas of concern. Some researchers have approached the topic from a quantitative stance, measuring different aspects of relevance to the area, while others have approached this topic from a more qualitative, exploratory approach. The selected articles will be explored in more detail and presented in groups; reviews, quantitative studies and qualitative studies, indicating what they each have to offer in this exploration of the experiences of adolescence with dyspraxia

2.7.1 Reports of scoping reviews

The scoping review of the available literature, following the selection criteria of this study, has identified 3 scoping review papers (Kirby, Edwards & Sugden, 2011; Edmonds, 2013; Gagnon-Roy, Jasmin & Camden, 2016) which will be explored in greater detail here. The inclusion criteria for each of these papers can be seen in table 3.

	Article reference	**Reason for inclusion**
1	Kirby, A., Edwards, L., & Sugden, D. (2011). Emerging adulthood and developmental co-ordination disorder. Journal of adult development, 18(3), 107-113.	**Age:** It focuses on emerging adulthood which follows straight from adolescence. **Focus:** Looking at available literature to identify the difficulties ongoing from adolescence to adulthood.
2	Edmonds, C. (2013). Why teachers need to hear the voice and experience of the child with dyspraxia. *Research in Teacher Education*, *3*(1), 5-10.	**Age:** School aged children and young people **Focus:** Focuses on education and dyspraxia drawing on available literature.
3	Gagnon-Roy, M., Jasmin, E., & Camden, C. (2016). Social participation of teenagers and young adults with developmental co-ordination disorder and strategies that could help them:	**Age:** 15 – 25 year olds **Focus:** Looking at the social participation of young people with DCD and identifying strategies and interventions to support this

	results from a scoping review. Child: care, health and development, 42(6), 840-851.	age group. 28 articles included in their review.

Table 3: Inclusion criteria for review articles

In 2011 Kirby, Edwards & Sugden conducted a review of literature focusing on the issue of emerging adulthood, recognising that DCD persists into adolescence and adulthood and as such they highlighted the importance of developing understanding in this area. They defined emerging adulthood as “the name given to the important stage bridging adolescence and adulthood, where the individual is usually still dependent on their parents but is also increasing in independence” (p.108). Their review focused particularly on the psychosocial difficulties associated with DCD, the issue of self-perception, and how DCD is impacted by other comorbid disorders.

Kirby et al (2011) recognised the importance of adolescence in an individual’s life as being crucial for identity development. However, they acknowledged that the difficulties with self-perception faced by these individuals may be linked to lower motor skills performance and negatively impact the development of their self-identity. They note that psychosocial difficulties have been reported in the literature related to childhood difficulties with DCD and note the long-term consequences that have been identified. They suggest that during the emerging adulthood phase of development these psychosocial difficulties may be further compounded by the many new experiences that are typical at this stage, such as moving away from parents to university, They cite studies which link these changes and suggest that such moves may reveal certain difficulties for which the individual may not have been fully prepared.

For Kirby et al (2011) the need to identify which symptoms of DCD persist into the emerging adulthood stage is important. They recognise that for some children and young people coping strategies may have been developed, interventions may have been sought, and the differing degrees of severity all lead to differing profiles of difficulties in emerging adulthood, just as in childhood. However, the recognition of different roles, skills and responsibilities mean that there may be new challenges in emerging adulthood that may have not been as evident in childhood and that this increase in potential challenges coupled with a decrease in parental involvement may lead to negative outcomes for some. Kirby et al (2011) highlight the many comorbid disorders, but especially discuss the difficulties between Executive Functioning Deficits (EFD's) and dyspraxia/DCD explaining that these EFD's may cause many problems in adulthood as these skills are important in academic and work domains and have also been shown to cause problems in childhood academic domains (Piek et al, 2004, 2007; Kirby, Sugden, Beveridge & Edwards, 2008). In considering what support is required to ensure positive outcomes for this group Kirby et al (2011) highlight that research has indicated a combination of good self-perception, family members teaching daily living skills and prosocial behaviours, all of which indicate a positive transition to adulthood. They suggest that parental support may be key to providing ongoing support in many areas such as financial, social, psychological, caring and companion roles. However, the authors caution that being too close to their child, parents may be unable to notice positive changes and therefore may maintain an out of date view. This may hinder recognition of the development into adulthood but may also lead to tension and difficulties with 'letting go' on both sides, something which is a common experience at this stage but may be more pronounced in those with dyspraxia/DCD.

Kirby et al’s (2011) review is important as it aims to link what we know in the literature about children and young people and how their dyspraxia/DCD affects them, recognising it as a lifelong disorder and highlighting issues in adulthood. The review takes the step of considering the bridge between adolescence and adulthood which is an important stage of development. It considers what the likely difficulties or important issues may be in adulthood, which is important to this study when considering the experiences of children and young people. It provides knowledge that may help to identify how best to support children and young people as they develop and progress through adolescence and provide targeted interventions to ensure that progression is as smooth as possible. As such this review paper, or the findings and discussion contained within, would be of great relevance to teachers and other practitioners who work with the children and young people living with dyspraxia/DCD so that they may be better informed and more knowledgeable.

The need for greater awareness, greater knowledge and greater understanding for those who live with dyspraxia, particularly within education, was further explored by Edmonds in 2013. This theoretical review paper focused particularly on the UK context and highlighted the need for teachers to hear the voices of children with dyspraxia. The argument being that by hearing children’s voices teachers can be better informed and better able to provide support to all children and young people, to enable them to reach their full potential by providing an environment that is more enriching to all (Edmonds, 2013).

Edmonds (2013) discussed the literature that focuses on children in research, emphasising the historical tendency to view children as objects to be researched rather than giving any consideration or weight within the literature to their experiences or viewpoints (Green & Hogan, 2005; Alderson & Morrow 2004;

Harden et al. 2000) and therefore drew attention to the way in which children and young people risked being disconnected, marginalised and excluded from matters that affected them (Edmonds, 2013). The author then explored the issue of pupil participation noting an increase in focus in this area within the research (Clark et al. 2003; Hulme et al. 2011; Kirby & Drew, 2003; Morgan, 2011; Rudduck & Flutter 2000, 2003), highlighting the change in emphasis in SEND policy and legislation which recognised the need and importance of participation of those with SEND in matters that affect them (DfES 2001a; DfES 2001b) as well as in research (Gersch 2001; Kelly et al. 2003; Norwich 1997). The author cautions however that due to other people's interpretations of levels of maturity and understanding, those with SEND remain at risk of having their views excluded from consideration (Edmonds, 2013) which would be detrimental considering the known benefits active participation and empowerment bring (WHO, 1986; Warwick, 2007). Additionally, the author suggests that the literature on inclusion remains largely from the viewpoint of parents (Palmer et al, 2001) and teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Pearson, 2007) identifying a gap in knowledge.

Edmonds (2013) referenced William James as having stated that 'individual experience defines the scope of psychology' (1990 [1890], p. 361) highlighting the need for a fuller exploration of individual experience and the importance this would bring to the field of knowledge in this area. Edmonds (2013) argues for more understanding of the experiences of children and young people in research more generally, but in particular identifying the importance of contributing to the knowledge of dyspraxia by adding the voices of these children and young people so that we can truly understand how it is to be a young person with dyspraxia, and to identify these experiences in the UK education system as well. The author suggests that this would allow for these children and young people to be considered as more than just objects of research, suggesting this is a moral issue which could be seen as being to do with children’s rights, one which ‘respects and promotes their entitlement to being considered as persons of value and persons with rights’ (Green & Hogan 2005, p. 3 cited in Edmonds, 2013). When focusing specifically on the issue of dyspraxia Edmonds (2013) identifies the lack of knowledge surrounding the disorder specifically relating to how it is experienced by children and young people, and indicates that the child’s view of their experiences may well differ from those of their parents or the professionals involved with them (Dixon, 2003). Identifying the many areas of education that are difficult for children with dyspraxia as cited in the literature (Portwood, 1996; Kadesjo & Gillberg, 1998; Kirby, 1999; Peters et al, 2004) including the lack of knowledge among educational professionals (Stordy & Nicholl, 2000), and the many negative outcomes these experiences can lead to (Parmenter & Knox, 1991) the author argues that it is essential that the experiences of these children and young people are sought by allowing their voices to be heard on the matters that affect them and the way they experience the education system.

In 2016, Gagnon-Roy, Jasmin & Camden further explored the impact dyspraxia/DCD has on young people and young adults aged between 15 and 25 years old and how it impacts their social participation, stating that this area remains less well known. In order to explore this area the authors conducted a scoping review following the steps developed by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) & Levac et al (2010) suggesting it would identify the gaps in knowledge that remain. This scoping review identified many areas of challenges for young people within the literature including those of fine and gross motor skill deficits affecting all areas of life (Summers et al. 2008b; Magalhães et al. 2011; Asonitou et al. 2012;

Prunty et al. 2013) and recognising the many secondary consequences that are associated with dyspraxia such as bullying, low self-esteem and the negative affect on social participation (Skinner & Piek 2001; Bejerot et al. 2013; Sylvestre et al, 2013). The authors recognise the lifelong nature of dyspraxia and identify difficulties facing these young people as they enter early adulthood and come across the need for new motor skills that cause difficulty such as learning to drive (Kirby et al, 2011), entering Higher Education (Hill & Brown, 2013) and dropping out of school (Rasmussen & Gillberg, 2000). This provides a wider knowledge of the lifelong implications of how dyspraxia affects those who live with it and how the changing demands that new life events bring are hindered by the need to develop new skills.

The results of the scoping review (Gagnon-Roy et al, 2016) highlighted challenges in education (54%), interpersonal relationships (54%), recreation (50%), employment (46%), mobility and communication (43%) and quality of life and mental health (57%). There were difficulties with personal care, housing, nutrition, responsibilities, challenges in fitness and community life identified in the scoping review but to a lesser degree. Additionally, the authors found that 50% of the documents reviewed listed strategies, as well as recommendations and possible interventions to aid social participation, however they note that there was no formal empirical study to evaluate these (Gagnon-Roy et al, 2016).

Gagnon-Roy et al's (2016) scoping review highlighted 54% of the documents had focused heavily on difficulties and challenges within education, indicating issues with handwriting, executive function difficulties, and inability to perform academic activities adequately and in a timely way (Kirby et al. 2008, 2011; Kirby 2011; Tal-Saban et al. 2012, 2014; Rosenblum 2013; Zwicker et al. 2013; Lingam et al. 2014). There were difficulties with communication, both written and verbal, as well as issues with non-verbal cues, spatial awareness and social rules (Kirby et al, 2008, 2001; Kirby, 2011). Difficulties with concentration, memory and processing abstract information were also acknowledged (Gagnon-Roy et al, 2016).

Interpersonal relationships were identified in Gagnon-Roy et al's (2016) scoping review as a further significant area of difficulty, one which would be integral to social participation within education, highlighting less participation in community activities, recreation activities and fitness activities. There were difficulties with social isolation identified, often as a result of shyness or lack of confidence in self (Drew, 2005; Missiuna et al, 2008; Kirby, 2011; Kirby et al, 2011; Lingam et al, 2014; Tal-Saban et al, 2014) however there was some suggestion that social status improved with time (Tal-Saban et al, 2014). Family relationships were reportedly easier and provided much needed support which while beneficial may also produce frustrations and tensions (Missiuna et al, 2008; Kirby et al, 2011b).

Finally, Gagnon-Roy et al's (2016) scoping study identified the significant secondary emotional problems that are associated with DCD in the literature and the impact this has on their quality of life and mental health, impacting on sense of self-esteem and self-worth (Hill et al, 2011; Missiuna et al, 2008; Kirby, 2011; Tal-Saban et al, 2012). Higher reports of mental health difficulties were identified as being associated with dyspraxia when compared to peers (Kirby, 2003; Piek et al, 2007; Kirby et al 2008a; Hill et al, 2011) and at risk of increase when moving to HE as the support received from parents and family would be less available (Kirby et al, 2013).

The scoping study highlighted intervention and strategies that were contained within the documents, which suggested compensatory strategies such as use of a computer within school (Kirby et al, 2008a; Lingham et al, 2014); coping strategies and humour as a means of deflecting attention (Kirby et al, 2008a; Missiuna et al, 2008); availability of information for others (Kirby et al, 2011); recognition and addressing of comorbid disorders and the associated secondary consequences (Piek et al, 2007); and finally practice of functional abilities (Kirby, 2003; Kirby et al, 2011). This review is useful in that it indicates the many areas of difficulty that dyspraxia presents for these young people and highlights the need for further exploration of this area.

2.7.2 Quantitative studies

The scoping literature review for this current study identified 2 quantitative journal articles, from Engel-Yeger & Hanna Kasis (2010) and Hammond, Jones, Hill, Green & Male (2013) that meet the inclusion criteria and that will be explored in more detail. The inclusion criteria for each of these articles can be found in table 4.

	Article reference	**Reason for inclusion**
1	Engel-Yeger, B., & Hanna Kasis, A. (2010). The relationship between Developmental Co-ordination Disorders, child's perceived self-efficacy and preference to participate in daily activities. Child: care, health and development, 36(5), 670-677.	**Focus:** Selected for inclusion as the focus was on psychological effects of DCD, particularly self-efficacy and activity preference of children. Measures used: Movement ABC; Perceived Efficacy & Goal Setting System; Preference for Activities in Children. **Age:** Pre-adolescence aged 5.08-9.83

2	Hammond, J., Jones, V., Hill, E. L., Green, D., & Male, I. (2013). An investigation of the impact of regular use of the W ii F it to improve motor and psychosocial outcomes in children with movement difficulties: a pilot study. *Child: care, health and development*, *40*(2), 165-175.	**Focus:** Looked at an intervention and if this would have impact on motor and psychosocial domains for children with DCD. **Age:** Pre-adolescence aged 7-10 years old

Table 4: Inclusion criteria for quantitative studies

Engel-Yeger & Hanna Kasis's (2010) article, whilst involving a younger age group than the inclusion criteria of this systematic review stated, is included as it adds an interesting and relevant contribution to the understanding of how dyspraxia/DCD and participating in daily activities is affected by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy relates to the beliefs an individual holds about their capacity to be able to influence events, execute behaviours or actions, that affect their lives in a competent manner (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Harter, 1986) and this continues developing throughout life and is influenced through mastery experiences, social modelling, social persuasion and psychological responses (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). This article is therefore important to consider here as the development of self-efficacy during the adolescent years will be impacted by many new opportunities for mastery experiences, social modelling, social persuasions and psychological responses, all of which will be impacted by living with dyspraxia and navigating the educational experience. Furthermore, as dyspraxia/DCD is characterised by the difficulties presented in activities of daily living (APA, 2013) a review of this article, despite the younger age group, is relevant and important.

Engel-Yeger & Hanna Kasis's (2010) article looked at the relationship between DCD and a child's perceived self-efficacy and preference to participate in daily activities by comparing groups of children; 37 with DCD and 37 typically developing (TD) peers all aged between 5.08 and 9.83 years old and all recruited from public schools in the northern region of Israel. The control group of TD peers were matched to the children with DCD by age, gender and socio-economic status. In order to investigate they used the Movement ABC for children (Henderson & Sugden 1992), the Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System (Missiuna et al. 2004) and the Preference for Activities of Children Measures (King et al. 2004). They found that children with DCD scored lower for self-efficacy on all the sub scales within Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System measure and indicated a lower preference for participating in leisure activities by their indications on all scores of the Preference for Activities of Children Measures. In addition to these findings they also identified a correlation between the motor performance and preference to participate whereby the lower the motor performance the lower the preference to participate. The authors acknowledge that their findings support previous findings that children with dyspraxia/DCD have lower self-efficacy than their TD peers and highlight the findings that this is more significant in regard to schooling activities, productivity activities and leisure activities.

It is important to note the cultural context in which this study was conducted, within the northern region of Israel, meaning that the experiences and self-reports of these young children most likely will differ to those of UK children. Whilst this study contributes an important understanding of the self-efficacy and preference to participate among children with dyspraxia and how they are related, it does not explain why there is an association, why these children report lower self-efficacy, or why they report lower preference for participation in leisure activities. To be able to truly understand the issues faced by this group, and to be in a position to be able to support and help improve these areas for children and young people with dyspraxia it is essential that this gap in qualitatively understanding these issues is addressed.

In 2013, Hammond, Jones, Hill, Green & Male further explored how physical activity for those with dyspraxia/DCD can have an impact on psychosocial outcomes. They used quantitative methods, to conduct a small pilot study, using a randomised crossover controlled trail that investigated children with DCD and the impact of regular use of a Wii Fit to improve motor and psychosocial outcomes. The reported study recruited 18 participants; 10 who received the intervention and 8 as a comparison group. The intervention group used the Wii Fit for 10 minutes, three times a week, for a month. The comparison group took part in the regular programme called Jump Ahead. The researchers conducted pre and post assessments focusing on motor proficiency, participants self-reported ability and satisfaction and their parents assessment of emotional and behavioural problems. The findings from the study indicated that participation in the Wii Fit program produced a therapeutic effect and they suggest that this has potential to support motor and psychosocial development in young people with DCD. This study is interesting in that it aims to engage young people in something relevant and interesting to them and utilise it in a way that may be of benefit to them and their difficulties. The authors argue that this could be used in an educational setting and provide potential gains to many children's motor proficiency, self-perceptions of motor ability and emotional wellbeing. They recognise these gains would not be for all children, however this small pilot study provides interesting results for further exploration. Further work following on from this study would need to be explored as to how these children experienced this intervention and what makes this more engaging and interesting to them than other interventions. It would be interesting to identify the qualitative aspects of how they experienced the intervention and in what ways specifically they feel their emotional wellbeing was affected.

2.7.3 Qualitative studies

The scoping literature review for this current study identified 6 qualitative papers for consideration, of these four were peer reviewed journal articles from Edmonds (2012), Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014), Payne, Ward, Turner, Taylor & Bark (2013) & Kane and Farrants (2018) and two were doctoral thesis from Payne (2015) and Kane-Hamer (2018). The inclusion criteria for the qualitative studies can be found in table 5.

	Article reference	**Reason for inclusion**
1	Edmonds, C. (2012). 'Diff-ability' not 'disability': right-brained thinkers in a left-brained education system. Support for Learning, 27(3), 129-135.	**Focus:** Provides account of lived experience of dyspraxia. **Age:** 2 of the 4 participants were aged 19 and therefore had just been through adolescence.
2	Lingam, R. P., Novak, C., Emond, A., & Coad, J. E. (2014). The importance of identity and empowerment to teenagers with developmental co-ordination disorder. Child: care, health and development, 40(3), 309-318.	**Age:** Eleven 11 – 16 year olds **Focus:** The studies aim was explore the experiences and aspirations of young people living with Developmental Coordination Disorder in their own words.

3	Payne, S., Ward, G., Turner, A., Taylor, M. C., & Bark, C. (2013). The social impact of living with developmental coordination disorder as a 13-year-old. British Journal of occupational therapy, 76(8), 362-369.	**Age:** Six 13 year olds **Focus:** Explore the experiences of teenagers with developmental coordination disorder from their own perspective.
4	Payne, S. (2015) How is life experienced by teenagers with dyspraxia? An interpretative phenomenological analysis. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Coventry: Coventry University.	**Age:** Nine 13 – 15 year old **Focus:** Looking to explore how life is experienced by teenagers with dyspraxia.
5	Kane, P., & Farrants, J. (2018) Social status and the re-framing of identity: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Adolescents with a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). The Dyspraxia Foundation Professional Journal. Pp 16-28.	**Age:** Eleven adolescents with DCD aged 11-18 years old Focus: To gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teenagers with DCD
6	Kane-Hamer, P. (2018). 'Nerds', 'Space-Cadets' and those 'a bit on the odd side': an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experience of adolescents with a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD).	**Age:** Eleven 11-18 year olds. **Focus:** Gain deeper understanding of the lived experience of adolescents with DCD

	(Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City, University of London)	

Table 5: Inclusion criteria for qualitative articles

Edmonds (2012) article reported on adults with dyspraxia recounting their retrospective memories of their lived experiences during childhood. The study utilised a qualitative approach, using semi structured interviews analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The research questions explored the ways in which dyspraxia affected childhood experiences, the impact of diagnosis and the ways in which dyspraxia impacted on educational experiences. The study involved 4 participants, two males and two females aged between 19 and 55. The study reported negative experiences in education by all participants, difficulties with relationships, including those with teachers as well as peers, poor long term emotional well-being and high educational disengagement.

With regard to relationships with teachers Edmonds (2012) reports on lack of support, lack of understanding and negative labels (such as ‘lazy’) being applied to the participants by their teachers. These things were reported as having negatively affected their self-esteem. The participants identified frustration in their teachers and felt that the lack of understanding resulted in punishment and humiliation at times which was suggested as being subtle forms of bullying. The result of these experiences for the participants was to disengage educationally and the study reported gender differences in this respect. For the female participants it was via school avoidance, whilst for the male participants disengaging academically was the strategy reported. In both instances, however, the study identified that the self-esteem of all participants was affected, as was the recognition of the incongruence with their peers and this impacted on their self-perception. Interestingly the study reported on the positive aspects of dyspraxia as reported by the participants as being “creativity, empathy and listening abilities as well as an ability to think more deeply and described how these skills were utilised elsewhere in their lives” (Edmonds, 2012, p. 133).

In considering the findings of this study Edmonds (2012) drew on Critical Disability Studies (CDS) to argue that people with dyspraxia are often excluded from the education system within mainstream schools as it appears to privilege those who are left-brain thinkers, rendering those right-brained thinkers floundering and often then constructed as ‘deviant’. Whilst the theoretical argument of this article was valid and grounded in relevant literature, it was based on only 4 participants retrospective memories of their lived experiences during their childhoods. The key focus was to explore the impact dyspraxia had on their educational experiences, the impact of diagnosis and how their dyspraxia impacted their educational experiences. Due to methodological restraints, adults were asked to explore their retrospective memories of this. This does however present an interesting element of time, as for two of the participants, one male and one female, the time from childhood to time of interview was not too long, both of them aged 19 at the point of interview. For the other two participants, again a male and a female, the time span was larger, the ages being 40 and 55. This element of time did however mean that these participants had more time to reflect and make sense of their experiences, something that interviewing children during their childhoods would not allow. Conversely though, this could also mean that their ‘memories’ of events may have altered given the significance placed on them and the emotions attached. In any case, the findings were interesting and contributed to knowledge surrounding the disorder but could be further explored by having larger participant numbers and by using younger participants still engaged in formal education such as university students. The findings also highlight the need to explore these experiences with children and young people engaged in schooling currently to identify if their experiences are similar.

In 2013 Payne, Ward, Turner, Taylor & Bark explored the experiences of a younger age group and reported on results from the first phase of Payne's (2015) PhD study, a three phase study looking at the experiences of teenagers with DCD (Dyspraxia). The three phases of the study were the three ages of participants and therefore the occasions that the participants were interviewed. This was conducted over 2 years and the participants were aged 13, 14 & 15 years old, with 16 interviews conducted overall. Not all participants took part in all three interviews, in fact only two did so.

Payne et al's (2013) exploration of the first phase of interviews focused on the experiences of six 13 year olds who had DCD (5 boys and 1 girl). Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the personal experiences of the six adolescents who had been diagnosed with DCD. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to analyse the data, and a research reference group was set up as part of this study made up of 6 older teenagers and young people who helped to develop the interview questions as well as provide feedback and inform the data analysis and findings. Payne et al (2013) suggested the overall larger study (later published as Payne, 2015) had identified 6 master themes across all interview transcripts which they reported were; Doing things the hard way; The social impact of living with DCD; The emotional impact of living with DCD; 'I don't know if I have it or not' – making sense of the diagnosis; 'I'm just a normal kid'; and Supports – making things better or making things worse?.

The article presented by Payne et al (2013) focused on one of these themes, the social impact of living with DCD, as they felt that this “is not well understood and has received little attention in the literature” (p. 76). Relationships with peers were categorised as a sub theme, identifying that motivation to join in activities with peers was affected by both coordination and the context in which the activities took place. Payne et all (2013) reported that some experienced social exclusion and bullying but that all had friends who supported them practically and emotionally. Three of the six participants expressed an interest in sport as a “factor that helped to define their social group” (p. 77) whilst for another participant a lack of interest in sport was reported to unite his friendship group whose interests were for music, card games and Japanese comic art. Relationships with parents and siblings were also discussed with participants identifying that mothers were usually the source of practical and emotional support as well as providing information, however there were feelings of being a burden that were also identified. Fathers were generally felt by the young people to be less tolerant although they had good relationships. Relationships with siblings seemed to differ depending on birth order. For those who had younger siblings there appeared to be times where this brought about feelings of inadequacy when their younger siblings ‘helped’ them. Older siblings were looked up to, much in the same way that it could be said typically developing peers may generally look up to their older siblings.

There was some mention of school life, largely when referring to peers, but also references to feeling unsupported by teachers, feeling invisible within the classroom, feelings of social exposure and of being vulnerable. However, reference to school other than this is sparse and this study necessarily did not focus on educational experiences as such. This paper is from an occupational therapist stance which while important, focuses on occupational understandings of dyspraxia and its implications in that field, rather than from an psychological or educational understanding. As such while this study contributes to the much needed exploration of experiences of dyspraxia in children there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the educational experiences of dyspraxia from a psychological viewpoint and in order to provide a holistic understanding of the disorder it is essential that this is explored and represented in the literature.

In 2015, Payne (2015) published her full PhD thesis. The aims of the PhD were to consider how life is experienced by teenagers with dyspraxia, in an attempt to identify areas of interest and to explore the impact dyspraxia has on these young people’s lives. Payne (2015) stated the purpose of this study was also to identify ways in which better support could be provided by parents, professionals and organisations and to identify future research areas. The findings from the overall study resulted in 5 superordinate themes; “Doing everything the hard way”; “I didn’t want to be seen as someone different”; “I’m an intelligent person but I can’t even write. It’s making me fill up”; “Right help, right time”; and “Making sense of the diagnosis”.

“Doing everything the hard way” explored participant’s perceptions of their efforts required to be successful in everyday activities, identifying that they had to work harder than others and identifying difficulties in many areas not just motor difficulties. These difficulties, and the increased effort that participant’s felt was required of them were reported in self-care activities and school related activities with recognition of the academic impact being caused by their DCD. The recognition that daily life presented physical challenges for these young people is evident in this study. Even when these young people had developed the skills to overcome these issues, they were not to a standard that they were satisfied with and often came with anxiety, frustration and at times avoidance. These experiences had negative effects on the young people's confidence and self-worth and the self-comparison to siblings and peers reinforced such feelings. For some this sibling relationship was supportive even though it resulted in a difference of what would have been considered the 'natural order' of their relationship. Parental frustrations were reported to impact the young person's own sense of frustration and failure to master what were considered simple tasks negatively affected these young people's sense of self efficacy (Payne, 2015). There were perceptions of having to deal with non-motor difficulties compared with their peers such as organisation, time management, memory and attention difficulties and reports of feeling overwhelmed and frustrated with the difficulties they had and the obstacles these presented.

The theme of "I didn't want to be seen as someone different" explored the impact their dyspraxia/DCD had on their relationships with others including peers, friends and family. There were fears of being different and a need to fit in and be accepted. Many young people had experienced bullying and social exclusion in some contexts, but it was reported that all felt accepted in some form of social group and had a sense of belonging, identifying close friends and family whom they could rely on for emotional and practical support. There were sensitivities about feeling as if they stood out from their peers which impacted on their use of alternative equipment. The need for being accepted and having a sense of belonging was reported and all reported feeling a sense of parental acceptance and understanding about their condition reassuring. Many participants had conflicting views about participating in sports activities, they enjoyed sports with friends, but removed themselves from more formal teams due to ridicule from others.

Payne (2015) reports on the emotional impact of having dyspraxia/DCD in the theme “I’m an intelligent person but I can’t even write. It’s making me fill up” highlighting the feeling of inadequacy that was reported by the participants when detailing how they could not perform developmentally appropriate tasks. High frustration levels were reported, for some this led to angry outbursts while for others they internalised their emotions. Feelings of stress and anxiety as well as feeling stupid were all reported amongst the participants. Differing coping mechanisms were reported such as participating in sports or walking the dog to reduce tension, non-physical activities such as reading, drama and music helped, as did engaging in creative activities as a form of escaping the pressures. Payne (2015) however reported that despite these experiences and frustrations the participants were optimistic and positive about their futures.

For the participants in Payne’s (2015) study feelings of teachers lack of knowledge and understanding were reported in the theme “Right help, right time” as were the perceptions of support they felt they needed at school. They reported not feeling as though their academic success was facilitated, there were levels of frustration with the support on offer, and they felt disadvantaged by the system which they perceived made it more difficult for them. For many the teachers lack of knowledge about their condition meant that they felt singled out, demoralised and embarrassed and the lack of understanding meant that often they were frustrated by being perceived to be making little effort. All participants felt that the teachers needed to have a greater knowledge and awareness of their condition, that it was their professional duty and certainly would have benefited the young people. There were feelings of being misunderstood, unsupported, rejected and invisible which all affected the emotional well-being of the participants. Reports of having support and help were mixed, for many this highlighted their difference, while for some the help to understand was welcomed. Often the social impact of the help outweighed the practical impact and led to the participant's rejection of such help and often left them feeling disempowered when their feelings were not taken into account over such things. Where teachers were able to enhance the young people's sense of agency and self-awareness positive impacts were reported, including feelings of empowerment and increased confidence.

Lastly, Payne (2015) reported on the theme of "Making sense of the diagnosis". Participants reported knowing they were different from their peers before diagnosis but often not knowing why, something Payne (2015) calls an "absent presence" (p. 157). All participant's received a formal diagnosis yet memories of this were vague and feelings of confusion and uncertainty were reported. Some young people became gradually aware of their diagnosis and, through not knowing much about dyspraxia, this did not offer immediate reassurance. When asked to describe the diagnosis they all focused on the physical aspects, which Payne (2015) suggests is due to these being more tangible. However she notes that these participant's experienced dyspraxia as more than "just a physical construct" (p. 160). For many it remained a confusing and mysterious condition, something that the complexity of the symptom profile compounded. Interestingly, despite this, many participant's discussed their acceptance of the diagnosis as a part of their identity. For one participant this was expressed in a distant and uncomfortable form, often referring to it as something other people experience. Others felt a sense of reassurance that they were not stupid or had not tried hard, offering a counterview to the one they may have received from others, or even themselves. Participant's did not define themselves by the diagnosis, rather they had learned over time to understand and accept it.

Payne's (2015) study provides a full and detailed exploration of young people's experiences of living with dyspraxia. It adds much needed insight into this phenomenon, providing a good understanding of some of their needs. Whilst this study's main focus is not solely on educational aspects it does discuss education and dyspraxia's impact on it for these young people. This highlights the need to explore these issues in greater depth and detail which this current study aims to do. Furthermore Payne's (2015) study was from an occupational therapist's viewpoint which differs in focus from a psychological one which this current study offers. Lastly, Payne's (2015) data was drawn from participant's over three years interviewing them at different stages. Out of the 9 participant's only 2 however were interviewed at all 3 stages, 3 attended two interviews and 4 participants were interviewed only once. This method of gathering data at different stages in these young people's lives means that their experiences may well be muddled as there will have been many differences in their social groups, developmental profiles and environmental aspects at each of these stages, however minor these differences may have been. Additionally, not interviewing all participants the same amount of times at the same stages, means that a more incomplete picture may have been gathered. It would be clearer therefore to have interviewed some participant's at aged, 13, and different sets of participant's at aged 14 and 15 or at the very least have interviewed all participants at aged 13, 14 and 15 and then focusing on how these experiences changed over the years.

Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014) report on a study focusing on understanding the experiences and aspirations of young people with DCD involving 11 young people aged 11-16 years of which 7 were boys and 4 were girls. The participants were from differing socioeconomic backgrounds and came from different parts of one large urban area in England. These experiences and aspirations were explored via semi-structured interviews with all 11 participants, with a follow up group interview with 7 participants, and involved participatory arts based techniques to facilitate the understanding via the use of clip art pictures used as prompts. In the group interviews participants were asked to expand on points raised in the individual interviews and to compare the importance of areas they had highlighted in their interviews ‘before’ (junior schools) and ‘now’ (senior school) using a ten-rung ladder drawing and placing a sticker where they felt the subject was in importance ‘before’ and ‘now’. The researchers analysed the interviews using phenomenological hermeneutic method (Colaizzi 1973; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). The themes that the researchers developed were shared with the participants during the group discussions giving them a voice in the analytical process. This is a different approach from traditional IPA, as traditionally in IPA the emphasis is on the researcher making sense of the participants sense making, therefore recognising the interpretations of the data as the researchers own, whereas checking the interpretations with the participants necessarily made these interpretations more shared. The central theme identified in this study was; ‘We’re all different’ which incorporated 5 subthemes of; ‘How I see my life’, ‘Things I find hard’, ‘Making my life easier’, ‘How others see me’, and ‘How I see my future’.

The theme of ‘How I see my life’ explored the recognition of the impact DCD had for them, but the emphasis was on their successes, what they could achieve, rather than what they could not, reporting enjoyment of many activities and having a positive outlook on their life. This positive outlook was more prevalent in the older teenagers but for some there was an element of negative self-talk.

When reporting difficulties the researchers noted that the participants used a mixture of denial and acceptance with an emphasis on it not defining them. For some there was a sense of pushing their DCD away and not considering it important.

In the sub-theme of ‘Things I find hard’ the participants expressed the difficulties DCD brought in school, academically, socially and in involvement in sporting activities even though for most they expressed an enjoyment in sports. The participants discussed issues with learning, concentration, memory, organisation, reading, handwriting (legibility and physical pain when writing) and understanding lessons and the researchers noted that the participants were largely, with some exceptions, in the lowest sets in school as a result. For many bullying was reported as an issue to varying degrees and a recognition of their difference from their peers contributing to this at times.

The sub-theme of ‘Making my life easier’ spoke about issues that helped these young people with many reporting positivity helped as did hard work, practice and recognition of small victories which impacted well on self-esteem and a sense of identity. Help received in school perhaps unsurprisingly varied, but so too did the school and type of school in which the participants attended. These variations in experience differed by teacher also and many valued their learning support assistants (LSA’s) especially and felt these were of particular benefit to their ability to understand in lessons. Interventions in which these young people were able to meet others like themselves were positively received, as was practical help from parents with homework and day-to-day activities.

The sub-theme of ‘How others see me’ focused on friendships and how important and supportive these were for the participants and some reported having found a social group in which they felt valued. There were discussion about telling friends about their diagnosis which was compounded by the lack of knowledge surrounding the disorder and some feeling they preferred to keep it a secret as they did not want to appear different. There was a link identified between how others viewed the young person and their own self-perception and the need for being understood was identified as the most important thing a teacher could do to help. They did not want special treatment but just needed to feel the teachers understood them.

The final theme explored in this study, ‘The future’, identified the way that young people’s perception of their future affected how they saw themselves. There were aspirations for further study whilst at the same time acknowledging their difficulties and the need to be able to overcome these. Strategies were discussed, as was the need to not be hindered by their DCD. The overarching theme presented by Lingham et al (2014) of ‘We’re all different’ which was an umbrella theme for these 5 subthemes discussed, identified how these elements formed these young people’s perceptions of themselves and their identity formation was affected by how they viewed their difficulties, how they were perceived by others and the things that were important to them. Many of the participants had developed self-help strategies and accepted help if presented in a way that enabled them to feel empowered. It was essential that in school these young people felt the attitude from the school towards difference was a positive one, that the class, teachers and their peers were accepting and that bullying was dealt with and all of these aspects had a significant impact on these young people. This study explored in depth young people’s experiences of having DCD and how this impacted them during a crucial time in their development, highlighting the many areas of importance to their formation of identity and the need to feel empowered. This study used a qualitative method of data collection and analysis, combining individual interviews with collaborative group interviews to refine emergent themes presented by the researchers. Whilst this presents an important exploration of an under researched area, by bringing participants back to a group setting interview to discuss further the topics they had explored individually may have changed the course of their meaning by placing social influencers on these young people's expression. Furthermore, by asking the participant's to agree on emergent themes allows the young people to again change the course of what is identified, which whilst for some this may seem an important practice to ensure correct themes are identified, it takes away from the interpretative nature of such an exploration, and potentially allows the participant to shape the themes to how they feel would be best portrayed.

Kane & Farrants (2018) further pursued the exploration of the lived experiences of adolescents with dyspraxia focusing on social status and the re-framing of identify. They too conducted a study using IPA with 11 participants aged between 11 and 18 (8 females and 3 males) and report two major themes from their study: 'A sense of otherness' and 'Complexity of response'. Within the theme of 'A sense of otherness' the authors report a sub-theme of 'Recognising and Re-framing Difference' whereby they identified that participants had initially identified as being different in their early experiences, but that for some they were able to reframe this sense of difference as they reached and went through adolescence in order that it contributed to their sense of self. They did note that for one participant however this was not possible and finding anything positive to say about her experience was impossible. A further sub-theme was 'Social acceptance', where the researchers note that many of the participants had experienced bullying, loneliness and exclusion and that social acceptance was difficult for many. They reported on social skills being a difficulty, high levels of social anxiety and humiliation being prevalent in spaces such as break time and sports lessons. However they also reported that progressing through adolescence social satisfaction and relationships were reported to improve.

The second theme reported was ‘Complexity of response’ which highlighted the contrasting feelings reported by the participants. It was identified that for many feelings of relief, particularly to do with diagnosis were experienced. The relief diagnosis, and therefore having a name, gave to the experiences they were having provided potential access to support and information they may not have had access to before. In contrast there were also reports of shame; often compounded by others pointing out their difficulties and others lack of understanding; and reports of ambivalence, with some reporting that it was not important and had very little impact on their lives. Finally, the article reported on participants need for acceptance, understanding and support with levels of frustration reported when people failed to understand, leading to feelings of insignificance (Kane & Farrants, 2018).

Kane & Farrants (2018) were reporting on two of three major themes that arose from Kane-Hamer’s (2018) study which formed part of her professional doctorate in Counselling Psychology. Kane-Hamer (2018) reports on all three major themes and as such allows for the understanding of the third theme not reported by Kane & Farrants (2018), this was the theme of ‘Recognising and coping with limitations’. This identified that the participants in this study recognised that their DCD caused limitations for them and that often these were unseen limitations, meaning they had to work hard without recognition and appreciation from others for the effort required. Many reported the feeling of not being good at things, often comparing themselves to their peers, and having to face obstacles that at times they felt unable to overcome. For some this was felt as an obstacle to reaching their full potential and often reporting negatives about themselves was far easier than identifying and reporting things they felt they were good at. For many there was a sense of an unseen struggle with aspects such as memory, concentration, organisational and processing issues which really impacted participants and caused a sense of frustration. Participants in this study identified the emotional impact of DCD and reported feelings of high anxiety which was felt with new situations, physical situations and areas where failure could occur. Feelings of frustration and stress were reported which for many were significant and often were felt as a feeling of being overwhelmed. There was a reported sense of having to work harder than others, and many coping mechanisms such as ‘keep trying harder’ were reflected.

Kane-Hamer (2018) identified themes of minimising and rationalising amongst the participants, in which many of them sought to diminish the impact DCD had on them. Often having something they were good at and could achieve in helped boost their confidence and activities outside of school and creativity were discussed as positives for these young people, helping them to cope. School was mentioned by the participants in this study with varying amounts of support received and for some it was a constant battle. Often feelings of not being listened to and not mattering were reported and the need to be noticed was high.

Kane & Farrants (2018) and Kane-Hamer (2018), like that of Edmonds (2012), Payne et al (2013), Lingham et al (2014) and Payne (2015) highlighted the many significant impacts on this age group living with dyspraxia, but highlighted also the positive and changing aspects as well. Whilst all mentioned elements of educational experiences, none focused on this as their investigative aim and as such the lived experiences of adolescents in secondary education in the UK remains lacking in the available research and more importantly lacking in the available understanding of dyspraxia.

2.7.4 Conclusion of scoping literature review

This scoping review of the literature has identified areas of the research relevant to this study highlighting the impact dyspraxia has on children and young people in many areas of life including their educational lives. It is essential that the educational experiences of children with dyspraxia are explored further and in more detail so they can be added to the growing body of literature as education, both formal and informal, form a huge part of a child’s life. It could be said that education and learning begin from birth with neuroscience providing evidence of the brains rapid growth especially during the early years of birth to 5. There are, of course, more formal learning experiences in educational environments from as early as 2½ years old when many young children begin to attend nursery education. All children within the UK begin formal compulsory education from 4½ years through until 18 years of age, and of course there are the numerous informal educational experiences that children and young people have in a variety of settings. It could be said that children, and in fact all people, are in a constant state of learning. As such it seems essential that we gain knowledge about an area of these children’s lives which is such a huge part, but one which also has been shown to be a greater challenge than for Typically Developing (TD) children.

2.8 Aims and purpose of research

Reviewing the literature on dyspraxia has identified that whilst it is a well-documented developmental disorder, it remains largely misunderstood and the focus of the available literature has been heavily focused on symptomology, assessment, diagnosis, intervention and parental and professional views. Furthermore, it has highlighted the apparent lack of knowledge and understanding of dyspraxia particularly within the educational setting despite the available research and as such this reduces our understanding of the school aged child's experiences further. Whilst some tentative steps have begun to explore these areas in the literature there remains a need for further work in order that an interdisciplinary, holistic understanding can be achieved. For example, much of the focus of the few studies with secondary school aged children has, to date, had an occupational therapy bias (Dixon, 2003; Payne, Ward, Turner, Taylor, & Bark, 2013; Payne, 2015) and has focused on comparing children's views with those of professionals and parents (Dixon, 2003). Although some researchers have used IPA as their methodology to explore dyspraxia (Edmonds, 2012; Payne et al, 2013; Lingham et al, 2014; Payne, 2015; Kane-Hamer, 2018; Kane & Farrants, 2018) no other study has focused on the specific lived experiences of children or young people with dyspraxia in education and from a psychological perspective.

The review of the literature highlights the significant paucity of research focusing on the experiences of those who have dyspraxia and it is my belief that to be able to provide for children with dyspraxia, their voices must be heard. This is even more important in the educational context as legislation has stated that a child's views should be sought and inform part of their assessment and intervention (Education Act, 1996; SEN Code of Practice, 2001). However, while the focus is largely on other people's perceptions and experiences of dyspraxia and its impact, and not the child's experiences and views, it appears that the emphasis to include children in matters that affect them may not be being implemented effectively and certainly is not being represented at least in published work.

The aim of this research therefore is to gain an insight into the lived experiences, specifically the educational experiences of children with dyspraxia, to hear the voices of the participants and to inform research in psychology and education, as well as to inform educational policy and legislation. By sharing their experiences, the participants will contribute to a more holistic understanding, which has the potential to facilitate educators', and others, understanding and knowledge, both in informal education and formal education. It also has the potential to provide understanding of how children and young people in the UK understand and experience dyspraxia particularly within education.

2.9 Research questions

2.9.1 Primary research question

What are the educational experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools?

AIM: to explore the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools and their understanding of these experiences as well as their understanding of the factors that influence their progression and attainment.

2.9.2 Secondary research questions

1- What does the exploration of the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools tell us about their motivation, engagement educationally, socially and in extracurricular activities?

AIM: to contribute to knowledge surrounding educational engagement and social interaction for this group.

2- What does the exploration of the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools reveal about their sense of identity?

AIM: To understand the sense of identity, self-esteem and confidence of this group of children and the impact the experiences educationally have on this.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presents the current study's methodology. The chapter begins by detailing the theoretical stance, and focuses on humanistic and person-centred psychology, specifically looking at the work of Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1951) and how humanistic psychology informed education. The chapter then goes on to give a brief account of the influence of the models of disability, particularly the Critical Disability Studies model and how it informs the current study. Then the ontology and epistemology is set out before literature focusing on conducting research with children and the need for individual experience is presented. Chapter 3 then provides a detailed account of the chosen methodology for this study, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and explores in depth the philosophical underpinnings of the approach. Issues of sampling size, research design and ethical considerations are explored before the participants identification, access and selection are detailed, presenting the selected participants and their details. Chapter 3 then provides a detailed account of the method of data collection and data analysis, setting out the six steps suggested when conducting IPA analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Finally chapter 3 provides a reflexive account of the data collection process and a discussion on credibility and trustworthiness.

3.2 Theoretical stance

This study's theoretical stance is informed by humanistic and person-centred psychology, but is also influenced by models of disability, particularly the Critical Disability Studies model. An overview of humanistic and person-centred psychology follows, detailing how these influence this study, followed by a brief statement about how the models of disability, particularly Critical Disability Studies, influence and inform this study.

3.2.1 Humanistic and person-centred psychology

Humanism is an approach in psychology, developed in the 1960's which focuses on the person as a whole, celebrating the uniqueness of the individual and is often considered the 'Third Force' in psychology (McArthur & Cooper, 2017; Bland & DeRobertis, 2019). It was developed as an alternative to the behaviourist and psychodynamic approaches in psychology, growing in influence throughout the 70's and 80's by offering a different explanation to human personality than those offered via mechanistic, reductionistic explanations based on observable, quantifiable traits (McArthur & Cooper, 2017; Bland & DeRobertis, 2019). Humanistic psychology draws on elements of both behaviourist and psychodynamic approaches whilst offering a phenomenological emphasis, therefore offering a new approach to exploring and understanding human nature and the human condition. This new approach resulted in a wider range of methods being offered for the inquiry and study of human behaviour and was most important in explaining professional psychotherapy practice (Rogers, 1951).

Humanistic psychologists believe that people are essentially good and have an innate need to make themselves, and the world around them, better and takes the view that people have free will. Personal agency is the term that is used by humanistic psychologists to refer to how people exercise their free will, the choices we make and the consequences that occur as a result.

Humanistic psychology lends itself to methodological approaches which allow for and consider the person as a whole unique being, emphasizing the need for the ideographic level of enquiry and recognising the importance of each unique persons experience in developing our understanding (Bland & DeRobertis, 2019). It is this idiographic level of enquiry that is so important to this study and the methodology of IPA that is chosen. Bland & DeRobertis (2019) state that in opposition to views which consider an absence of pathology and/or happiness achieved by an individual as being the indication of a healthy personality, humanistic psychologists instead focus on the motivations an individual possess to continually progress, grow and change suggesting; “humanistic psychologists highlight maturity and the roles of meaning-making and of values – e.g., autonomy and commitment, freedom and responsibility, personal decision and worldly adaptability, and self-awareness and the awareness of others” (p. 2).

Many qualitative methods of enquiry, particularly IPA, lend themselves to the exploration of mean-making and consideration of an individual’s values. Humanistic psychologists believe that the exploration of narratives and personal accounts of life stories are important in the consideration of who people are, where they have been and where they are going (Bland & DeRobertis, 2019). The focus for humanistic psychologists therefore is on the person as an experiencing being, in the process of becoming (Allport, 1955) that the person is in a gradual progression towards improvement, fulfilment, and optimal functioning (Maslow, 1999; Rogers, 1961/1995) and that the developing person is doing so embedded within the world with others (May, 1983). For Schneider et al. (2015) humanistic psychologists “pose two overarching challenges to the study of conscious and nonconscious processes: (1) what does it mean to be [a] fully experiencing human and (2) how does that understanding illuminate the fulfilled or vital life?” (p. xvii). These two challenges are central to this study as it is focusing on what it means to be an adolescent with dyspraxia and how this affects the educational experiences of these young people.

For the purposes of this study the work of two founding humanistic psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, inform this study and were considered when analysing the data.

3.2.1.1 Abraham Maslow

Abraham Maslow is often considered to be one of the founders of humanistic psychology, and one of the most famous psychologists of all time (Kelland, 2015). He studied, in significant detail, the influential and important theoretical concept of self-actualisation and possibly best known for his work on the hierarchy of needs (Kelland, 2015). The hierarchy of needs (see figure 1) suggested that all human behaviour, human motivation, is driven by a set of basic needs, these are; physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

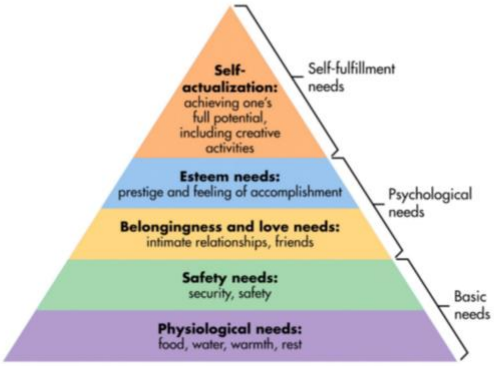

Figure 1: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)[6]

Physiological needs are those needs required to maintain essential biological and physiological functioning and these include food, water, shelter, energy, warmth/body temperature, sleep and sex. The safety needs include

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[6] Sourced at: https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

protection, security, law, order, freedom from fear and stability. Belongingness needs include love, friendship, family and intimacy. Esteem needs include self-esteem, confidence, achievement and respect. All of these lower needs are considered to be deficiency needs, whilst the final need is a ‘being need’ and that is of self-actualisation. Self-actualisation, according to Maslow (1943), is the desire to become the best one can, achieving ones full potential. Even if all the lower needs are met, he believed we are still motivated to what is right for us, to fulfil our unique potential (Kelland, 2015).

Maslow (1943) believed that all of these needs were arranged in an order of hierarchy whereby “the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need” (p. 371). He did recognise the complexities of such needs and the fact that while one need is in the process of being satisfied, a higher need may begin to present itself (Kelland, 2015).

3.2.1.2 Carl Rogers

Carl Rogers believed in the essential aspects put forward by Maslow but extended this further to suggest that an environment for growth needed to provide genuineness (often referred to as congruence), acceptance and unconditional positive regard and empathy (Rogers, 1951) (see figure 2).

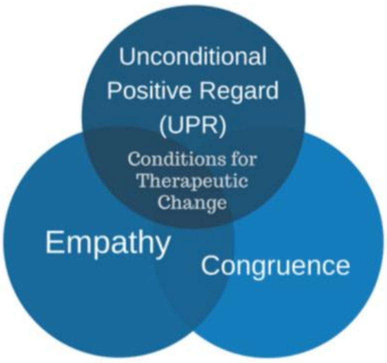

Figure 2: Carl Rogers 3 Core Conditions (1951)[7]

Rogers (1951) believed that, without these core conditions healthy relationships and personalities could not develop. It is suggested by Thorne (1992) that Carl Rogers whole conceptual framework ‘rests on his profound experience that human beings become increasingly trustworthy once they feel at a deep level that their subjective experience is both respected and progressively understood’ (p. 26). Rogers coined the term the ‘experiential field’ to refer to the concept of each person’s private world which is constantly changing but that only the individual themselves can fully understand (Kelland, 2015). It is considered that a person’s behaviour is a result of their interaction with, and perception of, that experiential field (Rogers, 1951).

For Rogers (1951) "The organism has one basic tendency and striving - to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism” (p. 487) and it is this tendency that he referred to as the actualising tendency. Rogers (1951), as with other humanistic psychologists, believed that people are motivated to self-actualise, suggesting that self-actualisation involves psychological growth, fulfilment and satisfaction in life. Both Rogers and Maslow consider this to be a basic human motivation, and despite differing in their views about how this is achieved, they both believe that every person seeks to grow psychologically and to improve and enhance themselves (Kelland, 2015). For Rogers (1951) the need for unconditional positive regard is one of the core conditions essential to a person’s ability to move forward in line with their actualising tendency. He believed that negative psychological health would occur if a discrepancy between self-regard and the positive regard received from others (i.e. they receive conditional positive regard) occurred.

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[7] Sourced at: https://counsellingtutor.com/counselling-approaches/person-centred-approach-to-counselling/the-six-necessary-and-sufficient-conditions-for-therapeutic-personality-change/

Rogers (1951) believed that the experiential field was integral to understanding self-actualisation and that part of this experiential field was the individual’s emotions, feelings and attitudes (Kelland, 2015). He further suggested that people have a self-image (a perceived self) and an ideal self (an image of where they’d like to be) and that they want to feel, behave and experience things in ways which are consistent with this self-image and which also reflect the ideal self. He suggested that if there is a discrepancy between someone’s perceived self and their ideal self then they are in a state of incongruence which is felt as unpleasant (Rogers, 1951). Rogers tried to describe what he considered the self to be, stating that it is created in relation to our experiences and interactions with others in our world, with our environment and with the values that we place upon such events (Kelland, 2015).

This study is primarily concerned with understanding the experiential field of the participants, of their lives as young people with dyspraxia, of how the interactions with the world has an impact on their self-actualisations, whether it supports or impedes personal growth and how their sense of self is created and how they are impacted psychologically.

3.2.1.3 Humanistic psychology and education

In education, behaviourism and behaviourist methodologies prevail as dominant application of theory to education (Shyman, 2016). Within the field of SEND many aspects of behaviourist interventions and approaches remain, for example the prevalent Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) in educating individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Shyman, 2016). In the field of SEND there remains a contentious issue in relation to the differences between behaviourism and its philosophical concepts and those of humanism and humanistic concepts (Shyman, 2016). According to Firdaus & Mariyat (2017) “current education loses humane aspects (dehumanization). This is due to the approach used for teaching based on the educator (teacher centre) and not centred on learners (student centre)” (p. 25).

Rogers assertion in 1977 that “The educational system is probably the most influential of all institutions - outranking the family, the church, the police, and the government – in shaping the interpersonal politics of the growing person” (p. 69) is as relevant today as it was back then. Therefore, it is important we consider that education is about so much more than just learning the curriculum and getting good grades, it has an important role of enriching individual’s lives. It is this element of education that some consider is the true purpose of education, and that it is a huge opportunity missed therefore if the whole person is ignored (Motschnig-Pitrik & Santos, 2006). Carl Rogers work on the Person-Centred Approach extended to education and focused on Person-Centred teaching and Learning where he emphasises his belief that everyone could reach their full potential (Rogers, 1969). He further suggested that the role of the teacher/educator is to facilitate such learning by setting a positive environment in which learning can take place, supporting the learner to know what is expected of them, making the relevant resources available, supporting intellectually and emotionally and sharing thoughts and feelings. He believed that for optimal learning to take place the subject matter needed to be relevant to the interests of the student and as such often the most lasting and pervasive learning occurred when self-initiated. He also suggest that learning new things which could be considered threatening to oneself, such as new perspectives or new attitudes, was easier if external threats were reduced and that this would facilitate faster learning (Rogers, 1969). For Rogers (1990) therefore ‘The facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between facilitator and learner' (p. 305).

With particular reference to issues of Special Educational Needs and Disability in the UK there has been a shift in focus, in the literature and legislation, which has tried to align more humanistic and person centred qualities into policy and practice. This is seen in the emergence of the Education Care and Health Plan (ECHP) that aims to focus on what the young person wants to achieve and how to facilitate them to achieve these goals.

As discussed, phenomenology and existentialism underpin humanistic psychologist's theory and development and as such, the theoretical links between humanistic psychology and IPA are evident (Sharf, 2012). Humanistic theory underpins many developmental theories and with particular relevance to this study underpins Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory and Rogers (1951) person-centred approach and it is these two theories/approaches that inform this current study. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is useful in informing the understanding of the participants accounts and is useful when considering the elements of their accounts of having dyspraxia and how that impacts on their educational experiences. With reference to Rogers person-centred approach which emphases the importance of certain core conditions such as empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness being integral to personality and behavioural change, this will be useful when considering the participants accounts of their experiences within education, particular with teachers and peers.

3.2.2 Influence of models of disability

As discussed in chapter 2, throughout history disability has been viewed and understood in many differing ways with a number of different models of disability emerging and developing over time. Whilst the current study acknowledges the prevalence and influence of both the medical model and the social model of disability in informing legislation as well as peoples understanding of SEND (Garner, 2009), it is the bio-psycho-social model (Engel, 1977) which innovatively sought to incorporate elements of both of these models as well as the emerging interdisciplinary Critical Disabilities Studies model that informs this study.

As an interactional model, the bio-psycho-social model (Engel, 1977) takes elements of both the medical model and the social model, whilst also recognising the interaction with the psychological aspects associated with SEND (Engel, 2009). This current study is influenced by this model, recognising that SEND is indeed a complex interaction between the medical, social and psychological as well as the environmental and as such needs to be considered and understood more deeply.

The Critical Disability Studies model, similarly to the bio-psycho-social model, provides an alternative way in which to understand disability. It challenges the limitations of historical individual pathology models of disability and seeks to give a politicised perspective of the emotional and psychological aspects of disability (see Goodley and Lawthorn, 2010; Swain, French, Barnes & Thomas, 2014). It calls for a recognition of, and focus on, the psychological impact that is caused by the social elements of disability (Finkelstein & French, 1993) and the ways in which this experienced as disablism and how damaging this can be (Goodley, 2011; Swain et al 2014; Thomas, 2007). It seeks to recognise the subjective nature of disability that is best understood by considering the perspective of those who experience and live with it (Reaume, 2014) and it is this element that this current study aligns itself with.

When considering this current study and its chosen method of analysis as detailed in chapter 3, humanistic approaches to psychology feel most suited to an IPA exploration of an individual's lived experiences. As discussed, the theoretical contributes to both humanistic psychology and IPA are shared and seek to consider a person's experiences as experienced by them, emphasising their uniqueness as an individual. Both seek to encompass both internal as well as external factors, motivators, and experiences incorporating a focus on the person as a whole. Both recognise the multiple factors that culminate in making an individual's experience unique and as such fit with a bio-psycho-social view of disability. Whilst Critical disability studies remains a relatively new and emerging field, it too fits with the theoretical stance of this study by diverting from the traditional medical model view of disability and considering the context in which the person exists.

3.3 Ontology and epistemology

This research is informed by an interpretivist paradigm. This study aims to gain an insight into the lived experiences, including personal and educational experiences, of children with dyspraxia as well as how they make sense of those experiences and as such it does not lend itself to a hypothesis driven, hypo-deductive methodology which quantitative approaches and the positivist paradigm offer. As Mukherji & Albon, (2010) state, a key criticism of positivist research is that while "it is possible to use scientific methods to research the biology and physiology of children….it is hard to see how these methods can be employed to investigate attitudes and feelings in the social world in general" (p. 14) and as such a different approach is needed to explore such topics in depth, one which accepts and allows for multiple realties.

The interpretivist/post-positivist paradigm supports the view that there can be multiple realities, which are subjective and can have individual meanings (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2011) and that having multiple perspectives can often result in a more holistic understanding of the phenomena in question (Klein & Meyers, 1998; Morehouse, 2011; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Cohen & Manion (1994) highlight the emphasis of the interpretivist paradigm as exploring the "the world of human experience" (p36), while Thanh & Thanh (2015) state that "Interpretive researchers do not seek the answers for their studies in rigid ways. Instead, they approach the reality from subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture" (p. 25). The interpretivist paradigm additionally emphasizes the role of the researcher's interpretations which aims to understand the participant's reality through their views, experiences and exploration of their background, focusing on the human experience (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). As such, interpretivists tend to focus on qualitative approaches to data collection, in order to gain the depth of experience and richness of data needed to understand the human experience (Willis, 2007).

Interpretivist research includes "accepting and seeking multiple perspectives, being open to change, practicing iterative and emergent data collection techniques, promoting participatory and holistic research, and going beyond the inductive and deductive approach" (Willis, 2007, p. 583) and accepts multiple view points of the same phenomena.

This study aims to address the paucity in the current literature, and seeks to understand the lived experience of the individuals in question and their subjective accounts of what it is like to live with dyspraxia and navigate educational experiences.

It will take a phenomenological stance, informed by humanistic and person centred psychology and will seek to understand the experiences through a Critical Disability Studies model. This study does acknowledge that dyspraxia is a developmental disorder with a neurological basis and concedes that this is important in the understanding of the disorder. However, this study also recognizes that pathology is only one aspect of any disorder such as dyspraxia. In order to understand the many ways in which dyspraxia impacts on young people's lives, we need to extrapolate the lived experience from the people themselves. Therefore, this research will take a psychological and phenomenological perspective on the educational needs and experiences of children and young people with dyspraxia in the UK. Informed by psychology, with a particular emphasis on humanistic and person-centred psychology, it will seek to maintain a holistic & person centred approach in both approach and analysis.

3.4 Research with children

The vast array of social scientific literature and empirical research focusing on children highlights the emphasis that historically children have predominantly been viewed as objects of research (Green & Hogan, 2005). Particularly in the social sciences, children have been viewed largely as 'becomings' as opposed to 'beings' (Bragg, 2010). This is the suggestion that as 'becomings' they are of interest because of who and what they will become in the future, whereas to view children as ‘beings’ grants them autonomy as individuals of interest in their own right. It could be said that children’s view’s and experiences appear to be seldom assessed and given weight to in literature due to the large array of perceived limitations of such data. Such issues include the assumption that the best interests of the child can best be served by decisions made by adults, particularly in arenas such as family courts, these assumptions may at times be referred to without eliciting the views of the child concerned or their particular needs (Piper, 2000). When relative weight is given to what children want, particularly in certain arenas, such as family courts, issues such as age and maturity are given precedence. Generally, the younger the child, the less relative weight is given to their views and opinions, however, even if their view’s and opinions are taken into account, they are considered alongside the views and opinions of the adults and as such children remain largely marginalised. This risk is highlighted by Narvanen & Nasman (2007) when they argue that age and maturity becomes “part of a circular reasoning in which whatever children say that is not in line with adult views will be judged as coming from individuals too young or too immature to be listened to” (p. 237). It is clear that children’s rights and views, however recognised they are, are still largely constrained by adult expectations, acceptances and power.

3.5 The need for individual experience

According to William James “individual experience defines the scope of psychology” (1990 [1890], p. 361). Mainstream psychology historically has been largely routed in empirical data and as such defined as a science in the traditional sense of the word. There has been a recent and very gradual interest in psychology to examine the experiences of participants and the importance of this is becoming increasingly recognized. This thesis aims to understand more about what children experience, how they experience and how they make sense of their experiences in relation to their dyspraxia and education. The emphasis is to afford agency to the individual child who experiences the phenomenon and as such contribute to mainstream psychological and educational knowledge surrounding children with dyspraxia by adding a new dimension to developmental analysis.

Furthermore, in eliciting the experiences of children we are reflecting their positions as people rather than objects of scrutiny. The importance of the experience of a person in a given phenomenon is highlighted by Jerome Kagan (1984) when he commented that “the person’s interpretation of experience is simultaneously the most significant product of an encounter and the spur to the next” (p. 279) and that without such knowledge, even a scientific perspective could be deemed incomplete. Research focusing on the experiences of individuals has largely involved adults providing a more comprehensive and holistic picture in many areas. As noted previously, children however, have not been afforded such an opportunity in the area of scientific knowledge and as such our understanding and knowledge surrounding their experiences, particularly in dyspraxia and education, remains with assumptions and experiences of adults in their lives. Furthermore, the importance of researching children’s experiences can be considered a children’s rights issue in which a moral perspective “on the role and status of children which respects and promotes their entitlement to being considered as persons of value and persons with rights” (Greene & Hogan, 2005, p. 3). It furthermore provides children with their value in the present rather than to their potential value in the future.

3.6 Methodological approach to the study (qualitative)

As the aim of this research is to provide an in-depth insight into the experiences of children with dyspraxia, after consideration of available methods, this study will employ a qualitative methodology in order to enable the reader to gain a comprehensive insight into the lived experiences of the child.

As this study wishes to afford agency to the child and gain an insight in to their lived experiences in a rich, detailed and in-depth way, it does so whilst acknowledging that these insights will necessarily not be generalisable but will offer a rich understanding of particular experiences. If educators are to provide an inclusive environment for these children, an in-depth understanding of their experiences in education, and of the policies set up to support them, is essential. Importantly, the examination of the experiences of children with dyspraxia in education will facilitate our understanding and highlight the complexity of the bio-psycho-social phenomena of dyspraxia and as such will provide exciting and innovative possibilities for informing Special Educational Needs policy and pedagogy.

A qualitative methodology is useful when a topic needs to be explored in-depth, when the variables are unknown or not easily identifiable and when theories and/or knowledge need to be developed (Creswell, 1998). There is a need to provide a detailed view in this current study and to encourage the receptiveness of the participants so that they may be able to discuss their experiences, revealing knowledge that could not be identified by quantitative methods alone. There are many qualitative approaches to research in psychology and several were considered for this study, these will be briefly discussed in order to provide an explanation as to why the selected method of analysis was chosen for this study.

Thematic analysis (TA) is a widely used qualitative method in psychology, offering a foundational method for qualitative analysis which offers an accessible and flexible approach (Braun & Clark, 2006). It is considered by some to be a core element of many qualitative methods and as such could be useful to researchers conducting any form of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006; Holloway & Todres, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998). TA can be used across many theoretical or epistemological approaches as it is not derived from, nor tied to, any specific theoretical or epistemological position (Braun & Clark, 2006). However, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) stems from a particular theoretical/epistemological position, and it is this position which is important to this study. When comparing IPA to Thematic Analysis (TA) it is important to note that they differ in process as TA codes across all data sets, whereas IPA codes one data set and then develops themes for that data set before moving on to the next data set. With this focus in detail upon each individual data set/participant IPA ensures the uniqueness and idiographic nature of the enquiry. However, IPA and TA have many similarities that it is likely that IPA and a phenomenologically-informed TA would end up resulting in similar outputs.

Collins and Nicolson (2002) question the differences between the two approaches and to what extent they differ. However, a study conducted by Warwick et al (2004) identified that IPA proved "more informative in terms of clinical implications" (p. 132). It can be said then that to overcome this possible perceived similarity between IPA and TA a thorough and analytical presentation of the results of IPA is needed. Whilst this is considered to be essential in reporting IPA, it may be that due to the nature of looking across participants accounts for similarities and differences, and reporting in this style, an opportunity is being missed to report a "potentially richer seam of data, that of a contextualised, unfolding and sequential account within a single interview" (Colins & Nicolson, 2002, p. 627).

IPA and Discourse Analysis (DA) have been said to share a commitment to language and qualitative analysis but differ in the perception of cognition (Chapman & Smith, 2002). The difference between the two approaches occurs when considering mapping verbal accounts to underlying cognitions. DA focuses on data that "elucidate the interactive tasks being performed by verbal statements, how these tasks are accomplished and the linguistic resources drawn on" (Chapman & Smith, 2002, p. 126) and generally DA takes a more sceptical view of the ability to map participant's verbal accounts to their underlying cognitions. IPA however, aims to do just that by being "concerned with understanding what the respondent thinks or believes about the topic under discussion" (Chapman & Smith, 2002, p. 126).

Narrative analysis (NA) focuses on how participants create and use stories to make sense of the world, their identity and social life (Riessman, 2008). It differs from TA in that it is more concerned with the whole of a story rather than separate themes (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 2008). However, similarly to TA there is no set approach to conducting a NA (Polkinghorne, 1995). Wong & Breheny (2018) emphasise the importance of storytelling to how people make sense of their experiences and state that "a narrative approach aims to make visible that which has already shaped our consciousness and identity" (p. 247). Criticisms of NA suggest that, similarly to TA, it does not have a defined, clear epistemological influence (Redqwood, 1999) and draws upon many sources (McLeod & Balamoutsou, 2000) and as such, as with TA, is broad in its application.

Willig (2001) considered the notion that some academics/researchers struggle "to see any meaningful distinction between" IPA and Grounded Theory

(Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 100) noting that they have frequently been contrasted. However Willig (2001) argues that the distinction lies with IPA's ability and suitability for understanding an individual's personal and lived experience, whereas grounded theory is suitable for understanding social processes. Therefore, for this study IPA is the chosen method of analysis and will be explored in depth following a brief justification for the use of semi-structured interviews as the means of collecting data for this current study.

Focus groups are a complex method of data collection, useful in many situations, but it was felt that the complexity of the social situation it encourages, would not be conducive to an exploration of experiential analysis of personal and sensitive data. Smith (2004) suggests that there should be some caution over the use of focus groups in IPA studies as they may not facilitate IPA's "commitment to the detailed exploration of personal experience" (p. 50). As such in order for the participants to tell their story, in the tradition of IPA, ideographically, this could not be achieved if a focus group was used as this would necessarily create a collective story, account or voice, not an individual one. As such, focus groups as a method of data collection were rejected.

Other methods of data collection such as questionnaires were discounted due to their limitations in gathering in-depth data and due to the need for participants to fill them in, something that children with dyspraxia may find difficult due to their fine and gross motor difficulties. Despite there being little published data using diary methods in an IPA study, it posed an interesting possibility and potentially could contribute something interesting and significant. However it was felt that for the current study which is focusing on children and young people with a disorder characterized by difficulties in fine and gross motor skills amongst many other things, asking them to write a diary would not be empathic to their situation and would most certainly not produce enough detail for an in-depth analysis, so this was rejected also. Finally there was a consideration to use visual methods in conjunction with semi-structed interviews for this current study, asking participants to draw or create something visual before or during the interview to act as a prompt for discussion. However again, due to the many difficulties with fine motor skills that these children and young people face it was again discounted.

As such, the method of analysis selected for the current study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with semi-structured interviews used to gather data.

3.7 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

3.7.1 Rationale for choosing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Greene & Hogan (2005) recognize the increased interest in how children “construct their own developmental story” (p. 2) and identify the need for a methodology which can understand children’s experiential lives. This study aims to address this need by utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a methodology and analytical tool, to bring a distinctive psychological perspective to the vast literature surrounding Special Educational Needs in the UK, and address the paucity of research in the areas of dyspraxia and children’s educational lived experiences.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was specifically designed as an approach that focuses on the lived experiences of the person and their interpretations of these experiences. IPA is committed to the close “examination” of how people make sense of their major life experiences. Dyspraxia, a life-long disorder, is therefore considered here to be a major life experience. Formal education in the UK begins as early as 2 and a half years old (in the pre-school setting) and due to legislation changes in 2017 is now compulsory until 18 years old, with many choosing to continue education in Higher Education settings. Informal education and learning takes place in many environments and can be thought of as beginning from birth and extending throughout one's whole life; therefore education is considered in this study to also be a life-long experience.

For children in the UK (and of course other developed countries around the world) compulsory formal education is a major factor in their early and teenage lives and as such constitutes a major life experience for them. Recent changes in the UK to legislation surrounding SEN also sought to engage young people in contributing their views to inform the policy changes and developments. This was achieved by consulting with them through an advisory group in order that they too could contribute to the green paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - A Consultation' (DfE, 2011) further recognising the importance of hearing the voices of young people in matters that affect them. As such IPA has been chosen as the most suitable method of analysis for this study and its aims to explore the lived experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools.

"Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is an approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research" (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 11) which was recently developed (mid 90's) and is rapidly growing within psychology. It is an approach originally based in, and largely used by psychologists, now increasingly used by other health and social science disciplines. It is a distinct qualitative approach due to its combination of psychological, interpretative and idiographic components. As noted by Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) IPA is an experiential approach to research, aiming to offer an in-depth insight into the participant’s lived experiences and a close examination of how they make sense of these experiences. IPA however recognizes that the researcher is involved in the process and their perceptions and beliefs are required in order to make sense of the personal world of the participant through a process of interpretative activity. Smith and Osbourne (2003 cited in Smith 2003) describe this as the researcher engaging in a double hermeneutic where;

“Participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their world”, (Smith and Osbourne, 2003, p. 53, cited in Smith 2003). Therefore, IPA places importance in both, the persons experience as described by them, but also in the researchers interpretations. It is these interpretations that illuminate aspects of the experience and meaning the participant makes of their experiences for the audience and which adds another level of depth to the enquiry and exploration of the given phenomena (Eatough & Smith, 2017 cited in Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017).

One main characteristic of IPA is its idiographic level of inquiry, working at the individual level, to make specific statements about those individuals, which contrasts with traditional mainstream psychology nomothetic approaches that work at a population level, making predictions and probable claims (Breakwell, Hammond, Fife-Schaw & Smith, 2012). IPA is committed to the detailed examination of a particular case or cases; as such participant numbers in IPA research are generally small, sometimes only one but usually no more than 15 (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). IPA is frequently the methodology of choice when researching experiences that are of personal significance to the participant. It is this aspect of the methodology that makes it particularly suitable for this study.

Whilst IPA focuses on the particular individual accounts, it then moves to looking at the shared experiences of participants and goes beyond descriptive to interpretation.

IPA as a methodology has been informed and developed by three key areas of the philosophy of knowledge. These areas are; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. Phenomenology is concerned with studying experience; hermeneutics is concerned with interpretation; and idiography is concerned with the particular. Each of these components will be explored and their contribution to IPA discussed.

3.7.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the philosophical approach to the study, or focus, of the experience of being human, including what it is like to be human, with particular reference to what constitutes our lived world (Alase, 2017; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This focus is largely concerned with “things” that are of significance to us. The term phenomenology is derived from the Greek words *‘phenomenon’* meaning show or appear and *‘logos’* meaning discourse, reason and judgment. This clearly highlights the complementary activities that are involved in phenomenological analysis and the analytical nature of the philosophy. It explores the experience of the phenomena as it ‘appears’ to the person and considers the way in which this has meaning for the person in question.

Phenomenology is also concerned with how we come to understand our experiences. It has a strong psychological value as it provides us with rich ideas about how to understand and examine human lived experience. There are four major philosophers that inform phenomenology; Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-

Ponty and Sartre, each will be discussed briefly here as the ideas and components of this philosophy is such an integral component in IPA methodology. Each of the four philosophers' ideas central to IPA will be briefly introduced but in no sense constitutes a complete or whole picture of their contributions to philosophy.

3.7.2.1 Husserl

"Go back to the things themselves"

Husserl was a German philosopher born in 1859 and was the founder of phenomenology. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) state that "the founding principle of phenomenological inquiry is that experience should be examined in the way that it occurs, and in its own terms" (p. 11). Husserl believed that phenomenology should be concerned with carefully examining the human experience, with particular emphasis on identifying the essential qualities of such experiences. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight the famous argument put forward by Husserl stating that we should "go back to the things themselves" (p. 12) in which they suggest that he means to remove the obstacles that prevent us from revealing the true experiential content of the 'thing' being examined and therefore we should focus in detail on each particular 'thing' without it being obscured. Willis (2001) suggests that this refers more to the approach a researcher takes, that in contrast to traditionally hypothesis driven research, this stance requires a more investigative and open mind and needs to remain attentive to what is presented rather than to any preconceptions. We need to be conscious of the human minds ability to "distort basic ideas of reality according to culturally pre-set prejudices and ways of thinking" (Willis, 2001, p. 3) and focus the gaze of the researcher on the experience itself before any interpretations, be those of the participant or the researcher.

Intentionality

For Husserl, experience should be examined in the way in which it naturally occurs. In order to focus on the lived experience of a particular phenomenon, Husserl used the term 'intentionality' in order to describe the connection between the process of consciousness and the object of attention. This indicates that there is always a conscious process taking place whenever we see, hear, think, and remember something. It is this process that is the lived experience and as such Husserl described the need to ‘bracket’ the aspects of lived experience which are *taken for granted* in order that the true lived experience of the phenomena under investigation can be examined without the influence of other aspects. This aspect allows complete focus on the given phenomenon and furthermore a deeper examination than may otherwise be possible. He also termed this as 'eidetic reduction’, which is to reduce the “thing” down to the essence of it.

Natural attitude

Husserl believed that we should step outside of our natural attitude (meaning our everyday experience) and adopt a phenomenological gaze, whereby we adopted a different viewpoint of the objects in question and instead of focusing on the object itself we become reflexive and focus on our perceptions of the object. This means that the focus of our attentions should not be on the experience itself but more on our seeing, thinking, feelings, remembering’s, wishing’s of that experience. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight this eloquently with their example of a car driving past the window. They suggest that we might see the car, think about it and who may be driving it for example, wish that we could have a car like that, and later remember the car, and that "Once we stop to self-consciously *reflect on* any of the seeing, thinking, remembering and wishing, we are being phenomenological" (p. 13). They are identifying the everyday activities this experience may bring to the fore, they confirm for us that it is our reflections on these experiences which make us phenomenological. Husserl used the term intentionality to identify the relationship between the object and our experience of it and as Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) state "experience or consciousness is always consciousness of something – seeing is seeing of something, remembering is remembering of something and judging is judging of something" (p.13).

Phenomenological method – bracketing and reductionism

Husserl, using the term Epoché, said we needed to 'bracket' our taken for granted world in order that we may focus on our perception of that world. By taken for granted world we mean the everyday, mundane, common-sense world that people experience (Ajiboye, 2012). By 'bracketing', Husserl did not intend that we ignore the taken for granted world, rather that we put it to one side in order that we can focus on the true essence of the experience rather than out interpretations of it (Willis, 2001). For Husserl this method involved different levels of reductionism, pulling different layers away, in order that we get to the true meaning of the essence of the experience. For Husserl this is a process in which "each reduction offers a different lens or prism, a different way of thinking and reasoning about the phenomenon a hand" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 14). Manen (2016) emphasised this idea of reductionism stating that “phenomenological reflection on lived experience is neither inductive nor deductive – rather it is reductive” (p. 222) therefore we are trying to get to the experience as we live it. Manen (2016) details the differing layers of Epoché in phenomenology as heuristic reduction (bracketing the taken for granted); hermeneutic reduction (the bracketing of all interpretation and assumptions); experiential reduction (bracketing theory and meaning) and methodology reduction (bracketing all conventional techniques and seeking to invent a new approach that might fit the phenomenological question studied). It is likely these are the many layers that Husserl is concerned with when he talks of Epoché and returning to the natural attitude. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) emphasise the importance of Husserl to IPA researchers, particularly with reference to the process of reflection and bracketing, but note that whilst he was focused on finding the essence of experience, IPA focuses more on identifying and capturing “particular experiences as experienced by particular people” (p. 16).

3.7.2.2 Heidegger

Heidegger, a German philosopher born in 1889, was a student of Husserl focusing on hermeneutics and existential emphasis in phenomenological philosophy. Developing from Husserl's concern with individual psychological processes, such as perception, awareness and consciousness, Heidegger became more concerned with the ontology of existence itself. For him this involved the practical activities and relationships we are caught up in and through which we view the world and through these process he believed the world becomes meaningful to us.

Dasein & intersubjectivity

Heidegger used the term ‘Dasein’, which literally means ‘there-being’, as the term for the “uniquely situated quality of ‘human being” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 16). He was concerned with understanding the nature of Dasein and as such was focused on the question of existence. He viewed people as always being a “Worldly ‘person-in-context’” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 17) immersed in a world of relationships, language and objects and always ‘in-relation-to’ something. It is this view and the phenomenological concept of intersubjectivity which are deemed important for IPA. Intersubjectivity refers to “the shared, overlapping and relational nature of our engagement in the world” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 17).

Pietkiewicz & Smith (2014) suggest that Heidegger’s contribution to IPA for researchers are the concepts that human beings are in a world of objects, that our existence is in relation to others and our relationships, and that we are immersed in a world of language. As researchers using IPA, Heidegger’s work also emphasises the concept that “our being-in-the-world is always perspectival, always temporal, and always ‘in-relation-to’ something” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 18) and therefore a core element, particularly within IPA, is the focus on understanding how people make sense of their experiences and the meanings these have for them.

3.7.2.3 Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty, a French philosopher born in 1908, deemed to be one of the most creative philosophers of the 20th century (Baldwin, 2004, in Merleau-Ponty 2008), was closely linked to and utilised the work of both Husserl and Heidegger. His philosophy regarding our knowledge of the world was more

focused on the embodied nature of our relationship with the world, viewing our body as a means of communicating with the world and emphasised the interpretative nature of such knowledge along with the importance of the situated quality. For Merleau-Ponty the embodied nature of the relationship we have with the world, a term he calls ‘body subjects’, leads to the primacy of our individual perspective of the world. He states “the body no longer conceived as an object in the world, but as our means of communicating with it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 106, cited in Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 18). As such, empathy can be experienced, but you can never share the same experience as the person you empathise with as the experience belongs to the person and their embodied position in the world that clearly differs for each person. “Ultimately we can never share entirely the other’s experience, because their experience belongs to their own embodied position in the world (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.19).
Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight the importance of Merleau-Ponty’s work, of the body shaping the fundamental character of our knowing of the world, as being critical to IPA and other qualitative research in general.

3.7.2.4 Sartre

“Existence comes before essence” & nothingness

Sartre, a French philosopher born in 1905, believed that human nature is not about being, but more about becoming. He emphasised the developmental aspects of being human, stating that “existence comes before essence” (Sartre 1948, p. 26, cited in Solomon & Higgins, 2017, p. 203) meaning that we are always developing and becoming ourselves and that this is an on-going occurrence throughout our lives. As such ‘the self’ is seen as an on-going project to be discovered, we are becoming, not being.

Another important concept for Sartre he termed as ‘nothingness’ which involved his belief that the things that are absent are as important as the things that are present in defining how we view the world and who we become. Jones, Cardinal & Haywood (2003) described this as being the gap between the world and us. For Sartre, who we are and how we view the world is defined by things that are absent in as much as they are defined by things that are present. He places importance on how our experience of something is impacted by all elements, the absent and the present elements, the sights, sounds, smells for example. In Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) they quote an extract of Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* (1956/1943, p. 42) in which Sartre gives an example to illuminate his concept of nothingness. The extract recounts Sartre’s experience of going to meet someone in a café, Pierre, however when he arrives at the café and Pierre is not there, his ‘nothingness’ is what creates the meaning for Sartre. As such, we can see the importance of nothingness in creating our own meanings. Furthermore, the emotions or experiences we have are unique to us and as such can only make sense to others if examined within the interpersonal context. He stresses that many complex issues should also be viewed within the context of the individual and their life and as such may affect their freedom to choose their experiences.

‘The world is not mine alone’

Sartre’s philosophy also recognised that we are not in this world alone and our experiences are shaped by our involvement with others in the world. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) highlight this concept; “the world is not mine alone and furthermore my perception of the world is shaped largely by the presence of others and others have their own projects they are engaged in” (p. 20). This is an important element to consider and for Sartre the presence of others shapes how we viewed particular experiences. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) explore this by detailing examples from Sartre's work where upon entering a park and becoming aware of another person in it, the experience changes for Sartre as he can no longer experience the park for himself in his own terms as the park is being experienced by someone else at that same time. Sartre suggests that this concept works in other ways also, whereby we only become aware of some feelings, for example embarrassment or self-consciousness, when we are aware of another person's presence. The concept then of being in this world with others, the impact that has on our experiences, and how our experiences are contingent on the presence or absence of others are key elements from Sartre's work that are influential in IPA.

3.7.2.5 What are the implications of these four philosophers for IPA?

IPA takes Heidegger's emphasis on the worldliness of our experience. It also takes Sartre's point of the importance of personal and social relationships, so that we conceive of our experiences as contingent upon the presence and absence of these relationships with others. Additionally IPA takes from these four philosophers, that experience is a lived process which is unique to the individual and is dependent on their embodied relationship to the world and their developing perspectives, meanings and becoming. IPA also utilises Sartre's emphasis of an analysis of people engaged in the world and the embodied, interpersonal, affective and moral nature of those encounters. All of these concepts are essential in IPA and especially this current study.

3.7.3 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the second major theoretical underpinning of IPA and is the theory of interpretation that is involved with and concerned with what the methods and purposes of interpretation are. Hermeneutics asserts the possibility of revealing the intentions or meanings of the person’s experiences and emphasises the importance of their relevance to present day life. There are some key theorists in hermeneutics and their contributions are important to IPA, as such, their ideas and approaches are explored below.

3.7.3.1 Schleiermacher

Schleiermacher offers a holistic view of the interpretative process and emphasises that part of the aim of interpretation is to understand the person and their experience. This differs from a social constructivist perspective, which focuses on the language used as opposed to *the meaning* of that language for the person themselves. His approach to interpretation was focused on grammatical (exact and objective meaning) and psychological (individuality of the individual) interpretation (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Interpretation is central to IPA and as such "in IPA this can be seen as the ability to bring to consciousness what was unconscious" (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 23). Therefore, the researcher is able to offer a perspective that the participant themselves cannot explicitly offer and as such may reach “an understanding of the utter better than he understands himself” (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 266). The suggestion is not that the researcher knows more than the participant does, but what is being emphasised is the possibility that the researcher may be able to offer a different insight than the participants are even consciously aware of themselves. It is this deeper level of interpretation that is utilised in IPA and is central to the notion of understanding the participant making sense of his or her own experiences.

3.7.3.2 Heidegger

Heidegger, as well as being influential in phenomenology, also had some important ideas and concepts in hermeneutics that are important for IPA. He was concerned with examining that which is latent as it emerges and believed that ‘appearance’ had a dual quality. Firstly the many visible meanings and secondly the many concealed messages that are present in the phenomena under examination. His primary aim was to examine the “thing” as it appeared and then utilise analytical thinking as required to help understand and make sense of its appearance. In IPA the collection of data often will involve examining that which is latent and that which the meaning may be “hidden” from even the participant so that they may not be aware it. It is the examination of this emergence (of the hidden) and the analytical process which helps to make sense and identify the meanings for the participant.

Heidegger’s concepts of fore conceptions and fore structures are important here as we tend to base our understandings on these. Certainly within IPA there is an importance between the fore structure, the fore conception and the object of interpretation and therefore it is a dynamic and multifaceted form of analysis. Being aware of this and acknowledging it allows the researcher to be reflexive, recognising the need to be aware of their own biases and fore conceptions, expectations and prior knowledge in order that the true essence of the phenomena can present itself.

3.7.3.3 Gadamer

Gadamer echoes many of Heidegger's ideas with particular reference to the concept of fore structure and the new object. He asserts that our fore conceptions emerge as we interpret that data and as such the process of interpretation is a dynamic one. His theoretical position suggests that we compare, contrast and modify our conceptions as part of the sense making process and as such requires an openness from the researcher. Gadamer suggests that "every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation" (Gadamer, 1990/1960, p. 267, cited in Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The emphasis is that the researcher brings something to the process of analysis and the interpretation of the data as well as the data bringing something to the researcher. It is this concept which influences the duel hermeneutic approach utilised in IPA. The role of the researcher therefore is to be aware of their own fore conceptions and bias and with this awareness the 'true' meaning can present itself.

3.7.3.4 Hermeneutic circle

A very important concept to IPA taken from hermeneutics is the concept of the hermeneutic circle. This emphasises the difference between the part and the whole. In IPA this is a useful concept as IPA is not linear; it is a constant movement back and forth through the data until complete saturation is achieved. The essence of this concept is in order to understand the parts you must look at the whole and conversely in order to understand the whole you must look at the parts. When thinking of data to be analysed in such a way, a word can only be understood when looked at it the whole sentence and as such, the meaning of that sentence will naturally depend on the words contained within it. It again emphasises a holistic approach and an in-depth approach to analysis. It is this detailed and iterative (back and forth examination of the data) process of analysis that is central to IPA. Furthermore, this is often why participant numbers in IPA studies are small, due to this level of detailed analysis.

3.7.4 Idiography

The third major theoretical under pinning of IPA is idiography. This is the concern with the particular, which contrasts with most mainstream psychology which is largely nomothetic in approach. The concern with the particular in idiography and in IPA has two components; firstly the commitment to exploring the particular in detail and at depth and secondly the commitment to understanding how a given phenomenon is experienced and understood from the perspective of particular people in a particular context. It is not concerned with generalising to populations as nomothetic approaches are.

This does not mean that researchers cannot draw from the idiographic to generalisations, they can, but it is via a different process from nomothetic, developing its generalisations (or transferability) cautiously, and locating them in the particular. For example, this might involve the bringing together of a number of case studies, a method often used in IPA studies of having a small number of participants, each providing a case study/interview. Two methods of generalising idiographic analysis include analytical induction, whereby a tentative hypothesis is tested and refined against each case, allowing for reflection and modification, another iterative procedure that allows for the emergence of a hypothesis that fits most cases. The second approach is a quasi-judicial approach whereby each case is considered in relation to each other, providing low-level generalisations within a narrow area of interest, taking into account the accounts of different people in similar situations.

Furthermore, an idiographic level of enquiry allows for an exploration of the individual human experience of the phenomena that is in contrast to nomothetic approaches that tend to transform data in to statistical equations. Such statistical data prevents the possibility of tracing back to the individual which risks constructing individuals, and their accounts, as being something they never were and never could be (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

It is argued that “science includes the study even of the unique occurrences” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 31), as Sloman (1976, cited in Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) suggests this “justifies elaborate and detailed investigation and analysis of particular cases” (p. 31) and this is precisely the purpose of an idiographic level of inquiry. Furthermore, Francis Galton, who pioneered (with others) the development of the statistical method, a nomothetic approach, wrote that an “acquaintance with the particulars is the beginning of all knowledge – scientific or otherwise” (Galton, 1883; cited in Allport, 1951, p. 56). In IPA this idiography is essential and allows for things to be revealed which were not expected due to the in-depth analysis of single or small participant numbers. Furthermore, the detailed analysis of transcripts takes a great deal of time and follows “a critique of nomothetic psychology as only allowing actuarial or group level claims and not being able to say something substantive and specific about the particular individuals who, in fact provided the data for the study in the first place” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 49).

3.8 Sample size

According to Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) the sample size for IPA depends on a number of factors such as the degree of commitment a researcher gives to reporting case study analysis, organisational constraints and the depth and richness of the data gathered from individual accounts. As such they do not stipulate an ideal sample size, however they do recommend guidelines and emphasize that in IPA the central issue is “quality, not quantity, and given the complexity of most human phenomena, IPA studies usually benefit from a concentrated focus on a small number of cases” (p. 51). Whilst single cases studies can be and are used in IPA they do require an experienced researcher and can be extremely powerful (Noon, 2018; Smith, 2004). However, in most IPA studies it is recommended a good sample size is between 3 and 6 participants for a student project as well as experienced IPA researchers. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) recommend 3 participants for an undergraduate or masters study and indicate that for a PhD study it is harder to define a number but it may be better to think in terms of number of interviews rather than numbers of participants, with an ideal number of interviews being somewhere between 4 and 10. They do however emphasize that a smaller number of participants allows for a deeper level of analysis both within individual cases and between individual cases and that “successful analysis requires time, reflection and dialogue, and larger datasets tend to inhibit all of these things” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.52).

Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez (2011) indicate that students are often pressurized to include too many participants in an IPA study, suggesting that this could be due to issues with placating examination boards as well as to be more in line with the quantitative research process. However, they strongly suggest, “this necessarily de-emphasizes IPA’s commitment to idiography” (p. 756). Reid, Flowers & Larkin (2005) suggest that less is more in IPA and that “IPA challenges the traditional linear relationship between ‘number of participants’ and value of research” (p. 22). A deeper examination of a smaller number of participants in an IPA study is always preferable to a shallow, descriptive analysis of many as is often seen in a poor IPA study as well as other methodological approaches such as thematic analysis and grounded theory (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011).

A brief review of a number of unpublished doctoral thesis using IPA support the assertion that small numbers are sufficient and emphasise the lack of any recommended sufficient number. Recent doctoral level studies include;

- Raleigh’s (2013) study exploring the experiences of 8 young adult students (aged 19-22yrs) with DCD;
- Reid’s (2012) study exploring parental experiences of inclusion for children with Autism with 5 participants;
- Rogan’s (2011) study on Asperger’s syndrome conducted with 4 participants;
- Maclean’s (2008) IPA study of service users' perspectives and experiences of relapse in psychosis had 7 participants;
- Jardine’s (2008) study exploring the meaning raising a child with autism has for parents engaged 9 participants gathering 10 hours of interview audio.

Many reviews of the use of IPA in research have been conducted, often used to chart the rise of the methodological approach and analyse in which areas it is being used. Reid, Flowers & Larkin (2005) conducted one such literature review identifying academic research papers between 1996 and June 2004 and found that there were 65 published papers between these years with 11 more added in the first half of 2004 which indicates the continued rise. From this analysis they were able to identify the areas in which IPA had been used and identified that largely this had been in the field of heath psychology, however noted that “IPA can be applied to an extensive range of psychological inquiry” (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005, p. 20). Reid et al (2005) do state that IPA can contribute to biopsychosocial perspectives and that this may be why it is so popular in health psychology. Interestingly Reid et al’s (2005) review identified that while participant ages in the IPA studies ranged from 10 – 83 years, only two studies contained child or adolescent participants.

3.9 Research design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis “research is always concerned with the detailed examination of lived experience. Therefore one should not expect one’s research question to be on too grand a scale or too ambitious in its reach” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 47). Often a single research question is helpful for an IPA study. In this study, the research question is ‘What are the educational experiences of children with dyspraxia in UK secondary schools’. This research question focuses solely on the lived experiences of this group of children whilst giving them a space to explore what this means for them as an individual. It may be that this differs between participants.

Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) suggest that secondary or theory driven research questions can be useful but should remain secondary “as they can only be answered at the interpretative stage” (p. 48). Therefore the phenomenological account should always be established first before attempting to address any secondary research questions during interpretation and that this should be approached cautiously so as not to suggest more about the meaning of the account rather than the account itself.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has traditionally used a single focus approach, in that its focus is on the person who is experiencing the given phenomenon not anyone else around them. Whilst some IPA studies have only one participant, most have multiple participants, however they all are experiencing the same phenomenon and as such considered a single perspective. Certain topics however may be better served by an analysis of multiple perspectives on a given phenomenon, enabling the researcher to develop a detailed and multifaceted interpretation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). However in this study it is felt strongly that the single focus perspective, with multiple participants all experiencing the same phenomena, is the more appropriate methodological approach. This is due to the focus of the current research being driven by the desire to afford agency to this particular group and to contribute to lessening the gap in the literature (that being of the child's voice) which already has parental and professional accounts within it. The aim is to explore the lived experiences of dyspraxia from the view of the child, thereby recognising them as active agents who are competent and capable of informing of their experiences (Smith, 2011; Hendrick, 2008; Prout & James, 1997). To date, there is a significant paucity in research which explores the views of the child with dyspraxia alone, without including the views of others. As a researcher whose academic background is based on psychology, I am keen to base my research in these traditions and take account of children's voices and place them as 'expert'.

3.10 Ethical considerations

As a researcher with a strong psychological background, I have always followed the British Psychological Society's (BPS, 2009; 2014) ethical guidelines and continued to do so throughout this research study. The University of East London's (UEL) University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) granted ethical approval for this study on the 16th December 2014 and an amendment granted on 7th May 2015 (see appendix H). Approval was granted prior to advertising the research or making contact with any potential participants. Research is a dynamic process, one that ethically needs constant monitoring throughout. This normally begins with meeting ethical criteria of certain professional bodies, here the BPS, as well as certain institutional bodies, here UEL's University Research Ethics Committee. However, I consider it necessary that I revisit my ethical procedures throughout the study. For example, avoidance of harm must take priority, however it is unclear as to the extent to which 'harm' may be caused by research around sensitive topics (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009: Greene & Hogan, 2005). As such, I ensured I provided an honest account of what was expected of participants, along with offering for them to view the interview schedule ahead of the interview. This afforded them the opportunity to make an informed choice as to whether they wished to participate and set them at ease by being aware of the topics wishing to be discussed. Furthermore, this allowed the participants the opportunity to select topics they did not wish to discuss and inform me of this in advance. None choose to do this, however it was important that they had a choice. I continually checked throughout the process that the participant was happy to continue, and this agreement was obtained verbally throughout the interview. I remained vigilant and observant throughout the interview process to identify and act on any cues that the participant may be feeling uncomfortable or uneasy and offered rest breaks or the opportunity to stop the interview if necessary.

It was essential that when informing participants prior to the interview that they had the right to with draw at any time that ‘at any time’ was defined. For example, I considered it essential to offer clarity as to exactly at which points the participant had the right to withdraw, as this may have meant something different to the participant than it did to me. For example: Is the right to with draw only during the interview? After data collection? During transcription? Or before publication? Furthermore, it was essential that I was as open as possible about confidentiality and anonymity. Due to the nature of IPA analysis, which involves use of extracts of transcripts in the write up, it was not possible to offer confidentiality as such, however what could be offered was complete anonymity and this was carefully detailed to the participant. It may be that some participants preferred to be identified in their quotes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), however this is rare, and certainly I do not feel appropriate in this study as it involved children and young people. In order to make the participant feel at ease, I offered the participants the opportunity to approve their transcripts, and/or the quotes to be used in publication, so that they can see what is going to be used and how.

Due to the topic of the research being potentially sensitive to the participants, careful consideration was given as to how to make the participants feel at ease. The interview schedule (see Appendix B) was designed in a way that ensured the least sensitive questions were asked first. Additionally, the decision to ask participants to bring a sheet of visual data that explained something about themselves to the first interview was also in part to help the participant feel at ease and allow the first part of the interview to be focused on who they were and what their interests are. The aim was to help build a comfortable and trusting atmosphere. Consideration of what services the researcher could refer the participant if they required any support following the interviews included;

- a leaflet for every participant from the Dyspraxia Foundation;
- a list of support services;
- a list of local support groups for the parents;
- the contact details of the researcher, her supervisor and UEL's university research and ethics committee should any concerns arise.

3.11 Participants

3.11.1 Identifying potential participants

For this study participants were needed that had experience of the phenomena in question (being a child of secondary school age who had dyspraxia) and who were able, and willing, to articulate their experiences. As such the participants sought for this study needed to fit the inclusion criteria as listed in table 6 (below):

INCLUSION CRITERIA	**EXCLUSION CRITERIA**
Secondary school children aged between 11 and 18 years old. In key stage 3, 4 or 5 at a UK secondary school, 6th form or FE college. Has a diagnosis of dyspraxia or dcd. Willing and happy to participate in this study. Able to provide their consent to participate.	Being below the age of 11 or over the age of 18. No longer in education. Not having a formal diagnosis of dyspraxia or DCD.

Able to provide parental consent for them to participate.	

Table 6: Participant inclusion/exclusion criteria

There are many issues with conducting research with very young children, whilst it is possible and often very valuable, it is felt that for this study and for the methodological approach employed, that having participants who are secondary school aged is preferable for a number of reasons. Firstly, as stated, formal education for all children is compulsory from the term after they turn 5, with the vast majority of children taking up a reception place at school when they are 4 to 4½. Therefore participants who are aged 11 and above will have at least 5½ years of formal education on which to reflect. Furthermore, due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews and the exploration of personal experiences that this study sought, the approach used suited adolescent participants better than younger participants. Adolescent participants may feel more able to explain and articulate their experiences than a much younger primary school aged child would. Whilst gaining the experiences of younger children would certainly benefit further understanding and add an interesting element to the growing literature, this study considered that a slightly older age group would yield more detailed, insightful, and rich data.

Children within the UK of secondary school age in school years 7 - 13 (years 7-11 being secondary school years and years 12 and 13 being higher secondary school or Further Education (FE), either in a 6th form or a FE college) were sought for this study. This age range was sought to ensure that a broad range of ages, and therefore experiences, were included and in order to cover the whole secondary school experience, covering key stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9), key stage 4 (years 10 and 11) and the now compulsory key stage 5 (years 12 and 13). This will ensure that experiences of dyspraxia can be explored in key areas including the transitioning into secondary school (in year 7), to undertaking GCSE exams (in year 11) and the transition to, and experience of, higher secondary education (years 12 and 13).

In 2017 the UK government made remaining in some form of education or training compulsory up to the age of 18 in England. This can be either full time education in a 6th form or FE College, an apprenticeship or traineeship or 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering whilst in part-time education or training. This differs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, you can leave school after the 31st May if you were born between 1st March and 30 September, or at the start of the Christmas holidays in the school year that you turn 16 of your birthday falls between 1st October and end of February. For Wales, as long as you will turn 16 by the end of that school years summer holidays, you can leave school on the last Friday in June. In Northern Ireland if you are 16 anytime between the 1st September and 1st July you may leave school after the 30th June and if you are 16 between the 2nd July and the 31st August then you can leave the following June[8].

This age group will be able to reflect on many experiences including their experiences of transition, their primary educational experiences, their secondary educational experiences as well as informal educational experiences which may take place in extracurricular groups as well as other formats. There will be many key moments that they will be able to explore such as their recollections of starting school, and possibly of the time in which they were formally diagnosed among others.

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[8] Sourced from https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school

3.11. 2 Access to, and selecting, participants

Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) state that most participants are sought through a combination of referrals, opportunities, researcher contacts or through what they describe as ‘snowballing’ where participants refer further participants. Therefore, in this study participants were sought from contacts the researcher has with other academics in the field; organizations such as the Dyspraxia Foundation and the Dyscovery Centre; parent forums for dyspraxia & Developmental Coordination Disorder; SENCO’s from local secondary schools; and Educational Psychologists in local boroughs, and as a result of snowballing from initial participants.

Participants in an IPA study are invited to take part as they can offer a meaningful insight into a given phenomenon. Therefore, the selection of participants in this study, as in all IPA studies, was by way of purpose sampling (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Additionally, all participants were expected to have similar experiences (that being young people with dyspraxia in UK secondary education) and a shared perspective and as such it is a homogenous sample. Participants in this current study were children at secondary schools in the UK who have been diagnosed with dyspraxia and were aged between 11 and 18. As dyspraxia is highly comorbid with other developmental disorders such as ADHD, dyslexia and Autism Spectrum Disorder it was not possible to select participants who solely had dyspraxia, therefore they were selected on the basis that dyspraxia was their main diagnosis.

Following contact being made, the following were sent to interested parties for their consideration;

- an information letter for parents (Appendix C);
- an information letter for the child (Appendix D);

- a copy of a parental consent form (Appendix E);
- a child consent form (Appendix F);
- a visual data consent form (Appendix G)

Once the potential participants had received the information letters and consent forms I made contact with them to discuss any concerns they may have had and to answer any questions. This contact additionally served to gather some basic details in order to identify if the children fitted the criteria of the study, namely that they were aged between 11 and 18 years old and had a diagnosis of dyspraxia (or DCD). Once identified as suitability to participate in the study, I arranged a meeting for the interview to take place at a location of their preference, including, but not limited to, their home, their school or the University of East London. I invited the participants to have someone with them during the interview if they wished. Lastly, I invited participants to draw or create something visual to bring to the interview as a way of telling me something about themselves and to be used as a prompt for discussing things that might be of relevance. The participants were also invited to bring any items they wished to show me if they would help them explain something about themselves. The purpose of inviting the participants to bring drawings, visual data or other objects with them was to facilitate the initial interview and to support the participant to tell me something about themselves and who they are.

3.11.3 Participant details

Eight participants took part in this study; 4 males and 4 females, aged between 11 and 17 years old and geographically from the Midlands, South East, East, South West and South coast of England. As all participants were under the age of 18, parental consent was sought before contact with the participant was made. During these discussions with the parents some biographical information was discussed (see appendix R for brief biographies) and their consent given for their child to participate in the study. All details for each participant can be seen in table 7, below. Participants were given the choice of location for their interview and if they wanted to have someone present with them.

All participants have been given pseudonym in order to protect their anonymity and as such these have been used throughout their interview transcripts in place of their real name. All other potentially identifying features in the interview transcripts, such as school name and names of friends and teachers, have also been changed again to protect their anonymity.

Code	**pseudo name**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Siblings**	**Geographical location**	**Interview location**	**Who present**
PhD-1 (M)	Mark	Male	16	Brother	South East	UEL Psychology research suite	Participant
PhD-2 (R)	Rhys	Male	16	Brother	South West England	Cafe	Participant, their mum and brother
PhD-3 (I)	Isla	Female	11	None	South West England	Library	Participant, their mum & Dad
PhD-4 (A)	Alice	Female	13	Brother	South East	Participants home	Participant & their mum
PhD-5 (Iz)	Zara	Female	14	Sister	South Coast of England	Skype	Participant & their mum
PhD-6 (T)	Toby	Male	12	Brother	Midlands	Skype	Participant & their mum
PhD-7 (E)	Esme	Female	13	Sister	East of England	Pub/ restaurant	Participant & their mum
PhD-8 (C)	Callum	Male	17	2 brothers & 1 sister	South East	Participants home	Participant only

Table 7: Participants details.

3.12 Data collection

When I met with the participants for the interview, more detail regarding the purpose of the study and the procedure were explained to both the parent and the child who was the participant. The participants and their parents were invited to ask any questions that they may have and if they were happy to participate, they were then asked to sign the consent form to take part in the study. A copy of the consent form was given to the participant to keep. I explained that the visual consent form would only be needed if there were any visual data brought with or created during the interview that was going to be used as part of the data gathered.

3.12.1 Interviewing

Data collection in an IPA study is usually in the form of semi-structured interviews as this allows an open and non-directive discussion led by the participant. According to Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009), IPA is best suited to data collection methods that allow the participants to provide a first person, detailed and rich account of their experiences. Therefore, in-depth interviews or diaries are the most appropriate methods for this as they elicit thoughts, feelings and description and are consistent with an intimate focus on individual experience. It follows therefore that focus groups by nature may not be as well suited to IPA as they do not provide that intimate focus on individual experience due to a number of participants being involved at once.

It is the experiences of the individual (or collection of individuals) and their understanding of their experiences that this methodological approach is concerned with, therefore it is essential that a data collection method is chosen which facilitates this and allows the direction of the discussion to be led by the participant. As discussed semi-structured interviews allow for this, whilst other more structured methods would direct the participant to express details of what the researcher had chosen, which would not give an accurate insight into the complexity of their experiences and of their making sense of their experiences. Semi-structured interviews additionally offer the opportunity to build a rapport between participant and researcher and allows the participant time to reflect, think and be heard (Kvale, 1996). Additionally, this method allows for unforeseen topics and new perspectives to emerge and this is what IPA is particularly useful for. Furthermore, IPA as an approach assumes agency to the individual, allowing them to interpret their world and lived experiences. It is inductive, meaning that open-ended questions are used instead of a hypothesis and as such, it is a bottom-up methodology, meaning that it is driven by the data, not by a hypothesis or theory. “There is no attempt to test a predetermined hypothesis of the researcher; rather, the aim is to explore, flexibly and in detail, an area of concern” (Smith & Osborn 2015, p. 28, in Smith 2015).

It is this aspect of IPA that makes it a particularly pertinent methodology and analysis tool for the topic of this study, and as identified in the review of the literature, children’s experiences of dyspraxia have seldom been heard. This in itself is an area of concern and interest worthy of further exploration. However, considering the recent changes to the compulsory age limit for UK secondary education, as well as the UK government’s desire to consult young people when forming new legislations and policies that affect them (DfE, 2011), it is essential that the topic of this study is explored flexibly and in detail.

3.12.2 Gathering data

Different types of data were gathered both before and during the interviews for this study; initial data from the parents as to diagnosis, age and geographical location; any visual data either produced by the child aimed at telling the researcher about themselves, during the interview itself or as a timeline produced between the participant and the researcher; and interview data on audio recorders.

All interviews were audio recorded on a dictaphone and all recordings were only heard by the researcher and were stored on a locked computer until after the study had finished when they were destroyed. All participants were given a pseudonym upon transcription of the audio and all identifying features and names were changed to maintain and protect participant’s anonymity.

3.13 Analytical framework

The analytical framework for this study was guided by the process put forward by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) for conducting an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis which employs a number of strategies whilst allowing for flexibility, understanding that there is no linear process to such analysis. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) advocate 6 stages that may be useful to the researcher when conducting such an analysis (see section 3.12.3 below) which acted as a useful guide when conducting this analysis. As such the data was transcribed using true verbatim in order to capture the essence of the lived experience in the own words of the participant. Each interview audio file was listened to again following transcription and each transcript was read and re-read in order that the researcher was fully immersed in the data. Whilst going through this initial step in the analysis the researcher kept a research diary (see appendix

T for an extract) which included field notes from the time of the interview as well as any initial thoughts. Initial coding began of an individual interview, with the researcher identifying emergent themes. Each interview was analysed in this manner until the researcher was content that all emergent themes had been identified. The researcher then looked across cases for connections in the experiences and to identify which emergent themes were most relevant to the research question (see appendix S). This analytical process is detailed and explored further in the sections below. The findings are presented first as the participants accounts of their experiences (see chapter 4) and then the researchers interpretations of the participants experiences and their sense making of those experiences are presented (see chapter 5).

3.13.1 Method of analysis

IPA utilises a line-by-line analysis of the experiences of the individuals, and identifies emergent themes and patterns focusing on the areas of convergence and divergence as well as those that are common and those that are nuanced (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This line-by-line analysis occurs across individual accounts before focusing across multiple accounts.

Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) identify the process of conducting IPA analysis as being complex and a challenging experience. Whilst IPA is concerned with the lived experience of the individual and the meaning they make of their experience, IPA analysis is always more a subjective account of the researchers interpretations of how the participant is thinking and as such “the truth claims of an IPA analysis are always tentative” (p. 80). This is due to the double hermeneutic, whereby the researchers sense making (of the participants sense making) is equally valid and essential to the analysis, but as such, can differ by researcher. Therefore, as each participants experiences are subjective, so too are the researchers interpretations.

3.13.2 Transcription

The interviews took place over a period of 18 months and were fully transcribed verbatim by the researcher. There are two different forms of verbatim transcription; clean verbatim (also known as intelligent verbatim) and true verbatim (also known as strict verbatim or simply ‘verbatim’). Transcription in qualitative research is an essential practice (Davidson, 2009), for the purpose of qualitative analysis, particularly IPA, true verbatim is used. This is important as true verbatim does not omit anything, it includes all stutters, filler speech, repetitions, idiosyncrasies, interjections, non-speech sounds (laughs, coughs, sighs), false starts and run-on sentences to name a few. In essence, it is a form of transcribing that captures not only *what* is said, but *how* it is said. Poland (1995) emphasis this form of verbatim transcription as a reproduction of verbal data in a word for word format, highlighting that the transcribed written words are a true replication of what was said. It is this form of verbatim transcript that allows for the in-depth insight into the participants mean-making and is this that adds the richness to the analysis.

I feel it is an important part of IPA for the researcher to conduct the transcription themselves. Whilst an arduous process, it is an important one in which there is an element of connecting with the data that occurs through re-listening to the audio whilst transcribing. Additionally, it allows for the researcher to add (where appropriate) any comments that are important and that will help contextualise the verbal account. For example, if during the interview process someone dries tears from their eyes, this would not be known on an audio file and therefore if someone other than the researcher transcribed it they would not add this element to the transcription. If the researcher is transcribing they may choose to add these elements as they may remember them or have field notes that indicate such events, this in turn adds context and richness to the data that would otherwise be lost. Therefore in this study the audio recorded interviews were transcribed true verbatim by the researcher and included notes/comments from field notes where relevant to provide context and richness to the transcript.

3.13.3 Stages of data analysis

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) provide a useful (though not definitive) account of the analytic process of IPA suggesting 6 distinct stages however emphasize that “the existing literature on analysis in IPA has not prescribed a single ‘method’ for working with data” (p. 79) therefore reflecting the flexible nature required for this from of analysis. IPA does however draw upon certain strategies including;

- the line by line examination of experiential, concerns, claims and understandings within the account of each participant;
- the process of moving from a single case to across multiple cases identifying emergent themes that both converge and diverge and are common or nuanced;
- the development of the researchers interpretation of what it might mean for the participants to have these experiences/concerns in the specific context;
- and the development of a structure that illustrates how the themes are connected (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Stage 1: Reading and re-reading

The first stage that Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest for conducting an IPA study involves the researcher immersing themselves in the data suggesting that this can be achieved by read and re-reading the transcripts. However, they recognise the usefulness of listening to the audio recording at least once and as such in order to immerse myself with each participants account of their lived experience, I listened again to the interview audio recording shortly after having conducted the interview. I had written field notes (in the form of a diary, see an example extract in appendix T) immediately after interviewing each participant, and as I listened to the audio recording I added further notes and comments. This is suggested to be a form of ‘bracketing’ which while immersing oneself in the data enables the researcher to put aside their recollections, observations and initial thoughts in order that they can ensure the participant remains the focus (Gil-Rodriguez & Hefferon, 2015). These notes are important but better put aside at this stage (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Due to some time passing between conducting interviews and transcribing them, I listened for a second time to the audio recordings immediately prior to transcribing them. Once transcribed I read, and re-read, each interview each time ‘hearing’ the participants voice and imagining the context of the interview.

Stage 2: Initial noting

According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) this step is the most time consuming and focuses on the language used by the participant, with the researcher making notes of any points of interest about how the participant talks about their experiences, how they express their understanding or thinking of the issues they discuss. This stage has no specific parameters however it is considered essential to conduct this stage of analysis as it aims to avoid superficial commentary and allows for focus on the things that matter to the participant and the meaning of those things (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This is an exploratory stage of the analysis, broken down in to descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments. It is suggested that these initial noting's be written in the margins and if preferred different coloured highlighters could be used for each of the three different elements commented on to provide a visual contrast.

Stage 3: Developing emergent themes

From immersing oneself in the data (as described in stage 1) as well as from the notes generated in stage 2 an extensive amount of data will be produced and it is from here that the next stage suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) develops, that being the development of emergent themes. It is this stage that Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009) consider to be "one manifestation of the hermeneutic circle" (p. 91). This is where the original 'whole' of the transcript/interview becomes the 'parts' of the themes, before becoming the 'whole' again in the researchers write up of the analysis. Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009) suggest that during this stage a collaboration between the researcher and the participant becomes apparent, and this is where the interpretative and phenomenological aspects of IPA come in. Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009) state that "themes are usually expressed as phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the piece and contain enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstract to be conceptual" (p. 92).

Stage 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Once themes have been identified throughout the transcript, their appearance in chronological order throughout, the next step seeks to move to consider how these themes fit together. Through this process, of which there is much flexibility and encouraged innovation by the researcher, some emergent themes may not be continued (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and the researcher should refer back to the research question and the limits of the study to identify which themes are important and which are less so.

There are differing methods of searching for connections amongst the themes in each case. At times sub-themes, and superordinate themes become apparent. Superordinate themes occurring when a cluster of themes fit together and is created as the higher level theme (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). There are polarizing themes (oppositional themes), contextualising themes (contextual or narrative elements), numeration (looking for the number of occurrences), functional (the function of the theme) and many other types of themes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Researchers are encouraged to be flexible in their approach and will find that their method of organising themes will be distinct to them and to their data, with some bridging across different methods. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) suggest that the next step in any case is to produce some form of visual/graphic representation of their themes. This can be achieved by creating a table with superordinate themes, themes, and an example form the data.

Stage 5: Moving to the next case

The next step in the analysis is to move to the next case and conduct steps 1-4 again with each and every case. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) stress the importance of IPA's idiographic focus, highlighting that he researcher will need to 'bracket' their interpretations of the previous case/s in order that they can analyse and interpret each case in its own terms.

Stage 6: Looking for patterns across cases

The final step in an IPA study suggested by Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2009) is to identify patterns/themes across the cases in an attempt to identify similarities and differences. Indeed a difference in themes is to be expected as IPA focuses on an idiographic level and as such highlights individual concerns. It is hoped however that by having a homogenous group there will be patterns of similarities of which something can be said of their shared experiences. Again at this stage a visual representation is suggested such as a table of master themes across the cases (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.13.4 Reflection on data analysis

Upon embarking on the data analysis stage of the project I had immersed myself in the stages suggested for use in an IPA study (although note these are not restrictive) and began with listening again to the audio recordings of all of the interviews, before delving into the systematic data analysis itself. The stages of analysis I found myself in were;

1) Listening to audio
2) Listening to audio again while transcribing
3) Reading transcript
4) Reading transcript again and highlighting

Making initial notes of thoughts, observations, reflections, own emotions, questions and comments of the language, tone, speed and body language etc of the participant as well as the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual elements throughout. This was completed for each case.

5) Uploading all transcripts to NVivo and going through each transcript line by line individually whilst coding in NVivo (See appendix S for an example of this process)
6) Coding across cases - after coding the first 3 interviews sorting the codes/themes into fewer/more organised themes

After having analysed the first three interviews in NVivo I began to feel overwhelmed with the themes/codes that I was beginning to build up. I knew that some of them related to each other and that I had just given them slightly different names and as such they needed sorting. I also knew that some of them were superficial and actually needed deeper analysis to identify what exactly was going on and where therefore it needed to be placed. As such I felt it was an important time to take a break in my NVivo analysis and to sit and analyse the themes that had emerged so far and to identify how and where they fitted together before continuing with the next lot of transcripts.

7) Continued analysis across cases

The process of data analysis was cyclical and took a much larger amount of time than I had anticipated. I made many notes in my reflective dairy as I analysed the interviews, these notes were about individual cases as well as about growing/emerging themes.

3.14 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is considered essential in an IPA study (Payne, 2015) recognising the importance that the researcher plays in the analytical process and the collaborative nature that is involved between the participants account and the researchers subjective perceptions of that account and its meaning. As such, identifying the need for the researcher to be aware of the way in which they approach the data and their thoughts about it is considered an important and necessary element in an IPA study (Cronin-Davis, Butler and Mayers 2009).

Therefore, this reflexivity needs to be considered throughout the research process and as such I have weaved throughout this thesis elements of my reflexivity where appropriate. This can be seen in the pre-introductory chapter where I detail what has led me to research this topic, and continues throughout the thesis by reflecting on; having parents present during the interview; interview location; data collection and method; and on sharing my experiences. In order that I remained a reflexive researcher I kept a reflexive diary (Vicary, Young and Hicks, 2017) throughout this study, which enabled me to not only ‘bracket’ my assumptions, interpretations and own thoughts and feelings, but allowed me to keep a track of them, as they are equally important in a dual form of analysis such as IPA (see an example extract in appendix T).

3.14.1 Reflection on having parents present during the interviews, and location of interviews

Participants were given the choice of being interviewed on their own or bringing someone with them. 6 of the 8 participants did have a parent, or parents, attend the interview with them, with one having his brother present also. Mostly the parent/s actively participated in the interview to varying degrees, while one parent who was present in the house during the interview but moved in and out of the room and so contributed at times but was not present at others.

It was not clear if it was the participants themselves who had chosen to have their parent/s present or not, and it appeared more likely that it was more the parent/s choice to be present or not. Having said that, none of the participants who did have their parent present appeared to be uncomfortable with this in any way and in fact it was felt that they may have felt more comfortable with them there. Furthermore, for one of the two participants who was interviewed alone, despite him confirming he was happy to be interviewed on his own, it was felt it was more the parents' choice to not be present than his and that he may have been more comfortable with someone present. For the other participant who attended the interview alone this did not appear to be a problem.

Reflecting back on the interviews I remain confident that offering the option to the participants to have their parent present was the correct one and feel that having parents present in differing amounts during the interviews brought many positive and some challenges to the interview process. The challenges I perceived to be mainly to do with keeping the interview about the child's experiences and views. Sometimes the parents would begin talking about their experiences and memories. Whilst this was interesting and important, it was not the purpose of the study. However, in some cases I feel that having a parent present helped the young person by prompting memories and areas of discussion and in some aspects aided memory for things the young person would otherwise not been able to recall such as age of diagnosis. This form of scaffolding has been identified by other researchers an important and complimentary element of having parents present during interviews with children as it can facilitate a richer and more complete account of the child's experience (Irwin and Johnson, 2005; Gardner and Randall, 2012). It was important in these instances to keep the focus on the child and their experiences, which was a challenge I had not fully considered and it is recognised that ensuring a child's experience can be expressed authentically is necessary yet challenging for many reasons (Alldred, 1998). Whilst ensuring the child's authentic experience could be heard was a challenge at times for the reason of having the parents present and eager to ‘help’ their child or even express their own thoughts and feelings, I do feel that it was a necessary one in this study, and felt having a parent present helped the children to be confident enough to speak with me freely. Certainly, in some instances the child needed their parent for either emotional support, or in one instance for almost translating purposes as the participants verbal dyspraxia meant that he found it difficult to make himself clearly understood.

At the beginning of the study, before having started data collection, I rather naively thought that parents attending with their child would be present physically but maybe not verbally. I recognise now that that was rather naive of me and that I too would most likely be like the parents in these interviews and be unable to not ‘chip in’ with things in order to prompt my child if they were being interviewed. However, whilst conducting the interviews I felt the natural ease of having the parents present and felt it added to the participant’s contributions. In fact for one of the two participants who did not have his parents present I do wonder if he would have been a little more expressive and open if they had of been present, maybe he may have felt more at ease with someone familiar with him, but this is difficult to know.

When conducting the data analysis I began thinking that by having parents present and as involved as they were, that it would detract from the main purpose of the study which was to explore the lived experiences of the children themselves. Certainly upon reviewing the interviews and in the process of transcribing them I became aware of just how much the parents in some interviews did contribute. However, upon listening back to the interviews, reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and through the process of conducting the analysis I have begun to recognise that the child’s experiences of their dyspraxia is so often (at least in these cases) played out so closely alongside their parents that in fact the parents appear to have been so integral to their lived experience and in that case their experiences are so closely linked and supported by each other. As mentioned before it also brought many aspects to the child's mind that were of great significance to them but that they may have otherwise not remembered to tell me and this element of scaffolding from the parents is important in understanding children's experiences (Irwin and Johnson, 2005).

There is another aspect of having parents present and involved in the interview process that I believe added a great deal to the study even if it was not the main purpose and that is getting the parents own emotions and experiences. Whilst parental views and experiences are covered somewhat in the literature, this study, even though unintentionally, has extracted parental views and experiences alongside their child's which I feel adds an important and significant aspect to our knowledge surrounding dyspraxia. It is also interesting as there are times when the parents views and opinions expressed may have an unintentional impact on the child's sense of worth. For example when Zara (14) is explaining how she likes arts and crafts but finds the physical aspects of it very difficult her mother says;

> Mum: the work that she produced would be that immature
> for her age, it would be very basic.
> Zara: Yeah but I quite liked doing it
>
> Page 238 Line 23 - 25

It is almost as if Zara is defending herself. Her mother's realisation that her child is different (and her expression of that in the interview) may well have an impact on Zara's sense of self-worth as it may be taken as reinforcing the negative aspects of her difficulties and reinforcing her difference to her peers. Whilst I do not believe this was the intention of the mother, or indeed of any of the parents, it is an example of where having the parents present and vocalising their views, experiences or opinions during the interview contributes a different element.

This can be seen as pertinent to the child's experience as it allows a glimpse in to the interactions between the child and parent surrounding the child's dyspraxia and as such may explain to some extent the impact these interactions may have. It could also be that these kinds of interactions offer some support to the child as they may feel they are ultimately understood, however conversely they may take these interactions to mean they are not understood and this will have a different impact on them. Without directly asking the child how they felt about what their parent had said it was difficult to ascertain how the child processed the comments. However, to interrupt the flow of the discussion to ask would have changed the direction of the child's thoughts, potentially influencing them. I considered that more could be gleaned from the way the participant responded and/or their body language. In this interaction between Zara and her mother for example, Zara did not seem overly defensive nor any more upset by it, and she continued to speak at the same pace and tone as before the comment. However, it is clear that she wanted to defend the comment by way of telling me she liked it (even if she was not very good).

Other researchers have considered these differing elements that having a parent present can bring. Gardner and Randall (2012) note that whilst there can be many benefits such as helping a child to express their views and enabling richer data as a result, there can also be some issues with power relationships and in some instances having a parent present may stop a child expressing their views. Whilst these considerations are important and relevant, upon reflection, in this study it feels that the parents presence brought more benefits than challenges. It may be that in conducting interviews with older adolescents the benefits of having a parent present may not be so evident and they may feel more comfortable being interviewed alone, but again the scaffolding that a parent can offer would be missed in such a case.

3.14.2 Reflection on location

The participants chose the location of the interview in order that they felt most comfortable. Upon reflection, and in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, I have chosen not to detail which participant was interviewed in which location, however the locations included one at UEL, one at a library, two in their own home, one in a café, and two via skype. I firmly believe that offering participants the opportunity to choose where they preferred the interview to take place was the right strategy for this study. However, upon reflection, the differing locations chosen did present challenges for the research which I had not anticipated and would potential alter future decisions with regard to this strategy.

Conducting interviews via Skype, whilst a very valuable technological addition to research, overcoming certain geographical barriers to participation, inevitably relies on excellent quality technology and internet connectivity on both sides. Unfortunately, during one interview particularly there were a couple of times where internet connection was lost. Whilst it did not take too long for the reconnection to occur it did however impose an unnatural and unintentional gap in the discussions which at times led the flow of the conversation to be disrupted and not so easily picked up again. However, conversely, interviewing via Skype ensured that one particular participant felt confident enough to participate which they may have otherwise not done so and therefore their valuable contribution would have been missed.

I feel that for the participants who choose to be interviewed in their own homes, the familiarity, comfort and confidence this appeared to have afforded them was most certainly reflected in their interviews. I felt their interviews were the most relaxed and fluent in discussing topics with me. They appeared to be more open and free flowing with their answers, however it is hard to know if this is just how they are personally or if the environment did indeed influence this.

The interview in the library was very successful as the place we choose to sit was quiet and mostly undisturbed. It allowed the participant to feel at ease as it was a location they were very familiar with and it was situated in their home town. In retrospect I feel that holding interviews at UEL's campus may have had a negative impact on the interview flow as it is an unfamiliar, formal environment and one which is totally different to any that a secondary school aged child would be familiar with. Whilst it is again hard to know if this affected the flow of the conversation with the participant, as this may be due to personal characteristics, I do feel it had an impact that may have otherwise not been there. In future I would consider not offering UEL as an option.

3.14.3 Reflection on recruitment and data collection

The recruitment process was frustrating at first. I initially sent out 200+ advertisements to the Dyspraxia Foundation for them to include in their delegate packs as part of their teenagers and young person conference. This was in an attempt to reach teenagers themselves, however I did not get one response from this. I then decided to approach things from a different angle and approach parents directly. As such I sent an advertisement to the Dyspraxia Foundation to include on their website which would reach parents predominately. I also approached parent online forums and introduced my research and asked parents to contact me privately if they wanted to find out more. This proved the most successful recruitment strategy. There were some parents who were very interested in my research with whom I had fruitful and interesting discussions about their child’s experiences, but ultimately their child did not want to participate. I think for some parents there was a sense of disappointment but ultimately understanding in their child’s decision. One young girl initially told her mum she wanted to take part and so I had a quick discussion with her mum as I have done with the other parents, however she then decided that she actually did not want to take part. Her mum described how she had had a very difficult time at school and whilst the school had good resources about autism they had little knowledge of dyspraxia. She felt it was important her daughter spoke to me as she felt alone and has “real difficulties with friends”. Another young boy ultimately decided he did not want to be interviewed but said he was happy to answer questions via email however this did not take place as it was felt that this would not offer a deep enough exploration of his lived experiences in the same way that an interview would.

Whilst it was part of the methodology to allow the participants to lead discussions and to ‘tell’ their story, I am aware at times that the discussions veered off in to areas that seemed important to the participant, but upon reflection could be seen to deviate from the main topic of education. However, this study’s main focus is on the lived experience of the child with dyspraxia and as such their importance on other aspects of their lives may be a signifier of where education fits for them. It may be for them that these topics they wanted to discuss were more important to them for a number of reasons. It struck me that Callum was more animated when talking about his experiences in his cadets unit and spent a great deal of time telling me about this and why it was so important to him. At the time I did wonder if this would actually add much to the current study but upon reflection and upon re-reading his interview I recognise the extremely valuable contribution this added to his account of his lived experience. It was obvious in his speech, tone, volume and speed that this was a significant area of his young life, one which brought him great importance and one in which it could be said he ‘learned’ some valuable lessons, skills and confidence. When discussing formal education, both his primary and secondary education, it was clear this did not hold the same or similar significance to him and indeed held a more negative memory for him.

3.14.4 Reflection of researcher on data collection and research findings

When pursuing something as time consuming and significant as a PhD many people focus on a topic of personal significance to them or at the very least something of great interest to them. I am no different and as detailed have a personal interest in the topic I am studying. Breen (2007) notes the importance for researchers to ensure their personal motivations for the research are considered and made clear and suggests this is especially important in qualitive methodologies. Whilst in this study I am not an ‘insider’ (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002) as I am not part of the group being studied, here a adolescent with dyspraxia, I do not consider myself an ‘outsider’ either as I do have a very close connection to the topic under investigation by having a son with dyspraxia. Therefore my involvement does come with some experience and as such leans more towards being an ‘insider’ than not. In any case when conducting my research I have been careful to bracket my own assumptions, experiences and opinions in order to allow the experiences of the individuals I speak with to come through (Smith, Flowers, Larkin, 2009), however it is inevitably part of the process that my knowledge and experiences may be raised, more so with the type of methodology used here. I am very aware that at times during the interviews I mentioned things my son has said, done or experienced and at all times feel this was in a way of empathising, showing understanding and in some way put the participant at ease as they knew I understood, elements that Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) highlighted as benefits of being an insider to the research phenomenon. There are possible implications of course of having a personal interest or experience of the topic under investigation such as a possible reduction in objectivity (Breen, 2007) whilst it is acknowledged here that the research has been influenced by my personal experiences and interest in the topic, I have at all times aimed to ensure that in conducting the interviews I allowed the participants experience to come through by utilising a semi structured format rather than a predetermined structured format, and by ensuring that I kept my views and experiences ‘bracketed’ (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) using a reflexive diary to ensure that the participants accounts were emerging from the data.

3.15 Credibility and trustworthiness

Issues of validity and trustworthiness in qualitative research can often be confusing due to the many varied terms used (Creswell & Miller, 2000) with some researchers suggesting these terms are borrowed from quantitative research and are therefore unsuitable for use in qualitative research (Kvale, 1995; Lather, 1993; Wolcott, 1990 cited in Ravitch and Carl, 2016). As such Ravitch and Carl (2016) highlight the need for qualitative researchers to have a guiding set of standards that differ from those of quantitative researchers, that assess the validity or trustworthiness of their research. Citing Guba (1981) they indicate that in qualitative research these standards include “Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (p. 188).

Ravitch and Carl (2016) state that “credibility is an important part of critical research design” (p. 188), one that helps establish trustworthiness of the research. Many techniques can be used to establish credibility including triangulation which involves “combining theories, methods or observers in a research study, can help ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method or a single observer are overcome” (Noble & Heale, 2019, p. 67). There are four types of triangulation; data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation, however it was not felt appropriate here for these forms of triangulation to occur in this study. This is due to the focus of the study being on the participants lived experiences of dyspraxia in education and as such any form of triangulation of this nature would detract from it being solely the participants experience. Furthermore one of the central elements of an IPA study is it’s ideographic level of enquiry (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and as such triangulation in these forms is not considered suitable here.

Another form of ensuring credibility according to Ravitch and Carl (2016) is known as member-checking and this involves taking the data, interpretations and conclusions back to the participants to allow the participants to clarify, correct or add to it if they wish. A key part of IPA’s methodological approach involves the double hermeneutic whereby the researcher is making sense of the participant making sense of their experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) therefore member checking was considered to not be appropriate here as this would have then added a third element to the analysis and would necessarily remove the interpretations of the researcher which are so important in IPA.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) further explore issues of credibility, discussing what they refer to as validity and quality, highlighting Yardley's (2000) concept of sensitivity to context and how this can be achieved through the entire research process. They summarise that this sensitivity to context can begin in the interactional process of the data collection, continues with the researcher immersing themselves in the data in order to ensure the participants account is full explored and paid attention to, and also includes the use of verbatim extracts from the data to ensure that the participants voice is strong in the presentation of findings. The use of page numbers and line numbers when presenting the verbatim extracts allow the reader to check for themselves the context and interpretation that has been reached (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) therefore providing credibility to the research. As this research followed the methods of data collection and data analysis for an IPA study this level of credibility is present in the findings. Specifically the sensitivity to context when collecting and analysing the data as well as the use of large amounts of verbatim extracts with references to ensure they can be checked by the reader.

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the need in qualitative research to provide enough information about the study that the reader can fully contextualise the findings and as such if the study, aspects of its design or findings, can be applicable or transferable to broader contexts (Guba 1981, cited in Ravitch and Carl, 2016). In the current study, to ensure transferability, the specific contextual details about the participants, the data collection and the data analysis have been detailed and reported in such a way that they are clear and specific to the reader.

Dependability in qualitative research according to Ravitch and Carl (2016) refers to the need to consider how and why the methods were selected and whether they were the most appropriate methods and techniques to address the research question. Furthermore it is to ensure that the data is indeed answering the research question set. In this research this dependability has been achieved by considering and providing the methodological approach to this study in chapter 3 to ensure that the data collection and analytical approach would be the most suitable to address the research questions of this study.

Qualitative research does not seek objectivity and considers that “the world is a subjective place” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188), however does need to ensure what Ravitch and Carl call confirmability (2016), this can be achieved again in a number of ways, one of which is to ensure researcher reflexivity and employ techniques that separate our biases and preconceived ideas. I have ensured I have worked to remain reflexive throughout the research process, I have bracketed my assumptions as stipulated in IPA technique (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) to ensure that my analysis of the research is not coloured by my potential biases and assumptions and have ensured that I have discussed my findings with my supervisor throughout the analysis process.

Chapter 4: Data analysis & findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and research findings from the study, beginning with a visual representation of the findings (see figure 3) and a table showing the 5 superordinate themes and 17 subthemes (see table 8). Finally each of the superordinate themes, and the linked subthemes, are presented in detail.

4.2 Findings

The analysis for this study has developed from a close examination of each participant's individual account of their experiences living with dyspraxia, with a particular focus on their educational experiences. This chapter explores the voices of the participants and how they give meaning to their experiences. The findings are detailed without reference to any literature to ensure the voices of the participants remains the priority. As is the usual process with IPA this chapter reveals the researchers interpretations of how the participants make sense of their lived experiences drawing together commonalities across accounts. Attention is also paid to identifying differences where relevant, to present an understanding of what the experience is of living with dyspraxia as an adolescent in secondary education in the UK.

The use of quotes is used extensively throughout to illustrate the findings and analysis and to ensure the findings are grounded in the participant's voice and sense making, whilst acknowledging the researchers interpretation of that sense making. Following on from the in-depth analysis, which developed from an ideographic, interrogation of the data to the consideration of commonalities and differences across the participant's accounts, 5 superordinate themes emerged visually represented in Figure 3. From these superordinate themes 17 subthemes were identified which can be seen and are detailed in table 8 below. The superordinate themes are;

- "I struggle a bit with it, but not really" – Complexity and internal conflict
- "I get twitchy when I'm nervous" – Recognition of incongruence & identification of Otherness.
- "I can't be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand" – Need for empathy and understanding
- "I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility" Identity formation
- "I can go at my own speed" – Right kind of help needed.

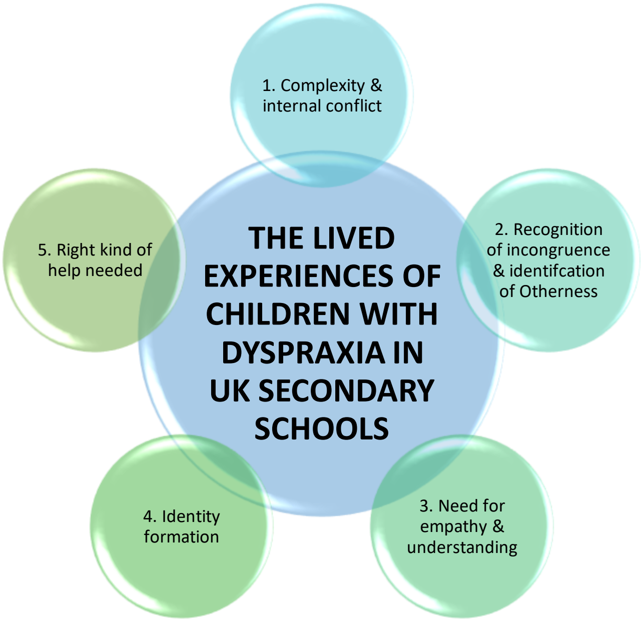

Figure 3: Visualisation of themes

	Superordinate theme	**Subtheme**	**Description**
1	“I struggle a bit with it, but not really” - **Complexity and Internal Conflict**	1. Realisation of difficulties	- Struggling with living with dyspraxia - Diagnosis
		2. Normalising self	- Minimising - Distancing from self - Use of language - No words to articulate
		3. Disconnect from reality	- 3rd person reference - Distancing self from others with dyspraxia - Unable to see own strengths - Making no effort/if it interests me
2	“I get twitchy when I’m nervous” **- Recognition of incongruence &** **identification of Otherness**	4. Bodily experience	- Awareness of inabilities - lack of trust in body - Physical pain - Fidgeting as a means of grounding
		5. Feeling different	- Not fitting in - Negative teacher interactions - Not wanting to use supports given (i.e laptop)
3	“I can’t be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand” - **Need for empathy and understanding**	6. Need for acceptance & understanding	- Not fitting in - Lack of knowledge compounds negative affects - Need for reassurance
		7. Feeling misunderstood	- Negative teacher interactions - Missing out educationally
		8. Social isolation	- Lack of choice - Bullying - Solo activities
		9. Psychological and Emotional impact	- Upset - Anxiety - Frustration - Anger
4	“I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility” - **Identity formation**	10. Need for invisibility	- Hiding dyspraxic self
		11. Belonging	- Feeling accepted and bonding through adversity

			- Identifying self in others
		12. I’m good at that	- Focus on abilities - Pride and recognition - Passion/creativity
		13. “I’m ok now” – passage of time	- Own acceptance - - It gets easier - Acceptance of how things are - Change and personal growth - Realisation/Awareness - Making active choices - I stood up for myself
5	“I can go at my own speed” **- Right kind of help needed**	14. Learning support	- Practical support - Emotional support - Non visible supports
		15. Ways of coping	- Make no effort - Surround self with the familiar - Organised chaos - Finding own methods
		16. “They just got me”	- Teachers who tried and supported
		17. “What I want others to know”	- What I want teachers to know - What I’d tell other children with dyspraxia

Table 8: Table of themes: superordinate, subthemes and descriptions.

According to Smith & Osborn (2007), there are two broad methods of presenting data in an IPA study. “In the first, the ‘results’ section contains the emergent thematic analysis, and the separate ‘discussion’ links that analysis to the extant literature. An alternative strategy is to discuss the links to the literature as one presents each superordinate theme in a single ‘results and discussion’ section” (p. 76). For this study, the first method of presentation is used. Therefore, this chapter presents the emergent thematic analysis of the participants lived experiences. This does involve an element of interpretation as their experiences are interpreted into the superordinate themes and related subthemes (see Table 8). Following on from this a discussion is presented in chapter 5 which will explore the deeper psychological interpretations of these emergent themes.

This current chapter presents the superordinate themes in larger underlined font with the coordinating subthemes presented underlined, consecutively numbered underneath the relevant superordinate theme. Extracts from participants interviews transcripts are indented and have the corresponding participant code, page number and line numbers underneath. All names are pseudonyms and the interviewer is indicated as ‘R’. Where pauses in speech occur this is reflected as ‘…….’.

4.2.1 Theme 1: “I struggle a bit with it, but not really” - Complexity and Internal Conflict

Exploring the concept of living with dyspraxia as an adolescent presented a complex and multifaceted experience across the individual cases in this study. For many of the participants their experiences of living with dyspraxia caused them a great deal of internal conflict; they were acutely aware of their difficulties and differences, yet desperately sought to be ‘normal’, to be like their peers, to distance themselves from the reality they face. The desire to be like one’s peers may be considered a relatively normal phenomenon amongst adolescents of this age; however, this theme deals with the specific feelings and experiences that go beyond this seemingly normal developmental desire, to the more deeply rooted internalised experience and mean making brought about by these young people’s experiences of their dyspraxia. This complexity of response and internal conflict is evident in the participant’s accounts of their experiences *and* in the way in which they make sense of these experiences. This theme explores this complexity and internal conflict as evidenced in three different subthemes; Realisation of difficulties; Normalising self; Disconnect from reality.

1. Realisation of difficulties

All participant's spoke about the many difficulties they experienced as a result of their dyspraxia, each with their own unique profile yet all sharing many commonalities which is consistent with what is known in the literature about the characteristics of dyspraxia as detailed in chapter's 1 & 2. The participant's reported experiencing difficulties with the expected gross motor skills and fine motor skills, giving examples such as difficulties running, climbing and walking into things, as well as difficulties with handwriting, cutting and sewing amongst many others. Further to the motor skills deficits reported, these young people experienced difficulties in a vast array of other areas most of which are not immediately obvious to others who may not know their diagnosis, difficulties with; concentration, organisation of thoughts, hand-eye coordination, visual difficulties, spatial difficulties, general organisational abilities, memory, subject specific difficulties in Maths and PE and for one participant severe verbal difficulties were experienced also. Details of each participant's specific profile of symptoms and difficulties can be found in their brief biographies in appendix R.

All participants had a formal diagnosis of dyspraxia, although received at different ages; however most reported differing levels of vagueness about the assessment and diagnostic process itself.

Mark reported having no real recollection of the assessment or diagnosis process other than his parents informing him of it at about 8 years old. Similarly Esme reported having no recollection either, however she was extraordinarily shy to discuss things at the beginning of the interview and took quite some time to feel comfortable to speak, so this may have attributed more to her vagueness than the actual recollection itself. For Isla, however, the memories of this were relatively new as it had only been a year since her diagnosis when we met. Isla received a private assessment and diagnosis which differed to the other participant's and she found the experience of the assessment relatively daunting and overwhelming which may explain some of her emotions attached to it;

> Isla: Ah that took forever, she was there for about 2 and a half hours.
> R: Ah really? Did she come and see you at home?
> Isla: Yeah at home.
> R: And what was that like having someone come in…
> Isla: Erm it's a bit scary cos she was a bit scary wasn't she?
> Mum: I know what you mean, she was quite aloof wasn't she?
> Isla: Yeah.
> Mum: Yes I know what you mean.
> R: Did she get you to do lots of tests and things like that?
> Isla: Yeah, I was like I don't know what you're doing this for?
> R: Did she not explain things?
> Isla: Not really, she just said 'oh can you do this for me' and it was a bit like oh….
> Mum: I can understand you being stressed, I was fairly stressed sat in the other room.
> Isla: Because you weren't allowed in were you?
> R: Were you not?
> Isla: and there was this big lady asking me to do things and it was quite creepy.
>
> Page 136 Line 3 – 19
>
> Isla: I was really really upset
> R: were you?
> Isla: yeah
> R: why are you upset?
> Isla: Erm I think I thought I was weird and that I couldn't do things.

> Page 137 Line 22 – 26

Alice's recollections were more vague and needed clarification from her mum as to when she was diagnosed, however her reaction to the assessment process and the formal diagnosis was different to Isla's. Alice felt happy, she felt it made sense and gave her an explanation;

> Alice: I was happy to have it done because I think it's also a reason and stuff, like if anyone says something it's like 'oh no I'm dyspraxic'
>
> Page 189 Line 4 - 5
>
> R: And how did you feel after you were diagnosed?
> Alice: I felt a lot better, I didn't feel like the dyspraxia had changed but like I said it was sort of a reason and it made it less embarrassing and like…..yeah just like difficult because I had a reason it wasn't that I was just really bad at cutting was how I felt about it.
> Page 189 Line 14 - 18

Other participants shared Alice's reaction to the experience of diagnosis, for many it was a sense of relief. Zara for example explained that she was very frustrated before her diagnosis, not being able to do things such as write things she had in her head, and expressed that the diagnosis gave her something to understand herself and her difficulties by. The experience of being given something that gave meaning to their difficulties and experiences was shared by most other participants. Callum could not remember how old he was when he was diagnosed although conceded he was in primary school, his recollections of the assessment process was one of fun, nice people and lots of activities, however he found comfort in the diagnosis when it was given;

> Callum: Erm I think I actually found it a bit…..I don't know what the word is…erm………I just found it kind of…I felt good about it knowing what it actually is cos it's not anything

> super serious at all like I didn’t think I had some like mental problem or something, like I just thought I was clumsy so it was good to know that I’m not just clumsy but I have something I can blame it on [laughs]
> R: [laughs] ok
> Callum: Like I have an excuse, but erm no honestly I think I just felt kind of like relieved a little bit
> R: mmmm
> Callum: Just like ‘ok that’s cool, I know what it is’
>
> Page 380 Line 9 - 18

Unfortunately for Callum this comfort did not extend to how others interpreted the diagnosis or treated him, in fact this just enhanced how others viewed him and made his experience of difference worse;

> Callum: ….. I started telling people what it was they were like “oh no you’re just a spaz” and “oh no you’re making it up” or “oh you’ve got dyspraxia is that like Aids?”
> R: Oh that’s helpful
> Callum: Don’t put that it cos like it’s rude
> R It’s not rude it’s what they said to you so…
> Callum: Ok you can put it in, yeah no so it was just stuff like I kind of got picked on more so I just stopped telling people but [laughs] yeah
>
> Page 380 Line 20 – Page 381 Line 2

For Rhys the clarity of what was happening during the assessment process resonated with Isla’s experience in that there was little explanation as to the purpose of things, however he too shared most participants experience of the diagnosis allowing him to make sense of his experiences;

> *Rhys:* Yeah in some ways I was quite happy about it I was like ‘oh ok I’m not just like terrible at everything….there’s a reasons I’m terrible at everything’
>
> Page 61 Line 1-2

Toby was diagnosed the earliest of all of the participant’s at aged 3. Toby’s severe verbal dyspraxia most likely contributed to this unusually early diagnosis and is the thing he remembers most even at that young age. With support from his mum he was able to express that he wished he did not have dyspraxia, for him he found it extremely difficult and frustrating, most likely compounded by his inability to clearly articulate what he wanted to and as such was rendered isolated. It is evident therefore that for all the participant's there was a complexity to the recognition, and labelling of, their dyspraxia. The diagnosis gives a concrete context in which their difficulties and experiences make sense, thereby creating a sense of relief for some and an explanation they could use. However, conversely this created a confirmation of difference which many struggled with and tried to distance themselves from thereby creating this complexity.

2. Normalising self

The complexity and internal conflict experienced by the participant's around their diagnosis and difficulties was evident in the way that many of them attempted to process this by trying to normalise these experiences and thereby normalise their sense of self and distance themselves from dyspraxia. The participant's did this in many ways; Rhys became almost defensive at times and attempted to diminish his difficulties by asserting his strengths. He acknowledged that he found certain sports difficult at school, however when his mum started talking about these difficulties and his coordination issues he began trying to retrieve the conversation asserting his strengths but then acknowledging his difficulties again;

> Rhys: I think I was alright at hockey….like just about
> Mum: yeah you were
> Rhys: I was alright at hockey
> Mum: Put something between you and the ball
> Rhys: Yeah

> R: Ok so was that…yeah…so having the hockey stick..
> Rhys: Yeah not very good at cricket though
> R: Right ok
> Mum: But had a desire to be
>
> Page 59 Line 19 - Page 60 Line 1

Mark's use of language throughout the interview was evidence of a similar attempt to normalise his sense of self. He often alluded to difficulties caused by living with dyspraxia but immediately used language to counter the impact of these difficulties and to emphasise his 'normality', often doing this by attempting to place the difficulties in his past. He consistently affirmed that *he was not so bad* and that his experiences were normal even when they did not sound that way;

> Mark: because that's sort of become my weakness, but now I'm not so bad at it
>
> Page 25 Line 11
>
> Mark: Erm, I just guess…….I was struggling really….yeah it's like my brain was going to sleep pretty much and that was it I think, nothing drastic.
>
> Page 26 Line 1-2

He also used the word "but" to normalise his experiences, often affirming that what he was experiencing was what anyone would experience. He specifically referred to this when talking about the impact on him physically when doing his Duke of Edinburgh award which involved three days of walking. He suggested anyone would be tired from that, which may well be the case, however he did not seem convinced himself, and it seems less likely that others would consider not progressing because they could not be confident they would physically be able to achieve it which is what Mark was suggesting;

> Mark: Erm I did a bit of volunteering for Duke of Edinburgh but that was it pretty much.
>
> Page 50 Line 23-24
>
> Mark: Does get a bit tiring, yeah, you pretty much have to. It’s like my mum does want me to do Gold but I’m just like….for a week, cos I pretty much can’t walk constantly for like three days.
>
> Page 51 Line 4-5
>
> Mark: Yeah its quite fun but don’t think I’ll be…don’t know if I’m doing Gold. I mean you can do till 25 so maybe when I’m a bit older then I’ll consider it, not now, pretty much.
>
> Page 51 Line 13 – 15
>
> Mark: Not really I think I find it normal I don’t think it’s something to do with my dyspraxia, it’s just normal.
>
> Page 52 Line 1-2

Callum, like Mark, also used language to minimise and normalise his experiences, this process could be seen as a way of coping and dealing with his differences and his dyspraxia. For example, he was aware of his body’s inabilities, he talked about the fact that he perceived himself to be clumsy, that he just knew he was not good at sports and he was very aware of his body’s limitations being caused by his dyspraxia, but then he went on to make sense of these experiences by normalising and minimising them;

> “that's it really…….just like normal things…….it didn't affect me that much”.
>
> Page 373 Line 9 - 13

It was unclear what Callum’s concept of normal was, but he appeared, in a similar way to Mark, to be suggesting that what he was experiencing was normal for everybody thereby normalising his experiences to those of his peers. Callum was acutely aware of the differences and difficulties he was presented with because of his dyspraxia, as all participants were. He spoke a lot of his difficulties with walking, the pain in his ankles and wrists and inability to play football. Whilst processing this experience of difference and difficulty, Callum exhibited an internal conflict of the reality, with his desire to not be different. This desire to be 'normal' and to be like his peers led him to use language which normalised and minimised his difficulties. The use of language can also be considered a way in which Callum, and others, sought to change the impact internally with how they viewed their self, by expressing things like;

> "it didn't affect me that much"
>
> Page 373 Line 12 - 13

This created an element of self-talk in an attempt to internalise and change the reality. This can also be seen when Callum discussed Maths and all he could say was *"maths just no"*, it was as if by using the words to describe why *maths was no*, then that would make the difficulty real and would prevent him from normalising it. This was really interesting as he acknowledged he had difficulties in certain areas academically, but had no words to describe it, this conflicted with how articulate he actually was in the interview and could be interpreted as a form of avoidance; by not articulating what he finds difficult it becomes easier to normalise and avoid.

Another mechanism that was evident with Callum in his interview, and others, was when recounting difficult memories. He often denied he had memories of things, and then seconds later recounted quite detailed memories. For example, when he is talking about his infant school experiences he initially said he remembered one thing vividly and began to tell me about it. It 'was a vivid memory of something seemingly trivial he said, but seemed to have a real significance for him, as he was being made fun of. However, after saying he only recollected that incident he then immediately began to detail another much more significant memory of being physically bullied, having his head slammed against something. He also spoke about being socially excluded, isolated and bullied because of his differences. He did this a number of times throughout the interview where he said he did not remember much and then immediately recounted quite detailed memories.

It is possibly that this complexity and internal conflict may be a means of coping for the participants, because by not acknowledging something or its impact, makes it easier to suppress, and therefore not further highlight the difficulties. Mark and Esme were seen to do this throughout their interviews, sometimes evident when the topic seemed too difficult to discuss (Esme when discussing her previous school) but at times it felt like a form of avoidance as if by not verbalising it, it could remain hidden and therefore “normal”.

Callum, like other participant’s, also felt this conflict socially, experiencing that his differences and difficulties made him stand out from his peers. He experienced this as making those relationships more difficult. He felt he was not included or accepted by his peers yet desperately wanted to be, therefore again trying to minimise and normalise his experiences.

Unlike Mark and Callum, Rhys did not seek to minimise his difficulties, quite often, he acknowledged and identified things that he found difficult:

> "it took me ages to learn how to read and write properly though but I caught up really quickly and was much better than most people that it when I figured it out at…
> Mum: it took a while…
> Rhys: yet took me awhile to figure out"
>
> Page 62 Line 14 - 18

He was aware of difficulties that he had with handwriting and that he used to have difficulties socialising particularly with large groups, Callum also experienced this.

Rhys however processed this differently to Mark and Callum and was able to recognise that over time he had improved and developed. It may be that by expressing and acknowledging these difficulties he was normalising them, recognising that we all have differences of some kind. Additionally, Rhys attended an independent school, on a scholarship, and as such, his educational environment would have been distinctly different from that of Callum and Mark, which may account for some differences in the way in which they dealt with this internal conflict and desire to normalise.

For most participants however there was a very strong internal conflict between what they could do and what they wanted to do. For example, Toby expressed immense frustration with his inability to verbalise and communicate; Callum spoke about an enjoyment of, and desire to participate in gymnastics, yet was unable to as he was very aware of his body's inabilities and his terror with heights as a result. When asked if the participants were part of any support groups or forums where they would know of others with dyspraxia there were mixed responses. Interestingly, most of the participants did not appear to want to know others who had dyspraxia. Rhys, for example did not see the purpose, focusing on the normalising aspect and querying why he would want to mix with others who happened to have a similar condition to him. This disinterest in meeting others similar to them may have been because that would further isolate them from their wider peer group when all they want to be was accepted. Some, like Isla, did know of a person with dyspraxia, for her this was an adult, another mum from her school who she had been introduced to as they had dyspraxia in common and she found comfort in this. It may be then that this connection brought an element of 'normal' to dyspraxia for Isla, by sharing it with someone. However, she was one of the younger participants in the study, being only 11 at the time of the interview. It may be then that for her identifying with somebody else who has dyspraxia at that point in her life would have been helpful. For the older participants however, they just wanted to be accepted and not seen as different. Isla did seem interested in finding out about other people who had dyspraxia, and was interested when I told her of the famous people who had dyspraxia. Esme knew someone who had dyspraxia and said it was nice to know her because she was nice, but there did not seem to be a sense of belonging, rather just a sense of having met someone friendly. Others were also intrigued to know of the famous people who had dyspraxia and Mark had attended a young person's conference for people who had dyspraxia and found this useful as he identified himself in their stories.

3. Disconnect from reality

For many participants the complexity and internal conflict was evidenced further by an attempt to disconnect from the reality of their experience. This was achieved by some again with language, whereby when issues related to their dyspraxia were identified, language was used to retract from the seriousness of it. For example, Mark often attempted to refrain from acknowledging the connection he had with dyspraxia, and used his language as a mechanism to almost distance himself from it as can be seen in this exchange when speaking about preferred terminology;

> R: okay, okay. Have you heard of….sometimes it's called dyspraxia and sometimes it's called developmental coordination disorder, have you heard that?
> Mark: I've heard of that a few times, but not that much.
> R: Not that much, so you don't prefer one term over the other?
> Mark: I prefer dyspraxia.
>
> Page 23 Line 25 – Page 24 Line 3

He said he had heard of it, and then said not that much, but then went on to confirm in a clear and concrete way that he did in fact have a preference. This conflict in language represents the complexity that exists for Mark, as with others, and the resistance to acknowledge the difficulties and associate himself with dyspraxia. This conflict went on throughout Marks interview with him using the word "but" very often to achieve the same distance. He identified his difficulties and yet appeared to be conflicted by their importance or impact they have on him;

> Mark: I mean yeah I've had a few struggles in school **but** everyone has that, so….. Maybe I have more than often **but** it does usually affect me, **but** not like that much, **but** quite small ways I don't really recognise.
>
> Page 24 Line 10 -12

This complex internal conflict prevented him from fully acknowledging the impact of his dyspraxia and so when he did begin to identify something he countered it with "but".

For many participants there was a real conflict that went on within them where they recognised their difficulties, however for many reasons appeared to want to assert that they were not a big deal. This was seen as an attempt to disconnect from the reality. Mark for example sought to impress upon me throughout his interview that he was ok and he was not too affected by his difficulties;

> Mark: well, it's not so big now but I used to struggle in Maths.
> R: right okay.
> Mark: because that's sort of become my weakness, but now I'm not so bad at it, don't know if it happened over sleep or something, but I'm not so bad as I used to be.
> R: okay. And did you get some help when you were struggling with Maths at school?
> Mark: I got a bit of help not like too much.

Page 25 Line 9 - 16

He also evidenced this attempt to disconnect by saying he did not remember things, yet went on to recount the things he initially stated he did not remember. It appeared his unconscious instant reaction was of disconnecting, and as such he denied having any memory, but then that prompted him and he reconnected with his experiences and could then recount things.

For Callum there was the same unconscious level of disconnecting, yet there was evidence of a more conscious form too. For example, he talked about the fact that he had a close relationship with his mum and talked to her about everything, yet there were some things that even she still did not know that he kept hidden. It seemed as if he was consciously disconnecting from these experiences, by not talking about them, not verbalising them, even though he had the relationships to do so. By verbalising them, he might then make the experiences real, by disconnecting and not verbalising them he could save himself the pain the experiences caused him.

Rhys also attempted to disconnect from the reality by seemingly blocking memories, and at times trivialising his recollections, as a way of coping with them, often expressing conflicting accounts which were then challenged by his mum who was present;

> Rhys: Erm, can't quite remember…let's think…like didn't quite feel happy about it obviously I was like 'ok I'll get this done like really fast and just make no effort what-so-ever'….literally just like oh ok random stuff…
> Mum: You tried really hard
> Rhys: Ah did I? Ah….well that's what I remember….although that's probably what I think I remember
> R: But you feel you were writing random stuff
> Rhys: Yeah. Yeah. That's probably what I remember anyway.

Page 65 Line 3 – 10

I am not sure that Rhys really believed that he did not try, but wonder if maybe he had taken and internalised this from what others had said to him, for example teachers, and now he had taken it to be his view. This would have potentially served as a protective method, to disconnect from the reality of what actually happened. It did seem for many of the participants as if their view of themselves was coloured by others perceptions of them and their efforts. For Rhys it was almost as if it was too difficult to say that he tried really hard, but that he did not achieve, and in this way this method of disconnecting from the reality could be seen as a defensive mechanism, a protective mechanism which masked the emotional impact for him.

Callum also used this mechanism to disconnect from the reality, in an attempt to protect from the internal feelings that come with not being able to achieve what he worked so hard to achieve. All participants expressed how they worked so hard, often harder than their peers did, and largely this went unnoticed. Alice for example recounted many times, in which she worked hard, thinking how she could overcome her difficulties and yet her efforts went unnoticed. Distancing themselves from the reality appears to be a way in which these participants protected themselves from how painful these experiences were and how they felt so out of control.

Further to this, many participants talked about how they were motivated by things educationally if it *“interests me”*. This may well have been because of the extra effort, both physically and mentally, that they had to put in to achieve what their peers achieved and so they overtime had developed a resistance to this unless it was something they were interested in or saw some worth in. Callum described this and how he had to enjoy something in order to engage, if he found it too hard he disconnected. Sometimes this was intentionally or consciously, other times it was unconsciously, but teachers sometimes mistook this disconnection for other things;

> Callum: yeah, I remember someone saying that and they were like “ah is he on drugs or something?” and I was like ‘no firstly I’m just tired’ I always have bags under my eyes like I could sleep like 12 hours a day they’re just there for some reason and secondly like no I was…just I couldn’t get it I couldn’t understand it….if it was a teacher I got on with I would just ask for help straight away
> R: Right
> Callum: But otherwise I would just…or if it’s something that doesn’t interest me as well I find it very very hard to actually put effort into it unless it’s helping someone else
> R: Right ok
> Callum: Like unless it’s something that I really hate but if it’s something someone else still wants to do I can really try and enjoy it
>
> Page 382 Line 18 – Page 383 Line 3

Callum, as the oldest participant had already completed his GCSE’s at the time of our interview and told me the only GCSE that he did well in was English Language, stating that he did not achieve well in the others as he did not put in much effort. The way he explained this suggested he intentionally did not put in the effort, but this did not feel genuine as he spoke. It felt more a method of disconnecting with the reality and a means of processing the results, a defence, as if by stating he had not tried would reduce the pain of having not achieved;

> Callum: urggh erm they were not good I remember I would….ah like honestly I should have revised a lot more I wouldn’t even say I did revision I’d say I did like an hour max…..for GCSE
> R: An hour a night or an hour….
> Callum: in general, of proper like focused….I would sit there and stare blankly at the books occasionally but….
> R: Why do you think that was?

> Callum: Honestly it's just I didn't see it….I know it is a massive benefit to your future but I didn't see it that way and I still don't
>
> Page 388 Line 24 – Page 389 Line 6

An additional method used by Mark when expressing his experiences of dyspraxia, in an attempt to disconnect from the reality of things, was to refer to his difficulties by referring to them through a 3rd person;

> R: and you said it affects you in some ways that you don't realise at the time what kinds of things?
> Mark: I guess cos they say I can be a bit gullible usually.
> R: Who says that?
> Mark: I don't know some person last year.
> R: Oh at the conference?
> Mark: Yeah. Or was it this year? No it was this year, said erm cos he was on this program years ago, not years ago but while ago and yeah, he's like it's a part of a trip down somewhere like people with disabilities so like limb loss and all that and he said he was like the only normal looking one, and yeah.
> R: Right. So this was someone at the conference that was saying this, do you recognise those same feelings in yourself?
> Mark: A bit I mean I guess some of them are a bit different cos he said he struggles with motor skills, I struggle a bit with it but I don't really…it's not a great big deal now, yeah.
>
> Page 54 Line 20 – Page 55 Line 9

Interestingly he again countered his own difficulties with the use of language at the end of this exchange seeking to minimise and normalise it. For Mark, it may be that he could only acknowledge the difficulties living with dyspraxia has, if he spoke as if it was not him experiencing it. He pursued this disconnection further by not outwardly acknowledging any impact the support provided brought him. For example, when discussing his parents providing his teachers with information leaflets explaining his dyspraxia, he did not indicate a strong feeling either way about the effectiveness of this intervention and was equally ambivalent when he spoke about support provided by teachers.

This strategy of disconnecting with the reality in order to distance themselves from the pain that the memories and difficulties hold was a common theme across many of the participant's experiences and may be an attempt to protect their emotional well-being. It appears therefore that they young people have grown up having to develop protective strategies because of the experiences that they've encountered as a result of having dyspraxia and this has created a complex and conflicting internal identity.

4.2.2 Theme 2: "I get twitchy when I'm nervous" – Recognition of incongruence/identification of Otherness

This second theme deals with the recognition within the participants of their difference and incongruence with their peers, going beyond the surface issues of difficulties and exploring the meaning that these differences have and how this was experienced as a sense of Otherness. This highlights the difficulties presented in meeting many individual needs such as feelings of accomplishment, prestige, understanding, belonging and security in one's self. This theme is explored in two subthemes; Bodily experience and Feeling different.

4. Bodily Experience

The subtheme of bodily experience explores the embodied nature of dyspraxia, providing a glimpse into these participants sense of body and the limitations dyspraxia brings. It focuses on the meaning this has for them, the lack of trust they have in their own body and how this relates to their sense of self, their sense of security and sense of safety.

All participants were aware of their bodies' limitations and the ways in which this was evident to them and to others. Some of these limitations for example were externally obvious, such as the inability to run, climb, participate in PE in the same way as their peers, which led to ridicule, negative comments and exclusion. The less obvious limitations, such as organisational difficulties, visual difficulties and spatial difficulties often led to a lack of understanding, as if not being able to see something caused others to believe it was not there.

Many participants spoke about what appeared to be a lack of trust in their body to be able to do what they wanted it to do. For example, Rhys was aware of his difficulties and his body's inability to function how it should, exploring how sports at school were difficult as he often had to figure out where his body was in relation to the ball and then what he needed his body to do next. This affected his enjoyment and participation;

> R: Right, did you like the sports at school?
> Rhys: Not particularly. No.
> R: What was it that you didn't like about it? Was it because you had difficulty doing it?
> Rhys: Probably. I just couldn't understand any of them and like the most I could ever keep track of the ball so I'd just be standing like in one place trying to figure out where I need to go next….which team I'm on
>
> Page 58 Line 22 – Page 59 Line 3

Rhys's sense making of these experiences led him to report that he disliked sports. Whilst this may be true, an alternative explanation might be that he disliked them because he could not access and participate in them in the way he would have liked to due to his body's limitations. These limitations highlighted his difference to his peers and contributed to his feeling of Otherness.

This lack of trust in their body and resulting sense of Otherness was very central theme throughout all participants experience in many different ways.

Often they spoke of how they would bump into things, emphasizing their difficulties with spatial awareness, there were experiences of dropping things often, not being able to catch balls for example or ride bikes like their peers. For many this led to increased frustration levels and an increased sense of internal pressure to get their body to do what they wanted it to do;

> Isla: I wasn't able to do like as many things like in PE as my friends were like I couldn't do a cartwheel and no matter how many times they showed me how to do it I still couldn't do it and I used to find copying really hard
>
> Page 131 Lines 2-4

Many reported a contributing factor to their inabilities (such as time pressures) to achieve physical aspects in school, and reported that this made their difficulties even more pronounced. Mark, for example, stated that if he had more time he could get his handwriting to be clearer, an experience that was shared amongst others. Isla also reported that given time she could achieve what she needed to physically;

> Isla: …..we had to do a long distance run which was two laps round a field, I ended up walking most of it, I didn't come last though but I came last in the sprint cos I really can't sprint, I can't go from being still to going really fast. Cos if I work up to it I can run reasonably fast but if I just start running I can't run very fast.
>
> Page 147 Line 13 – 16

Alice was very vocal about the difficulties she faced due to her body not being able to do what she desperately wanted it to do and how this led to intense frustration. She reported being very creative and driven, showing me various of her art works and achievements of which she was rightly proud, yet the difficulties she faced with daily activities as well as academic activities were significant;

> Alice: It was things like eating with my knife and fork, cutting things, I used to find really hard like sticking things in, just everything to do with like hands and art and creative things like making stuff, and just used to get really frustrated because I didn't really understand
>
> Page 187 Line 4-7

The bodily experience of all of these young people was that they had to work so much harder every day to achieve the things that their typically developing peers seemed to take for granted. Alongside this there was intense frustration and significant exhaustion levels, both physical and mental. As Alice described, even using cutlery required intense focus and significant difficulty. It was clear throughout these participants accounts that the activities of daily living, coupled with those required within educational contexts, caused a level of exhaustion which set them apart from their peers. Alice highlighted these difficulties and lack of trust in her body to do what she needs it to do when she further explored issues of walking and PE, identifying the spatial difficulties that she, and others experienced;

> Alice: I'm actually alright at P.E., one of my things is though I always change lanes, I can never, I'm ok at running and stuff but like I can never stay….I find it hard to run in the same lane
>
> R: Right ok
>
> Alice: and also when I'm walking on the street I always walk in front of people [laughs] zig zag and stuff so I think it's really annoying and like frustrating but like…oh yeah obviously like throwing and everything I found really difficult, like ball games, so especially things like tennis and cricket, I just used to totally dread…like oh god protect me bat I can't like do anything.
>
> R: Is that because it was a smaller ball?
>
> Alice: I think so yeah it's like it's harder you've got to be more accurate haven't you?
>
> R: yeah

> Alice: But yeah I think running, mum what do you think? Running and foot things are ok it's just the zig zagging, ball games are just like really difficult.
>
> Page 190 Line 9 - 23

Here Alice explored her enjoyment of PE, and particularly running, something she reported she takes part in with a club outside of school. Yet she identified the bodily experience of her dyspraxia caused issues with her body placement. It was these elements that made Alice, and others who reported very similar bodily profiles and experiences, to stand out from peers. Alice also reported difficulties with multitasking, such as when riding a bike, she felt she was ok pedalling and holding the handle bars, but cannot ring her bell or brake at the same time and therefore makes this task, that many of her peers can do, much more challenging for her because of her dyspraxia. For some, the act of riding a bike for example was too difficult to achieve, while for others like Alice, Isla and Callum they achieved it to a degree.

Callum gave an example of the issues faced with body placement and spatial awareness as a result of his dyspraxia in the cadet unit which he was part of and was considered here as an informal educational setting. He described how he was learning to march, something they did regularly as part of the cadet training and something that he stated was easy, but something that he found great difficulty in and which caused him to stand out from his peers significantly;

> Callum: It's…when you think about it and explain it is the easiest thing, but when you actually try it, it is so hard cos you've actually got to be in time with everyone else, you're left foot has to touch the ground at exactly the same time as your right foot like all in line otherwise you start to do this thing called tick tocking, which is where…so you're meant to bring your left foot forward, and your right arm up [showing me as he speaks] and then alternate, but when you tick tock you're either out of time and it just ruins the whole thing or you're doing right arm right leg and you just

> look ridiculous, like it is so hard like…after a year everyone…people who have been there for four years who are like 17, 18, staff even get it, cos it's just…it's a weird thing to be in time with everyone, like someone messes up, you mess up….but for me that was so hard, I was known as like the tick tocker for like a good year, a good year [laughs]
>
> Page 396 Line 7 - 18

Some of these experiences, like that of Alice and Callum, are to do with the body's inability to perform these gross motor skills, but these same difficulties and experiences are felt with fine motor tasks as well. Zara detailed this bodily experience and extra required effort when discussing learning to use scissors for example, something that would be required a lot in schools, and how this affected her enjoyment of arts and crafts, something she liked. She reported it took about three years to work out how to use a pair of scissors and that even then her cutting was not how she wanted it to be. Here we can see again the impact that such a seemingly simple task, one that others may take for granted, has on someone with dyspraxia. It is also clear to see that these difficulties, and the required effort and focus needed, takes attention and focus away from what may actually be being taught in the class and as a result the child could fall behind in their educational understanding. Additionally, without full appreciation of how such things impact on the person, a teacher may easily assume they are not paying attention, which was an experience reported by many of the participants. Zara further explored this bodily experience when discussing learning to swim;

> Zara: Swimming was hard as well. I did swimming because you thought it was an important thing to learn [directed at mum]….and when I started going, I was about 4……well I could do it, I just wasn't really good…..soon I got out of my own depth because I started thrashing and panicking…. and I just wouldn't be able to coordinate everything together.

Page 274 Line 25 – Page 275 Line 3

Toby, with the support of his mother, was able to express the difficulties he experienced with his body in achieving certain everyday tasks as well as activities such as PE in school. For him doing up buttons, holding a pen and tying his shoes laces were all difficult and these everyday tasks were required at home but also at school. The extra effort needed was exhausting and time consuming as well as taking focus away from anything that was being taught and for Toby his body's limitations caused significant difficulties in PE;

> Toby: Yeah I have some problem with coordination.
> R: Right but you still really enjoy it?
> Mum: So in what way do you have trouble? Because you can kick a ball ok?
> Toby: I can kick a ball ok, it's my hands.
> R: Your hands?
> Mum: oh sorry.
> R: No that's ok. So you can kick a ball ok but you have difficulty with your hands, is that what you were saying?
> Toby: Yeah.
> R: Right, and what kind of things does that involve? So is that sort of hitting things with a bat or…?
> Toby: Like, yeah like hitting things with a bat and cricket [inaudible]
> Mum: Badminton, it's a bit tricky.
> Toby: yeah badminton.

Page 294 Line 23 – Page 295 Line 10

Many participants spoke of physical pain caused by their dyspraxia, for Callum and Mark this was pain in the wrists when writing and in the ankles when walking. Callum described the challenges this brought him with finding appropriate footwear to provide support and prevent the pain, however this in turn lead to social difficulties and bullying as it made him stand out from his peers and he reported that as he got older this pain became less of a problem;

> Callum: I had joint pains for a while, still in year 11 actually, cos I had to have really supportive shoes, which I was bullied for…no I was just taken the mick out of…I wasn't bullied in year 11 I was just kind of teased, which is fine everyone can cope with that….but erm…no I mean I don't know like a switch just changed I just don't get it anymore. I can walk for like long long periods of time like it would just be the same as anyone else, my legs would just hurt that's it….I don't get joint pains.
> R: and so walking now like you said you could walk for a long period of time but when you were younger…could you…
> Callum: yeah my balance and everything was just really bad…
> R: Right ok
> Callum: I would trip up a lot, I would just…my joints would just hurt a lot anyway from walking.
>
> Page 416 Line 19 – Page 417 Line 6

Physical pain in the wrists was reported by many participants that would cause significant difficulties in traditional educational contexts, for example for Isla this pain was in her fingers when writing;

> Isla: yeah because if I write lots of stuff my hand really aches
> R: Right okay
> Isla: and cos I've got hyper-mobile joints, so that really hurts because my fingers do like that [shows me how her fingers bend back] and stuff so, and there really hurts and there really hurts.
>
> Page 143 Line 13 - 17

This physical pain that many of the participants reported, in differing forms, was significant and important in a number of ways. Firstly, an understanding of what these participants bodily experience was in general furthers our knowledge of dyspraxia and focusing on these elements that are not visible helps to deepen this understanding. However, within the context of education the need to understand the physical constraints and pain caused by dyspraxia will illuminate areas where academic achievement may be hindered by the dyspraxic body. For example, if we explored the common aspect of pain in the hands and wrists when writing as discussed by Mark, Callum and Isla particularly, we can understand that the reported difficulties with writing for people with dyspraxia may not just be about coordination but may also be about physical pain. The difficulties with coordination in this respect may also contribute to the pain felt. In either case, an understanding of this enables specific and relevant interventions to be put in place. Within education, this could be in the form of the use of laptops or by giving extra time to enable rest breaks. With respect to the physical pain reported in ankles and feet, this again may be caused by the difficulties coordinating one's body and the extra effort required, however an understanding of this enables again for specific and relevant interventions in the form of rest breaks, better footwear and so on.

Many of the participants were observed, and reported, fidgeting. This is considered to be a bodily experience which the participants reported provided a means of grounding and a mechanism for concentration and thought processing. Callum for example began tapping his fingers when I asked how old he was when he was diagnosed. This was a question which required him to access his long term memory in order to accurately retrieve that information, he did this tapping a lot when thinking about his answers. Isla also exhibited this form of behaviour. Her mother at the end of the interview asked her if she had noticed that she had been clicking the pen on and off throughout the interview, Isla responded that it helped her to concentrate. Mark used his eyes in a marked way when thinking, rolling them up to the ceiling in a very exaggerated manner and for an extended time while he looked like he was thinking about his answer, he would then roll them back to normal before answering. He too fidgeted in his seat a lot, again when retrieving things from memory. Alice fidgeted a lot in her seat while talking and often changed positions. This may have been an outward expression of the difficulties these young people faced.

A further difficulty reported was involving cognitive processes, particularly coordination of thoughts. Many of the participants expressed difficulty when being asked to process too much information at once and coordinating their thoughts, this added an often overlooked element of the coordination issues faced by those with dyspraxia. Isla explained that memory issues contributed to this difficulty;

> Isla: Yeah cos I kind of remember, I don't remember and….cos I normally forget, I can normally remember one or two things at the beginning and one or two things at the end but I can’t remember the things in the middle….
>
> Page 165 Line 13 - 15

Whilst Alice reported issues with organisation, planning and concentration, she identified that in education this was a particular challenge often compounded by the need to get your ideas written down quickly therefore requiring differing elements of areas of difficulty for someone with dyspraxia. She recognised this difficulty and the impact particularly within exams whereby strategies to overcome this were not accommodated;

> Alice: Planning I guess
> R: Planning it, ok
> Alice: But what I mean is when it’s just really down to the time it’s concentrating otherwise…it’s probably another part of dyspraxia but I find it so hard…I find it really hard to concentrate on work and stuff so it’s quite hard especially if I can’t write that quickly
> R: and do you find that the ideas you’ve got then go out of your head because you haven’t been able to get the down quick enough?
> Alice: Well yeah sometimes that’ll happen occasionally unless we’ve got it next to us in a planning sheet or something were not gonna have that in our GCSE’s
>
> Page 199 Line 9 - 18

Many participants stated that issues of organising thoughts and planning were particularly difficult for them. This was predominantly pertinent in education, as traditional formal forms of education required the retrieval and organisation of relevant and appropriate information often in timed settings such as exams. Certainly, this format is one approach to assessing and grading levels of academic ability. However, if for these young people the difficulties in this area prevent them from being able to accurately evidence their abilities, this would then disadvantage them. The impact in education may result in them being placed in lower sets for lessons and as such not being pushed academically. If they do not achieved the grades that are a true reflection of their understanding and abilities then the impact outside of education may cause them to not pursue future goals. In any case, it is evident that this bodily difficulty, or planning and organising thoughts, has so many implications within education, and life in general, and needs to be fully appreciated alongside the more obvious bodily difficulties faced by these young people. Alice exemplified the spiralling impact of this difficulty and its implications for education here, detailing how too much information leads to her zoning out;

> Alice: Yes! I find it…and my brain will try and focus on all of them and as a result I just won't take anything in and then I'm like 'yep so what are we doing then?' to the person next to me [laughs]. Yeah that's all great, just try to look concentrate and my mouths just open and like….what's happening, I've just been bombarded with information, so I guess that's the main….if teachers like listen more carefully, you weren't listening or whatever, sometimes it's just a matter of other people talking so you can't hear sometimes it's just that you just can't take it in and I think sometimes when I get like bored as well I just get really fidgety , I rock on my chair a lot and I find it really hard to take any information and I find it really hard to work and I just kind of zone out and I can't concentrate on anything

Page 212 Line 25 – Page 213 Line 8

Zara too experienced this exact same difficulty and expressed that she had the ideas, thoughts and ability but it was the bodily difficulties that prevented her achieving. Fortunately she has been able to overcome some of this with interventions within school;

> Zara: extra time and a netbook
> Mum: and use of a netbook
> Zara: Yeah
> R: Right ok, so how is having a netbook? Is that one that they have at school or are you allowed to bring your one in?
> Zara: erm I was allowed to bring my one in but it's just a bit difficult, so I just started using one at school and that's a lot easier because … because in Year 7 they taught me to touch type.
> R: Ok
> Zara: They thought that that would be good for me and that actually really works because I couldn't think and get my words down a lot sort of normal – whereas writing I have lots of ideas but couldn't quite get them down and for me that was really quite frustrating
> R: mmm
> Mum: Read it
> Zara: [laughs] yeah I can read it
> R: But it's easier now you've learned to touch type and you have the netbook?
> Zara: Yeah

Page 240 Line 5 - 23

Esme also experienced these difficulties and echoed the frustrations as she commented that she had plenty of ideas and knew what she wanted to say but reported difficulty with the process of getting her thoughts on to paper. She too benefited from interventions at school to support this difficulty, receiving extra time and the use of a laptop. These organisational and planning difficulties extended beyond the academic level into the everyday life of these young people making daily living again more exhausting. Aspects such as getting ready for school and planning what needs to be taken in that day caused great difficulty, frustration and anxiety for these young people.

All of these many aspects related to the bodily experience of dyspraxia appear to contribute to the sense of Otherness that was palpable from these young people when they speak. They recognised that these experiences disconnected them from their peers, positioning them as different and as ‘Other’. This caused great frustration for many as the desire to be able to achieve things that they perceived others achieving further supported the feeling of incongruence and Otherness. For some this feeling was less uncomfortable, but for many this impacted greatly on their sense of self, sense of worth and feeling of belonging.

5. Feeling different

This second subtheme of the recognition of incongruence and identification of Otherness deals with the concept of feeling different and the internalisation of this feeling. As discussed, many participants were vague on the details of diagnosis but none were vague on their identification as different due to their dyspraxia even before knowing of the diagnosis. For many however, the act of diagnosis provided some comfort even though it was confirming this Otherness;

> Rhys:…’ah ok that makes sense’.
>
> Page 58 Line 17
>
> Zara: … it gave me something to understand……. I think it does make more sense. I think it also lets people be aware of how they can help you and what you might struggle at.
>
> Page 236 Line 13, Page 275 Line 15 - 16

> Callum:….. I felt good about it knowing what it actually is cos it's not anything super serious at all like I didn't think I had some like mental problem or something.
>
> Page 380 Line 10 - 12

Whilst for others, like Isla, this confirmation of Otherness was emotionally difficult. For all participants, however they reacted to the diagnosis, it did confirm their position as Other. Mark illustrated this feeling of Otherness throughout by experiencing not knowing where he fitted, feeling a lack of sense of who he was and where he belonged in the world. He was unable to identify any real interests, likes or dislikes at school, unable to portray a sense of who he was, seeming very disconnected and ambivalent about life in general. His use of language was evidence of the way in which he was confused about his position and his place as when he would appear to begin to explain a little about who he was, he immediately stopped himself, disconnected and then moved on. This was a really interesting aspect of Marks account of his experience as someone with dyspraxia. It was very apparent throughout our discussions and whether he did this consciously or unconsciously (and I suspect elements of both) it was very evident that either he did not have a strong sense of his individual self, or that he did not want to let his individual self be 'seen'. This appeared to be a coping strategy, a defence strategy and one in which, it appeared to me, that he provided a level of safety.

Callum also experienced this sense of Otherness; his recognition that he did not fit in was felt overwhelmingly as insurmountable and unable to change. It appeared to have affected his sense of who he was, indicating a deep internalised view of self;

> Callum: yeah, it was just cos I was just like, just that kid, the grey kind of guy in the equation, like I was the kind of person who just didn't fit.
>
> Page 405 Line 22 - 23

For many participants, the interactions they had with teachers in school also affected and contributed to this sense of Otherness, often the lack of understanding on the part of the teacher was the contributing factor. For many these interactions were significant and the implications for their emotional wellbeing, sense of self and feeling of acceptance were immense. The impact on their growing sense of self-worth at this age appeared to be enormous and long lasting, shaping the way they felt about themselves, shaping their emotions and the way they approached, or retreated from, events and situations. Esme for example was so affected by experiences in her first primary school that she was profoundly upset by it and this still resonated so strongly years later;

> R: Ok. And so what was it that made it a kinder environment. Was the previous primary school not particularly kind?
> Esme: [Shook head and looked a little upset] No.
> R: What kinds of things made it unkind?
> Esme: [Mumbled] don't know really
> R: Or do you not want to say?
> Esme: [shook head].
>
> Page 315 Line 21 – Page 316 Line 1

A particular History teacher equally affected Esme emotionally. So much so that even though she wanted to tell me she could not begin, it took quite a while of prompting to give her the place to start before she was able to explore the issue with her mums input;

> Esme: I don't know how to start.
> R: What was his name?
> Esme: Mr Reynolds

> R: Mr Reynolds, ok. And he was History teacher?
> Esme: Yeah.
> ………………………………………
> R: Was it the topics you were learning that you didn't like?
> Esme: The teacher.
> ………………………………………
> R: You don't know. So was there anything particular that happened with History?
> Esme: With the teacher?
> R: mmmm.
> Esme: Parents evening.
> R: What happened at parents evening?
> Esme: [Looks at mum]
> Mum: It's your story.
> Esme: I don't know how to say it though.
> Mum: Was he supportive of you? Did he understand you?
> Esme: No.
> R: So at parents evening did you, you all went together, and so as he sat there explaining what he thought of your progress? Is that how they do it a parents evening?
> Mum: Yeah.
> R: yeah, and you didn't feel that it was supportive or?
> Esme: No.
> Mum: [Asks Esme] Do you want me to talk?
> Esme: Yeah.
>
> Page 331 Line 1 – 5, 15 – 16; Page 332 Line 18 – Page 333 Line 10

Esme's mum was able to explain that in front of Esme this teacher had begun parents evening by not being able to find her name in his book, and then leading off about how she needed to stop staring out the window and just get on with her work. Esme's mum had to stop him and ask him if he knew if she had dyspraxia and what that meant and asked if he had read her information sheet. The teachers response was to state that it was not dyspraxia. For Esme this lack of understanding, even when presented with the information and explanation by her mother appeared to be felt as a deep rejection and unwillingness to accept her, placing the sense of Otherness further within her and contributing to her sense of self negatively.

Some teachers however did try to support the participants by providing various supports or interventions such as the use of a laptop and for some extra time for exams. However despite the practical usefulness of these interventions, many felt this added to their sense of Otherness and incongruence with their peers. Callum felt this so strongly, and his already negatively affected sense of self, coupled with his desire to be like his peers, meant he often rejected the use of such things in order to attempt to fit in and reduce the sense of Otherness. Alice was not offered the use of a laptop, which she said she would not have wanted, as she struggled with IT, yet she was not offered extra time and would have found this useful. Isla and Toby were offered, and used, Alpha smarts which they both found useful.

Unlike Callum however, Rhys did make use of some of the interventions in school that were put in place to support his dyspraxia. For example, he did use the laptop in lessons and said that it helped him to work faster and enable people to be able to read his work, highlighting his issues with handwriting. He expressed that this had really supported him in his education:

> Rhys: I can now literally just like look at the board or whatever I'm meant to be writing down or whatever…just look at that and be typing it down
>
> Page 61, line 17 - 18

Rhys experienced this support differently to most other participants. This may be due to him attending an independent school, whereas all of the other participants attended public schools, but for Rhys using a laptop in class did not make him stand out as it did for Callum, because almost everybody in Rhys's class used laptops whether or not they had any difficulties.

4.2.3 Theme 3: “I can’t be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand” – Need for empathy & understanding

The third theme of needing empathy and understanding is a very strong one amongst all participants and stems from their recognition of Otherness. The identification of their difficulties and difference are harder to deal with when met with a lack of empathy and understanding. For many they experienced teachers’ lack of empathy and understanding to be a result of their lack of knowledge and yet there remained a need for reassurance from these authority figures. There were feelings of being misunderstood, and of missing out educationally, often due to a lack of recognition of their difficulties. Issues of social isolation were explored as well as psychological and emotional impacts of experiences of dyspraxia in education. This theme is discussed within the four subthemes of; Need of acceptance and understanding, Feeling misunderstood, Social isolation, and Psychological and emotional impact.

6. Need for acceptance and understanding

For all participants there was a strong need to be accepted and understood in terms of their dyspraxia. Many participants referred throughout their interviews to the fact that dyslexia was better-known in education and in general, and they identified that their peers with dyslexia were receiving support that they wished they could be recognised as needing. They were aware that teachers knew what dyslexia was, as well as autism and ADHD. They knew that teachers could support others with these disorders and expressed frustration at how this was not the case with dyspraxia. As such, the acceptance, understanding and support was lacking for them, further serving to deepen their sense of Otherness, compounding their lack of place. This was evidence of a general lack of understanding within schools of what dyspraxia is, how it affects those who live with it and how best to support these young people to achieve educationally. These participants felt the knowledge surrounding dyspraxia needed to be brought in line with knowledge surrounding other disorders;

> Mum: I don't think… I think now Dyslexia is quite prominent…
> Zara: yeah people know what it is… It's like there's loads of documentaries….
> Mum: But people don't know… Is it a form of Dyslexia or?
> Zara: there's loads of documentaries about dyslexia and stuff but no one seems to know what dyspraxia is!
> R: yeah.
> Mum: and autism and ADHD which I know sometimes go in hand
> Zara: but they're not the same, are they?
> R: no, so do you think it would be helpful if there was more… Like some documentaries on what dyspraxia is and things?
> Zara: yeah, because everyone knows what dyslexia is… but there's like this children's TV show and one, like the main character has Dyslexia… And there was a documentary show about Dyslexia but there's nothing about dyspraxia.
> R: mmmm
> Zara: I know it can affect a lot less of the population, but I still don't think people can quite understand what is.
>
> Page 272 Line 6 – 22

There was a significant lack of support reported amongst participants also, with many participants not receiving any specific support at all or receiving some token support only for it then to be withdrawn later. For some this unmet need for empathy and understanding left them feeling unsupported educationally and alone. Some participants resigned themselves to the fact that they just having to accept this and get on with their education. Zara emphasized the impact the lack of understanding was having on the support she could receive and the resulting feeling of having to just deal with it alone;

> Zara: Yeah…. I think when I was little I was like…'why me?' but now I'm just yeah…well I've got it haven't I, I've just got to deal with it.
>
> Page 278 Line 23-24

This was an experience echoed with most, if not all participants, this feeling of having to just get on with it as no one really understood or accepted. As such this feels as though it is more an exhausted, exasperated, self-defence strategy rather than a true acceptance and as Alice points out eloquently;

> Alice: I think…to understand really…in the end it kind of comes down to that because if you don't understand you can't empathise with someone and you can't try and help them. so I can't be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand what I'm going through
> Page 222 Line 21 - 24

Alice emphasised that in order for her to be able to be ok with her dyspraxia and to truly feel accepted she required the understanding of others. She highlighted a real issue that without understanding there is no empathy and for her she felt she really needed people's empathy and support to find strategies to help, not just to think of her as just *"clumsy".*

Zara highlighted the emotional impact of dyspraxia and explained how her need for acceptance and understanding lead her to be very emotional at school. She reported she did get some support with the emotional impact of her dyspraxia which she seemed to find beneficial, however expressed frustration that not all teachers were understanding and supportive. She reported often being taken to see a pastoral care teacher within the school for emotional support and that she could breathe and calm down. She was very emotional detailing this to me and so it seemed still very emotional and raw for her even now;

> Zara: emotional yeah, and they used to take me to see the emotional support person

> Mum: Which I think is a manifestation of frustration …
> Zara: Stress
> Mum: And which, as far as exams go, you'd get extremely stressed [inaudible] and ah, sometimes you used to get upset in class and you can't sort of stop being upset.
> Zara: No.
> Mum: [sort of nervous laugh]
> Zara: So, I'd see them and I'd sort of calm down, breathe …
> Mum: [sort of nervous laughs]
> R: And what do they, when you go to see them when you were stressed and upset, what is it that they do, that helps you to calm down and breathe?
> Zara: erm, I don't really know [nervous laugh]
> R: you don't have to know [reassuring]
> Mum: I think they're very sympathetic, aren't they? I think they get to … breathe to take you mind of it and to try and put that to one side.
> R: oh have I made you upset?
> Zara: No it's fine [crying]
> R: Oh I'm sorry!
> Page 251 Line 5 - 24

It appeared, therefore, that pastoral care provided her with a safe place where she could be accepted, understood and supported. For Zara there was a real sense of being lost in a sea of people who do not understand. She attended large school with 250 people in every year, and found it depressing that nobody knows what dyspraxia was. There was a real feeling of being alone with dyspraxia that this lack of understanding and recognition further isolated these young people.

Due to the lack of knowledge of dyspraxia particularly within education, it seemed a diagnosis in itself did not make much difference either as Callum suggested. He felt that even though a diagnosis for him made sense and gave him something concrete to attribute his difficulties to, and to some extent gave him an explanation for friends and peers, this made little difference to his teachers understanding. Few teachers improved in how they interacted with Callum after his diagnosis, however he did talk particularly fondly of one PE teacher who he said actually thought about things properly after he was diagnosed. Instead of excluding him from PE, or ignoring him as had happened in primary school, this teacher in secondary school would still get him involved as Callum explained that he would find alternatives to teaching the activity that the class were doing, rather than getting him to do something completely different or nothing at all;

> Callum: Yeah all the other secondary school PE teachers would just make me do what everyone else was doing but *Mr Daniels* would still get me involved but would find alternatives to kind of teach me the thing
>
> Page 381 Line 20 - 22

This teachers attempts to empathise and understand how dyspraxia was for Callum meant that he enjoyed PE particularly with this teacher. He experienced this in a positive way and it appeared to act as a reassurance for him. Throughout the interviews many participants, Alice particularly, appeared to be seeking reassurance from me that some of the things they were experiencing were common to people with dyspraxia. It was as if they need to be able to attribute the difficulties they have to something concrete in order to be able to accept it themselves and cope, but also to feel accepted. It may also be this need for reassurance would provide a sense of belonging for them, a place they fit.

7. Feeling misunderstood

Unfortunately, for many participants instead of feelings of empathy and understanding they felt largely misunderstood in the educational context and this may be because of the lack of understanding, for many this was evident when they tried to explain their difficulties. Alice gave great detail about how her teachers misunderstood her difficulties even if she overtly explained to them and at times was almost begging them not to make her do certain activities, however never felt understood;

> Alice: yeah. In like….I found it quite hard like erm in CDT especially which is like woodwork and things like that erm….like in textiles I put a needle through my finger….I can't sew, I told my teacher that I couldn't do the 'I can do' task which was like this sewing thing and was….like I find it so difficult and they were like "Well you need to know how to set up the sewing machine it's basic knowledge" I'm like "I can't I can't sew" and like recently with my apron we had to sew aprons and stuff, I can't do it, literally I can't, I was actually hiding from my teacher so I went out of school, I tried really hard, I got all this tie dye stuff so that I could tie dye it instead of like sewing stuff to it and I was actually really happy with it, it looked really nice I wanted to give it to my little cousin, and erm I came in and I was quite…you know I was like….I wasn't expecting praise or anything but I just came in to "oh you need to sew something on to that it looks unfinished" and like….
>
> R: Oh no
>
> Alice: she hadn't even looked like properly looked at it, she could have said oh I don't know at least well done for trying and the whole point was I'd gone out of the way so I wouldn't have to sew it and stuff
>
> Page 191 Line 23 – Page 192 Line 13

Here Alice also highlights how there was often, for these young people, a lack of recognition in what they had managed to achieve or the effort that they had put in. For Alice in this example she had not just given up on something she could not do, she had had the tenacity to explore and think what she could do instead. She did not require anything more than recognition for this, yet all she received was confirmation of what she had not done. For some, like Rhys and Alice, their internal sense of self may have stood up better to such knocks, yet over time these inevitably took their toll, but for others with a far more fragile sense of self such as Esme and Zara for example these kinds of moments were far more damaging.

Callum too experienced that teachers often misunderstood the symptoms of his dyspraxia, giving the example from secondary school where he says he was just struggling, explaining that when he cannot understand something, or is not interested, he tends to look spaced out. In his attempt to remain normal and avoid the difficulties his dyspraxia presented, particularly around his peers, he reported that he did not want to ask for help and so would just disconnect and disengage and as such teachers thought he was on drugs or was tired and sleepy.

Rhys also expressed how teachers lack of understanding and knowledge about dyspraxia caused difficulties for him in the way in which they misunderstood him and as a result dealt with his difficulties, such as his slow hand writing, by keeping him in to finish work and this, according to his mother, used to reduce him to tears. Rhys explained that there was a particular teacher in Maths and she misunderstood his difficulties with dyspraxia to be issues with not paying attention or focusing and this resulted in a negative emotional impact on him as well as compounding and exacerbating his social isolation. This impact had such serious consequences for Rhys, as his mum explained he became very anxious and began to self-harm. Even though it was his mum who is explaining this to me, Rhys appeared to want me to know, yet seemed obviously upset by it;

> Mum: The impact now….you've still got from that teacher…the anxiety reaction tend to pick your skin and you picked and picked and it used to be horrific, really, really bad and it was bleeding in school, it was all over his hands in class it was every scratch…so his anxiety levels were really quite high
> R: Right
> Mum: and that is in direct [inaudible]
> R: Yes
> Mum: It was usually obviously…..sorry you probably don't remember cos she left after
> Rhys: Yeah I think I've blocked it out
> R: Yeah, I was going to say how did you deal with that then? So you don't really remember a lot about her then?
> Rhys: Yeah
> R: But you remember some of it?

> Rhys: Yeah, not really actually….as I said I think I blocked it out.
>
> Page 64 Line 6 – 20

What was evident here was that this lack of understanding of dyspraxia by Rhys's teachers exacerbated his already isolated and anxious state, and he internalised these experiences and these emotions and began to self-harm. There is evidence here of an internal conflict with processing these experiences as well as it was evident when his mum was explaining this to me that he was very aware of what she was talking about, and that he did want me to know, but he also appeared quite embarrassed. He tried to distance himself from the memories saying he has blocked it out and this serves as a form of protection from the emotional pain.

There were many emotions that the lack of understanding evoked in the participants. Alice was quite despondent for example when she realised that people cannot empathise with her, and acknowledged she's going to find it hard and nothing will change unless people begin to understand;

> Alice: I think…to understand really…in the end it kind of comes down to that because if you don't understand you can't empathise with someone and you can't try and help them. So I can't be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand what I'm going through and have actually taken time like teachers to look into properly so until it's more well-known and people understand what's happening I can't…nothings gonna change for me…I'm still gonna find it really difficult, I might not get minutes on exams and stuff, it's just not that heard about, not that known about even if some people have heard the name of it 'oh I think I've heard of that, I'm not really sure what it is', I can't do anything until people are sure what it is, so I would say understanding really.
>
> Page 222 Line 21 – Page 223 Line 4

For Alice, and for others, this need for empathy and understanding was something she longed for that would allow her to be herself.

Because of feeling misunderstood, many participants spoke about their experiences expressing that this affected their trust of teachers. Callum spoke directly about the need for trust with the teacher and that there were some teachers that he would ask for help, but these were very few. Sadly, this affected his understanding of the curriculum as he felt unable to ask for help. He talked about one Maths teacher who he had throughout the whole of secondary school who he said just 'got him', and about the fact that she understood him and she would explain things in a way that he could understand. He also spoke about a primary school teacher who was very similar. For him both these teachers just taught in the way that he could grasp. He described there being certain criteria needed for him to engage. Firstly he said he would disengage if he found it boring, if it was not taught in a way that he could understand, or if he did not appear to see the purpose. He stated he would engage and make an effort if it was something someone else wanted to do, if the teacher taught in a style he could grasp, if the teacher was funny, interesting and willing to make effort;

> Callum:…..they'd need to be willing to go the extra mile cos some teachers just really do not care about students full stop like I've come across teachers that'll either have fav…like one person that they actually only care about or they just won't care and they're just there….it's not even good money but they're just there for the work
>
> Page 385 Line 8 – 12

Sadly, his experiences throughout formal education have left him with what seemed to be quite negative views of most teachers. He talked about the fact that a lot of teachers in his opinion did not care and this may well be his perception built up by the way in which they have misunderstood him, yet he felt that they behaved this way because they just did not care. He was very articulate about what teachers can do to help, rather than just talking about himself and dyspraxia, he spoke about the need for them to understand diversity. He talked about the need to enjoy something in order to achieve and that if it is something he enjoyed, such as something creative, he could immerse himself in that and almost disengage from his bodily pains and bodily difficulties.

There were other positive times in which the participants felt understood, or at the very least supported. Isla described how a teacher was supportive of her for example when she was standing up for herself when a boy was being nosy and unfriendly, the teacher backed her up and this was important to her.

> Isla: yeah. This boy, he's very horrible, he was like why do you have the alpha smart and I really didn't want to tell him cos he’s really horrible and I thought he'd make fun of me and so I was just like I just do and it was finally in French which I said ‘it’s none of your business’ and then my teacher was, said ‘yeah that right, you shouldn't be asking cos it’s none of your business’
>
> Page 177 Line 13 – 17

Sadly, however, a lot of participants had experienced a loss in their educational experiences. Either via not being able to access education in way that was accessible to them, through being misunderstood even with a diagnosis, or because having dyspraxia caused them to work twice as hard as their peers that they were so emotionally and physically exhausted they could not experience education in a way that they liked.

Isla spoke about her desire to be challenged at school. She appeared as a very keen and eager child who expressed the desire to do well educationally. However, she identified that she had issues keeping up as her teachers’ pace was too fast. She recognised she experienced difficulty with handwriting, and issues with processing information and as such was aware that these things prevented her from keeping pace like her peers. She spoke about the fact that this prevented her from getting all the questions done and as the more challenging questions were at the end of the work she missed out on attempting these as she would wish to and there was no provision or time available within the school day to do these in inclusion or at home. Isla experienced this by being held back in Maths, even though she was very capable. She struggled under time pressure and therefore could not evidence her ability to achieve the correct grade in order to move up. Given extra time, she would have achieved the required grade. This sense of not being able to show your ability, and therefore being constantly misunderstood appears to have chiped away at these young people's self-esteem and confidence, which was evidenced in Isla's voice when she was explaining this to me.

Isla therefore was experiencing her dyspraxia as holding her back, there was an incongruence between what her body could do and what she wanted it to do which was to further herself in her education. She was not lacking in drive or desire, nor did it appear she was lacking in intellect, and yet she was prevented from reaching her full potential. Certainly, Isla was not the only participant to experience the impact that the physical aspects of dyspraxia had for them on their education. Most participants had trouble to some degree with their handwriting, processing speeds, copying from the board, writing at a fast enough pace, that they all experienced some degree of restriction in their education. In an attempt to keep up with peers it seemed the participants tried to keep pace, but the slow pace of writing meant they lost their place and so chunks of information got missed. Over time this appeared to have a detrimental impact not only on the educational drive, achievements and experiences, but also on their self-esteem and on identity as evidenced when Callum and Rhys for example spoke of not trying hard enough as a way of coping as discussed earlier.

For many participants this further affected their interest educationally, because if they were losing their way, missing bits of information and struggling to make meaning of the bits that they did hear, their motivation and interest appeared to wane, negatively affecting their engagement and their motivation within lessons. This then further exacerbated things, as without the teachers understanding they were often then perceived to be distant, badly behaved or lazy. As will be explored later this also had an effect on these young people's developing sense of identity and for some, over time, they built up the image that they were not capable. Callum, for example, clearly decided he was not academic and as such has formed an identity and pursued interests that do not require him to be academic. Isla on the other hand appeared to want to be academic, but was being impacted by the restrictions her dyspraxia place on her.

8. Social isolation

For many participants being isolated socially was a common experience caused by the differences they faced because of their dyspraxia. Callum spoke about being isolated socially when he was at primary school, due to not being able to play football which all the boys did at break and lunchtime. For Callum though there was a real sense of loss, it was not actually his choice, he wanted to join in with his friends or with the others at school, but his experience was that he was not allowed to;

> Callum:…I just wouldn't join in, or I wouldn't be allowed to join in just cos I wasn't good at it or whatever and they'd be like ‘oh no I don't want him on my team, don't want on my team’

> Page 373 Line 20 - 22

Therefore, Callum experienced this as if he did not have a choice anyway. He did at times try to integrate himself socially suggesting that he would go over and talk to people that were nice to him, however they would briefly talk with him but then go back to playing football, and then he was left alone again. Over time, this had a negative impact on him and on his ability to engage and participate;

> Callum:…..'well they're probably not gonna let me join in what's a point'
>
> Page 374 Line 5 – 6

For Callum social isolation occurred often because of his inability to participate in certain activities at school. He was aware of this even before he knew he had dyspraxia;

> Callum:…I just knew I was really clumsy and everything wasn't good at sport
>
> Page 373 Line 1 – 2

He explained that he remembered how other kids made fun of him for being bad at sports. When explaining these experiences Callum often sought to minimise the impact they had on him, saying things like *"that's it really"* and *"it didn't affect me that much"* and it felt as though this was an attempt to convince himself that it was not as bad as it felt at the time. Callum said that he would be excluded and isolated socially by the other children and would end up removing himself and isolating himself as well, he would go and sit away from everybody else;

> Callum:…but I just go sit down somewhere…… I'd just go and sit down
>
> Page 373 Line 24 – 25, Page 374 Line 8

Mark spoke a lot about his social friendships at times saying he had no real friends, but then informed me he had 5. Upon further exploration however it seemed these were not friendships as such, but rather more people he knew within school. He told me he did not see them outside of school, did not appear to socialise with them during school, had not spoken with them in years and suggested he was quite insular at home. His relationship with his younger brother appeared fractious and Mark confirmed he intimidated him a lot. He appeared to spend most of his time alone in school and at home. He referred to the move from primary school to secondary school as;

> Mark: Erm, it wasn't…..well it was a bit difficult, but I sort of made more friends before the year ended really.
>
> Page 28 Line 25 – 26

This seems in contrast to how typically developing peers may have formed friendships in the first year of secondary school, showing Mark's sense of social difficulty and time needed to integrate. He referred to being shy because he was new, but stated that everyone was shy, thereby seeking to be like others and diminishing the difficulties he may have experienced. Mark spoke about bullying to some degree and the impact it had on him. Although for him it was more a sense of real social isolation and lack of integration with others that came across and he impressed upon me that the bullying was more in the form of teasing and therefore attempted to diminish the emotional impact this had on him;

> Mark: Yeah I got bullied in like…well I didn't really get….well I got bullied not like beaten up and all that back in primary school yeah and that was it and erm I do get teased a bit but that's like joke tease and that so nothing that drastic.
> R: Right. So is that…cos you said that's sort of joke teasing, is that people that you would consider to be your friends or is it other…
> Mark: Erm well I wouldn't say they were my friends but I've known them quite a while, they're not bad people.
> R: So how does it make you feel when they, even though you say its joke teasing, do you take it as a joke or does it…

> Mark: Erm if I was younger I probably wouldn’t, but yeah probably would bit now, not ever joke but yeah
>
> Page 38 Line 15 – 25

Many of the participants reported enjoyment of varying activities, even physical activities and sports. However, largely these were outside of the school environment and largely there was a preference for activities which were non-contact sports and those which relied largely on solo activities. For example, Mark enjoyed golf, an activity you play with others, but relies only on your ability. He also spoke about a form of cadets which he attended (although he was quite keen to tell me it was not cadets but when he described it, it sounded exactly like an army cadets i.e. a uniform, marching, drill etc) saying he enjoyed this even though he came across as quite indifferent. Interestingly a number of participants took part in a form of cadets, both Rhys and Callum as well as Mark, however their enthusiasm and interest differed greatly. Callum for example attributed his time in cadets as life changing, while Rhys and Mark appear to be less enthusiastic and rather ambivalent. In any case it appeared they all participated in it voluntarily so I can only assume they got something positive out of it and again, whilst this is a group activity it is one which is not a team activity, relying upon, or being relied upon, by others. Isla enjoyed many sports including ballet, yoga, karate, swimming and cycling with her dad. Again all of these activities can be considered solo in that they only rely on one’s self in order to participate and as such, there is no contact, no reliance on others and one can go at one’s own speed.

9. ‘Psychological and emotional impact’

Lastly, the theme of ‘need for empathy and understanding’ highlights a further subtheme, which focuses on the significant psychological and emotional impact of dyspraxia. This was evidenced in many differing ways, all of which greatly affected and hindered the participants' development and psychosocial and emotional wellbeing as well as their educational engagement and achievement to differing extents, but for all had long lasting implications.

Many participants experienced high levels of worry and panic associated with aspects of schooling and for many they would actively avoid certain activities or situations that caused them this anxiety or which they disliked. However for some they would also end up avoiding activities or situations that they did like and enjoy. This avoidance was often due to who the teacher was and the way in which that teacher made them feel. As discussed previously, a teacher's lack of understanding, willingness to appreciate the difficulties and challenges faced by these young people, or to acknowledge the effort they have put into something, has such a significant and lasting impact as noted particularly in Rhys, Callum and Alice's experiences for example.

The emotional impact of being a young person with dyspraxia in education was very evident in both Esme and Zara's accounts of their experiences, their emotions were almost tangible, with both being visibly upset when discussing these experiences. This upset for all participants stemmed from many of their experiences in many areas. For Isla the diagnosis itself was upsetting, whilst for Zara comparing herself to her sister upset her as it illuminated her difficulties and struggles. Certainly, for most, the recognition of incongruence with their peers produced feelings of sadness, upset and frustration. These feelings often led to further issues with high levels of anxiety particularly in education as it was often there that their difficulties stood out in comparison to their peers, and where the structure and context of the educational setting highlighted their difficulties further. Alice reported that she would become highly anxious for example when the teacher would pick teams for PE or pick people to do certain activities and she knew she could not do them and felt the same in music lessons when required to perform;

> Alice:….I would say for me in music something I'm unconfident in and I know that my dyspraxia …cos I just get really nervous cos I've got to go on the piano and it's like if I don't wanna to sing in the group there's not really anything else I can do, erm and I'm just really aware of the piano…the wrong place I'm gonna mess up the whole song and I think especially when it's in groups it's not one…if you're on the spot light it's like erm you don't wanna just look really bad but if you're in a group you don't wanna mess it up for everyone else it's just so obvious if you've messed up. Especially mine I did the simple one I just had three keys and I kept on forgetting where they were and everything on the keyboard I wish they could just write letters on it so that I could just see where it was
>
> Page 220 Line 13 – 22

Esme reported high anxiety with being late and as such does not like getting the bus and does her homework the night it is set, both of these things suggest a higher than usual fear of the teachers reaction if she is late in person or with work and may stem from the organisational difficulties reported by all.

Worryingly however, some teachers approaches have a massive impact on the engagement with both formal compulsory schooling and extracurricular enriching activities that are on offer and due to the approach of some teachers some participants reported disengaging with these also;

> Isla: they say….the PE teachers say you should go to two PE clubs a week but I don't go to any cos I don't really like any of the PE teachers I could go to a dance club but I really don't like the teacher who does it.
>
> Page 148 Line 12 – 14

This was concerning for many reasons. Not only the impact it initially had for the young person, but also the potential it had to further isolate them from their peers, to contribute to their already diminished sense of self, and to prevent them from pursuing potential interests.

All participants reported high levels of frustration. Frustration for different reasons. Frustration at themselves due to their bodily experience of not being able to do things in the way they wanted it to, frustration at not getting the support they needed, frustration at not being understood and at not being able to make themselves understood. For Toby this was a very strong literal inability to make himself heard as he often could not verbalise things clearly enough due to his significant verbal dyspraxia. As a result he often felt high levels of frustration as often the only way he could communicate was by taking people to things and pointing and this led to him feeling angry;

> Mum: He used to find it really frustrated, so frustrating. He used to mime things, lead us to places cos he couldn't verbalize it properly
> R: Ok and so does your dyspraxia affect just your talking or is other areas as well?
> Toby: Other areas.
> R: Right ok. And when you remember having difficult with talking and your mum said you would lead them to places to show them things and you were trying to mime things, so did you know what you wanted to say you just couldn't say it?
> Toby: yes.
> R: Ok
> Mum: Yeah that was right yeah
> R: And how did that make you feel when you wanted to say things but couldn't?
> Toby: Angry
>
> Page 284 Line 5 – 18

During the interview the difficulties with making himself understood were very clear, he needed a lot of time to get coordinated and articulate a single word and it was obvious the physical and mental effort this required. His mum was integral to his ability to share his story and experiences and needed to interpret things for him often, at times needing to explain things for him so he could offer a confirmatory nod or verbal yes. Observing him struggling to verbally communicate and articulate words to explain his experiences, I was able to see the significant effort required and significant frustration this caused him. It was clear to see how this difficulty would render him isolated within his body and cause him to be highly frustrated day to day and especially within education. Despite Toby's significant difficulties verbally, as well as the many other symptoms of dyspraxia he lived with, he did not have an IEP at secondary school let alone an ECHP and his mum reported this caused significant frustration for them.

The frustration with one's own body and the effort to be able to achieve what others can, and what was expected of them, was another contributing factor to these high levels of frustration, often compounded by the lack of recognition felt as highlighted by Alice;

> Alice:….I do put lots of effort into things especially things like Art that I find hard I like to put sort of effort into. In fact I'll show you this things cos I actually got better at cutting but it took a while, I actually cut out what's meant to be paper Rocky [leaves the room for a minute and then comes back] for lots of people that would be….
> R: Oh wow look at that
> Alice: but for me it took so many goes at getting everything right and it's quite frustrating so things like that….to the teacher might not seem much effort but to me…
> R: yes
> Alice: to me it feels like a lot of effort and it feels a lot harder than it looks and I almost feel like the teacher doesn't understand how much effort has sometimes gone

> into some of the things and like they don't you know really like know that I've really tried and just you know done my best. Other people yeah it might just take 10 minutes
>
> Page 209 Line 11 - 25

Alice was able to recognise her efforts and feel proud of her perseverance and achievements yet also reported feeling upset because of the lack of understanding that she received from teachers and their insistence that she do things she could not even with a diagnosis;

> Alice:….I just find things so difficult and she was just like 'oh my what are you doing' and I just couldn't do it so, yeah in year 5 though….also that teacher's quite bad, I don't think she really saw it as that important, she just thought 'oh she's just got a pencil grip' whatever so she didn't pass the information on to my year 5 teacher who just thought I was really bad at cutting and everything and I got so upset because one lesson he got cross at me for like "who did this" cos we all had to cut these words out and he was "oh who did this" and stuff and I remember I was really upset, he was actually nice, he was really apologetic and stuff afterwards but he thought I was just like, he thought I was doing it deliberately
>
> Page 188 Line 16 – 25

As Zara explained her experiences and frustration caused by her difficulties with dyspraxia, it became clear that like Toby she also felt isolated and restricted by a body that could not communicate or do things in the way she wanted to and this brought further frustration;

> R: Ok, so that's quite a long time ago. Do you remember what it was like before you were diagnosed?
> Zara: Not really, but I think I was feeling quite frustrated I guess,
> R: Right.
> Zara: We had this reading [exercise] where we had to read in Reception Class – increasing where we had words and we had to write them out. And I could read them but I

> couldn't write them out and for me that was really frustrating cos I knew exactly what they meant and how they were spelt.
>
> Page 235 Line 20 - Page 236 Line 2

For Toby, Zara and all the other participants, these experiences of not being able to communicate, whether verbally, written, or otherwise was felt as deep frustration. As Zara pointed out she, and others, have plenty of ideas yet struggle to get those ideas out and she found the use of a netbook freeing in this respect. The many negative teacher interactions reported by all participants sadly were all too frequent and often added to feelings of embarrassment about having dyspraxia. Zara's mum echoed these experiences and how they made Zara feel;

> Mum: I didn't think that some of the comments that Zara got were particularly helpful. Yeah, you seem to get a lot of stuff that.. 'this is messy' or 'untidy' or … like this. It wasn't for the want of being like that, it was just you used to get those and .. that was a bit … Oh! That was a bit upsetting for you, wasn't it?
>
> Zara: [laughs] yes well 'I'm trying though!'
>
> Page 250 Line 12 – 16

The feelings of embarrassment may have been compounded by the frustration with others not understanding and as Alice pointed out she did not want people to feel like she was using it as an excuse, she, like all others, just wanted to be understood;

> Alice: I feel ok, I've got a lot better…in primary school…in secondary it was just was kind of the constant explaining I almost couldn't be bothered anymore and also it's a bit embarrassing, just like sort of….like I said it seems like an excuse to try and get away with loads of things
> R: Right ok yeah
> Alice: especially if teachers don't really take it seriously that's quite…[laughs]

> R: yes that makes it harder doesn't it if they're not taking seriously then it can feel….
> Alice: yeah, a bit like you're trying to get away with something
>
> Page 216 Line 7 – 15

Alice experienced this feeling of embarrassment also when made to do things that at school made visible her difficulties and explained why she would actively avoid certain tasks and activities;

> Alice: It was things like eating with my knife and fork, cutting things, I used to find really hard like sticking things in, just everything to do with like hands and art and creative things like making stuff, and just used to get really frustrated because I didn't really understand
> R: Ok, and was it that you were frustrated that you didn't understand what was going on or….?
> Alice: Yeah I just thought I was really clumsy or like yeah, I think it's also I think it's embarrassing cos like it's primary school….like basic skills things like cutting, so I think that was the thing for me that everyone else at that age, it just looked like I was just behind
>
> Page 187 Line 4 – 13

Exploring the participants experiences and considering the emotional and psychological impacts of these experiences has highlighted an interesting and potential gender difference with how they make sense of and internalise these feelings. For all participants the reality was that the effort required for everyday tasks was vast, they had to work harder than their typically developing peers to do seemingly simple things such as tie their shoes laces, do up buttons and pack the correct school equipment for the day for example. There are then the issues with bodily awareness, spatial awareness and positionality, concentration, communication, coordination of thoughts, organisation and planning to name a few all coupled with the feelings of not being understood, anxiety and frustration. The girls overall reported more internalised sense making of these experiences, with more reports of being emotional, upset and embarrassed. The boys overall however reported more feelings of internalised sense making spilling outwards, detailing their anger and often outward displays of frustration. Callum reported this bottling things up and what he described as bad outbursts;

> Calum:….I knew…I always knew that I had my mum that I could go and talk to and I was a bit stupid, I didn't talk to my mum about everything, not because I didn't feel that I could, I just…that's what I used to be like, I'd just bottle everything up and it was nothing against any of my family really I just….
> R: What happened when you bottled things up?
> Callum: I was just such a delightful child [sarcastically said]
> R: [laughs]
> Callum: would never burst out in anger or rages or anything, definitely didn't smash the door [sarcastically said]
> R: Right
> Callum: I was never like…..I would occasionally like shove my mum out the way, I wouldn't try and hurt her, I wouldn't shove shove or be violent cos I'd experienced….yeah well anyway another story….but I'd yeah I would take it out kind of verbally on everyone more
> R: Right
> Callum: I would occasionally like just barge my mum out the way if I was trying to like move out the conversation, I did smash the front door cos my brother was annoying me so much and everything was so hectic and I made a fist and I was like 'ok *Jack* needs to move cos I'm not gonna want to hit him but I'm gonna hit something very hard, and then I smashed the front door, to smithereens…
> R: rather than your brother
> Callum: rather than my brother
> R: Probably a good choice!
>
> Page 412 Line 7 – Page 413 Line 5

Mark reported these same outward feelings and tried, as he did throughout, to minimise them yet it was clear he too experienced this anger and outward expression of his frustration at his difficulties;

> Mark: I might struggle a bit but that's it really. Yeah nothing, not difficult I won't go hulk and smash everything.
> R: No.

> Mark: A bit, maybe just a bit annoyed, but that’s it really. If I’m a bit annoyed my mum and dad would probably shout at me, yeah.
>
> Page 41 Line 6 - 10

Toby reported that he felt angry when teachers did not understand and angry when they did not help him. Whilst Rhys stated that he was not an angry person he did detail a strong sense of morals and feelings of injustice and whilst he may not have reported lashing out physically, these feelings of anger and outward expression were evident in his account also when speaking of the hierarchy system in place at his school;

> Rhys: Yep…I hated them, absolutely utterly hated them
>
> Page 114 Line 10

Whilst the experiences and the way in which they made sense of these experiences and processed them were individual to each participant it is clear there were commonalities amongst them also. The impact these experiences had psychologically and emotionally, as well as the impact on the psychosocial development of these young people was immense. There are implications for their sense of self, self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of belonging, and their sense of safety and security in the world and throughout there was a desperate need for empathy, understanding and acceptance.

4.2.4 Theme 4: “I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility” - Identity formation

The fourth theme emerging from, and embedded in the data is the theme of identity formation. This illustrates how these young people’s experiences of living with dyspraxia and their experiences as a result in educational contexts have shaped and developed their sense of identity. Far from the potentially bleak picture that may come across from some of the themes presented so far and from the experiences these young people have had, all of the participants presented as positive, smiling, engaging individuals exceptionally keen to share their stories and with an overwhelming desire that others should hear what they have to say. During the process of assessment and diagnosis most participants reported not being aware of what was going on and none reported having been able to explain how things were for them fully and as such this may have been the first time they had been afforded that opportunity outside of their family network. It therefore is striking that the negative impact comes from their integration within the educational system and environment, and the many elements that have sought to disempower and isolate them further that means that this is often a sad and bleak picture.

Here however is a more positive picture – one which explores their identity formation – and whilst some of these negative elements feed into that – there is a real sense of positivity, creativity, belonging and their own developed empathy that they have grown through their shared adversity and this theme explore this creation and formation of identity. This theme has four subthemes; Need for invisibility, Belonging, “I’m good at that”, and “I’m ok now” – passage of time.

10. Need for invisibility

For many participants there was an overwhelming need for invisibility. Not invisibility as a person per se, but more an intense need to hide their dyspraxic self. As mentioned they were all acutely aware of their difficulties and differences, were framed as ‘Other’ and felt seldom understood, appreciated or recognised. Therefore, it is somewhat unsurprising then that many spoke about a need to be invisible, to almost hide their dyspraxia and this need for invisibility was evidenced in many forms.

For Alice this was a literal need to hide herself, often as a way of combatting the teachers' lack of empathy, understanding and acceptance. For example, she spoke about her textiles teacher who failed to listen when she tried to explain she could not sew;

> Alice:….like in textiles I put a needle through my finger….I can't sew
>
> Page 191 Line 24 – 25

She then left school and tried to think how she could achieve a good piece of work without sewing. Despite her efforts at thinking outside of the box and presenting a creative piece of work the teacher could not appreciate her effort and focused instead on it being unfinished, as a result Alice developed other strategies;

> Alice: I hid under the table
> R: Oh ok, when was that?
> Alice: it was kind of half funny half scary, my friend was like telling me when she's coming and I was like ninja crawling from one place in the classroom to the other [laughs]
> R: this was the teacher with the tie dye apron?
> Alice: yeah, she tried to make me sew stuff and I can't sew and I find it awful, I can't even set up the sewing machine let alone do anything on it.
> R: So you were trying to hide from her under the table?
> Alice: Yeah and everyone was like "ahh" like
> R: How long did that last? How long did you manage to hide from her?
> Alice: I hide under there for the lesson, she wasn't that interested
> R: Ok.
> Alice: luckily, she doesn't really check on me or anything like that. I think also cos I'm bad at it like it doesn't really help my CDT and textile teachers sort of taken against me, I think they just think I don't really try hard and am just a bit clumsy you know I don't get their subject or whatever and I think if

> anything it's the other way round, like they haven't really….they don't really understand dyspraxia and they like they don't…you know…know how it affects me and erm they think that I'm like just being lazy and don't really care, I think that's a lot different, they think oh you know it's just some little finger thing it doesn't really affect that much
>
> Page 204 Line 19 – Page 205 Line 13

Alice pointed out that despite her hiding her teacher was not interested, she perceived this to be as she, and other teachers, had identified her as clumsy, lazy and uncaring about their subjects and her work. For Alice this further emphasised the feelings of being misunderstood and meant she missed out educationally.

Mark also experienced a need for invisibility but expressed this in an unconscious way. His inability to find the words to articulate how dyspraxia affected him was evident in Mark's expression of his experience and he was at times unable to expand verbally on how his dyspraxia affected him. It was felt that this however was not because he was not affected by it, as there was a real sense when he spoke that he was deeply affected by it, but was felt as a way of keeping the real extent of the impact of his dyspraxia hidden. As explored in the first theme, Mark's experience was complex and there was evidence of a real internal conflict within him regarding his dyspraxia and it was this internal conflict that was not allowing him to expand verbally, as if by doing so it would make it all real. Therefore, it was felt this need for invisibility, like that of Alice, was an attempt to protect and remain safe from the impact of being visible and the true extent of his experience to be seen. Further evidence of this vulnerability and attempt to protect was evidenced by his use of language and the way that when he does begin to verbally describe things that affected him he immediately counters them with words and statements that minimised the impact or normalised the affects. This however may have been a way of him choosing his identity formation, rather than allowing himself to be identified by his dyspraxia, an attempt at regaining some control maybe.

Rhys's exploration of his experiences too provided this feeling of a desire to keep the dyspraxic self hidden, however for him it was achieved more by his ability to emphasis the areas of his life in which he felt strong, skilled and safe. He proudly articulated a strong sense of morals and desire to create justice in the world, for example discussing in detail how he and others in his year worked at breaking down an ancient hierarchy system that was prevalent in his school. He was proud to tell me of his achievements academically and through his scholarship as a chorister and focused more on these positive aspects of his life as having meaning for him, even though there was evidence in what he said of the negative impacts that his experiences had on him. For him it felt he was again choosing his identity, and in some ways had more choice compared to the other participants as he attended an independent school and had moved schools to find one that was more suitable to his needs.

Callum's experiences were not as positive at school and he expressed the desire to disappear, to not be visible, to not have to deal with people and to escape. He explored his fantasy of being invisible stemming from his experiences with a particularly teacher in primary school;

> Callum: No it was…I remember in I think it was like year 4 cos I had this horrible teacher called *Miss Bloomfield* who was just like so verbally abusive and just horrible
>
> R: Why was she verbally abusive?
>
> Callum: Oh she was just put mainly me, other people occasionally, but mainly me she would just put me down when I wouldn't get something and she'd just snap at me for no reasons, she was just one of those teachers who had favourites and honestly did not care about most of the students
>
> Page 391 Line 1 – 8

He expressed that most kids want to be a superhero and that they can be, just not with superpowers, but if he did have superpowers, it would be the power of invisibility. He expressed this was his childhood fantasy as a result of his educational experiences but that this continued into secondary school, specifically the desire to be invisible;

> Callum: yeah anyway I had this teacher and I wanted to be able to go invisible so I could just like not have to deal with anyone which is kind of like clinically depressing but you know…
> R: Clinically depressing did you say?
> Callum: yeah
> R: Ok
> Callum: I just wanted to kind of escape everyone
> R: Ok and that was primary school
> Callum: that was primary school, yeah I didn't want that at….well I kind of just wanted to just disappear at secondary school but I didn't want to be a superhero
>
> Page 391 Line 15 – 24

Callum reported that year 7, the first year of secondary school, was one of the worst years of his educational life and that he did have a few friends but that difficulties remained and the desire to be invisible continued.

11. Belonging

As discussed in the theme focusing on the need for empathy and understanding, the participants expressed a desire to be recognised, to fit in and to belong. This desire to belong and be accepted is considered an innate need, but for these young people their lived experience was that they often did not feel they belonged. Yet for some they experienced belonging in different areas and this formed a very important and relevant part of their identity formation.

For Callum there was a real need to be accepted, to feel like he belonged but his experiences in formal education was that he never belonged. He spoke of bullying in both primary and secondary school, of not fitting in or being included in games or social groups and being relatively isolated not taking part in any extracurricular activities. He then spoke about his experiences in a cadets group, an informal educational setting, that was external from his school which he attended regularly and for which he considers an important contributing factor that helped to shape his identity;

> Callum: I met him there and we got on and then erm started hanging around with him, his friend Olly and Will, and they were my kind of friends…they were like who I hung around with until year 9 where we had a massive falling out which I'm not going to go into detail but yeah erm during that time I joined the Royal Marine cadets when we moved house cos we lived very near to it
> R: Ok, so that's outside of school?
> Callum: that literally changed my life
> R: ok
> Callum: 100%
> R: Why did that change your….so you would have been how old? So year 7….
> Callum: That was around….I was 12 when I started and then 13 when I joined the Marine cadets
> R: Right
> Callum: Erm yeah no 100% that kind of changed my life definitely
>
> Page 392 Line 25 – Page 303 Line 13

His experience of this cadets group was that he was accepted, he felt like he belonged and he felt that his differences were ok as there were others there he identified with. He explained how they laughed with him, not at him, and would go over things until he got it in what was a supportive way. He expresses this as contributing to shaping his identity and supporting him to work harder and try and achieve things that he found difficult. He stated that this impacted his life outside of this context, spilling over into how he experienced his formal education in the later years of his schooling and describes it as a bonding formed through a shared adversity, highlighting his feeling of belonging;

> Callum:….it's just honestly sculpt me so much
> R: Ok.
> Callum: like made me start to work a lot harder…obviously still only in things that I enjoy [laughs] but it still made me work a little bit harder it made me start to take care of myself like full stop, cos I wasn't…it made….yeah it kind of like…that and my family definitely just….especially my mum, definitely kind of sculpt me into who I am today, my dad wasn't a big impact to be honest at all, but it was just…yeah it was a place I could go….there was a time I was quite obsessed with it cos it was literally….it's like me with the gym now it was only twice a week and that was like the only time where I felt 100% like relaxed, like meditation Buddha.
> R: Meditation Buddha?
> Callum: Yeah I just felt perfect there, like whether we were running or having like buckets of water thrown at us and stuff or like doing…..well I couldn't even do a push up when I first joined…trying to do push ups and stuff…it was just…I don't know it was just more like you bond really quickly even though you're not in any bad situations like the forces at all, it's just a little club you just…..there's just still a small sense of adversity there like you're getting shouted at by the people to go and run down the road and you're all hating it but you look at each other and you smile and you're just like 'oh we can do this' and you do it. It's just a nice thing, you bond really quickly.
>
> Page 394 Line 25 – Page 395 Line 18

The sense of belonging is evident, everyone experiencing the same thing and working as a team was important to him. Callum built a strong connection with one of the leaders at the cadets group who he described as such an important person to him as he supported him to develop his physicality. Sadly, for Callum, this person passed away and Callum described how hard this hit him. He had attributed so much to this acceptance, the fact that this person persevered with him to help him overcome the issues he had physically with his dyspraxia, this formed a huge part of his ability to move on and become confident and change the way in which he engaged with the world physically, emotionally and socially;

> Callum: Yeah, a lot of my friends had started to leave, my role model sadly passed away, he was the one who actually got me into…who taught me how to do one push up and then eventually coached me through it and taught me everything.
>
> PhD 8 (C) pg line
>
> Callum: Yeah he was like, basically, until me new stepdad came along he was basically like my dad figure.
>
> R: mmmm
>
> Callum: Cos I would talk to him about everything.
>
> R: Ok and he helped you to learn how to do push ups and stuff?
>
> Callum: oh yeah he was like oh….[seemed a little emotional] he was erm, yeah I remember I couldn't do one push up and no one would laugh but they were like 'oh come on you can do it' I could not do one push up, I would try, I would try every night and it took about a month for me to actually get one, and he got me…I set a goal from when I was around 13 and a half, set a goal to be 15 and to be able to do 100 push ups in two minutes and he would…every night…every night that he was down cos he was also a doing…I have a feeling he was still doing something for the military cos like he would just disappear for like a month
>
> ……………………….
>
> R: But, so he helped you with the physical side of things?
>
> Callum: yeah and that really helped with kind of my mental side of things as well, as obviously endorphins, but also it boosted my confidence a lot and like every night he would be like 'come on, I wanna see you do as many as you physically can' like until I, until you can't get back up kind of thing every night, cos it only took like two minutes and he would time me and I'd just be like sweating after two minutes, but erm eventually I got 100 and I think the best that I ever did in two minutes was like 140
>
> R: Wow. That is impressive
>
> Callum: But now now I can't do that cos I've just changed how I train but I've made sure that I can always do 100 in two minutes.
>
> Page 400 Line 24 – Page 404 Line 8

It is clear that he appears to have created an identity from his experiences of being accepted and belonging that led to him building a physical identity that was far removed from the young child unable to play football that used to be socially excluded. He attributed his physical strength, this external identity he has created, to his time in the cadets and the support he received to build up this physicality, to being accepted and feeling as if he belonged.

This could however also be seen as a way of becoming invisible from his dyspraxia. He has created an identity which hides the dyspraxic self. For example he spoke about the fact that actually in year 11 people start talking about his big muscles whereas before they had ridiculed him, teased him and bullied him because of his physicality, a child with dyspraxia. Therefore, it may be this formation of his identity was a necessary way of coping. He did talk about the fact that he has become more confident, so there may be an element of him developing trust in his body as he forms it to be stronger than it had been. Callum appeared to have formed an identity that ensures the invisibility of his dyspraxia and he appeared to know that dyspraxia is a lifelong condition throughout his talking, he appeared to know that he still struggles, however he has created an identity that does not show that, hence he is invisible.

This could be then another aspect of his internal conflict with being somebody with dyspraxia, but not wanting to be, so therefore he has created an identity that is different, that is strong, and that is not afraid. When we look at Callum's time at cadets and how that helped him form an identity, how it helped him to gain trust and confidence in his body, and how it helped him to create a sense of invisibility about his dyspraxia, it is important to look at the educational experience. This is an extracurricular activity, but is an informal form of education. He clearly felt he had a sense of belonging in this form of education, he felt accepted, and safe to be able to build up and create his identity. This then allowed him to take this new identity back into formal education where he talks about the impact that had on his ability to socialise, on his confidence, and on his ability to seize his experience educationally and make something more positive of it in his final year at secondary school. He too expressed this as being of great importance.

> Callum: But yeah, no erm I just had enough, I wanted to get to know people cos these are people Id spent three years with, like weather I liked them or not I wanted to have some sort of memories with them, like that's three years of my life gone with people that I'm not gonna remember, I find that quite sad, so I wanted to get to know people so I would purposely go up to groups in my form that I don't usually talk to, it went well, like year 11 I was just a normal person which is good.
> R: So do you think you became a bit more confident?
> Callum: I definitely became a bit more confident
> R: Because those kinds of things take confidence don't they?
> Callum: and that was definitely due to the marines.
>
> Page 411 Line 17 – Page 412 Line 1

Going forward interestingly Callum left that school, despite them having a sixth form, and took this new formed identity and furthered it. He took up a course at a different college that focused on this newfound physicality. Furthermore, his career aspirations again focused on this newfound identity and newfound physicality, his career aspirations were to join the army. Again this could be viewed as a means of creating this superpower of being invisible, if we think of fitness instruction and the army, it conjures up images for many it could be said of strong, powerful, confident and capable. Therefore, by following these paths and maintaining this identity he has created, he keeps his dyspraxia invisible and hidden.

Rhys too had built a strong identity through his experiences in education. He had a strong identity in his ability as a musician, he was an accomplished choral singer, on a scholarship at the Independent school he attended and enjoyed the performance aspect of being a musician. This too provided him with a sense of belonging and acceptance, somewhere where his strengths were illuminated. As well as being a singer he also played the piano and the viola and spoke about how he was going to teach himself to play the guitar. There was an air of confidence about him when he spoke about these things. Rhys also built his identity around his strong morals and sense of justice. He got very frustrated when there was a sense of injustice in things, for example when explaining to me about choosing what activities to take part at school he explained how some students who just would not choose an activity ended up getting allocated the best option and this annoyed him. His favourite subjects at school were RS and music which aligns with the identity he has created around himself of being this very moral person;

> Rhys: RS is all learning about other religions, like religious tolerance and all that sort of stuff
> Mum: Ethics
> Rhys: Yeah ethics and all that yeah it's brilliant I just like that, like it's nice to know everything about other religions or whatever and everything about that. And then music, I’m just good at it, I like singing and performing and whatever
>
> Page 79 Line 22 – Page 80 Line 3

Rhys explained in great detail about how in his school there was a hierarchy system where students in the older years would effectively bully children in the younger years and get them running around doing things for them. When he was speaking about this, it gives an insight again into a strong sense of morals, he and others were not happy about this and so they set about eradicating the hierarchy within their school;

> Rhys: oh yeah, when I started there was like this whole ancient hierarchy system where for the years above believed that everyone in the year below should do whatever they want because they were older
> R: right
> Rhys: so like you had this whole system of sixth form saying “pick up my sunglasses from my room" er….
> R: and did you have to go and get them?
> Rhys: “make me some food"… Yeah… There was the whole….
> ………………
> Rhys:…. Partly because of our year like hierarchy has gone down loads.
> ……………
> Rhys: oh yeah also, I'm really happy about it, one of the people who's been going really far with hierarchy has been expelled
>
> Page 111 Line 1 – 8; Page 112 Line 13; Page 114 Line 7 – 8

For other participants this sense of belonging came in other forms, for some like Isla and Alice it was through friendships that were supportive and understanding, as Alice described often helping her to evade her teachers attention. Family was also a safe space for all, where they were able to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance and often parents were the advocates for them within the educational environment, raising awareness amongst the teachers of the difficulties they faced, providing useful leaflets and information sheets for them summarising their child and suggesting practical interventions.

The ability to identify themselves in others provided a sense of belonging for some. Mark for example discusses attending a conference organised by the Dyspraxia Foundation and how he does not always identify with the way his dyspraxia affects him at the time, but that attending the conference helped him learn a bit more about it and he was able to identify himself in their experiences. He identified very well with a young person who was speaking at the conference one year and almost took on their experiences as his own. He immediately attributed what the young person had been saying to himself, which suggests he identified with the experiences that the young person was portraying and that maybe this gave him a way of verbalising and identifying his difficulties which he had found so difficult previously. It is as if by hearing someone experience the same things he had experienced, enabled him the safety to verbalise it;

> Mark: Er I guess when I was a bit younger I thought it was a bit of a bad thing but now I think it's not that drastic. It does affect me in ways I don't usually recognise instantly but yeah going to the conference thing usually learn a bit more about it and yeah.
> R: Right ok and that's the dyspraxia foundation conference isn't it?
> Mark: Yeah
> R: so was that really useful then?
> Mark: Yeah.
> R: and you said it affects you in some ways that you don't realise at the time what kinds of things?
> Mark: I guess cos they say I can be a bit gullible usually.
> R: Who says that?
> Mark: I don't know some person last year.
> R: Oh at the conference?
> Mark: Yeah. Or was it this year? No it was this year, said erm cos he was on this program years ago, not years ago but while ago and yeah, he's like it's a part of a trip down somewhere like people with disabilities so like limb loss and all that and he said he was like the only normal looking one, and yeah.
> R: Right. So this was someone at the conference that was saying this, do you recognise those same feelings in yourself?
> Mark: A bit I mean I guess some of them are a bit different cos he said he struggles with motor skills, I struggle a bit with it but I don't really…it's not a great big deal now, yeah.
>
> Page 54 Line 12 – Page 55 Line 9

Whilst Mark employed many techniques to distance himself from the difficulties of his dyspraxia, when speaking of this young person he appeared to identify himself in their story, he began to identify with their experiences and see that he had similar ones. This may have been a sense of belonging, of understanding and familiarity that he found to be a positive thing, so much so that he almost attributed their experiences as his own.

12. "I'm good at that"

The subtheme of "I'm good at that" deals with the participants recognition of their strengths and how these have shaped their identity. For many they were able to identify things they were good at and were able to focus on their abilities to differing degrees. They expressed pride in themselves and a recognition of their achievements, despite the frustration that others may not have recognised it also. Many spoke of their creative abilities, enjoying creative writing was common, as was an enjoyment for arts based activities. It appeared that the freedom of creativity allowed them a means of exploration. For many there was a sense of creating identities when they spoke of their abilities. Rhys for example spoke of his creativity with cooking, how much he liked it and how he was good at it. Alice spoke of her creative abilities and ability to think outside the box which for her gave a sense of pride and ability to overcome elements she found hard – she was disappointed and hurt that teachers could not see her abilities in this way. Callum spoke about his creativity with writing, explaining with pride how he achieved a grade B in his GCSE's for English language as it was something he had a passion for. He described that he does not view it as work and even though his wrists hurt when he writes, he explained that he does not notice this when it is creative writing as he is so passionate about it. This could be seen as a form of disconnecting from his bodily experience for the moment while he is enjoying something, but he is unable to disconnect from his bodily experience when his finding something difficult. Linguistically when Callum was talking about things that are creative he used positive words such as *"I loved it, with a passion", "I would happily do creative writing every day"* and there was an element of him immersing himself in a creative world when he spoke about one English lesson where they were told to just write creative writing, he wrote non-stop to the point that his wrists hurt afterwards, whereas others just sat and talked because the teacher left the room.

Zara shared this love of creative writing, attending a writing club and feeling a sense of belonging there, writing gave her a sense of freedom from the challenges of the real world and allowed her to fully immerse herself in a different experience;

> Zara: Erm… I like Creative writing, I really do I… think I'm quite an imaginative person so I write stories a lot of the time…erm… I write very long stories and I come up with this little world in my head and then imagine it all - it's like it's real, I guess [giggles] for me it's a lot more of an escape..
> R: So the creative writing thing is a form of escape?
> Zara: Yeah, for me it is.
>
> Page 245 Line 18 – 23

Zara used this ability and love for creative writing to imagine and explore a world in which she can control her experiences and create an identity that she aspires to;

> Zara:…Like I said so it's my escape - for me it's seems a lot nicer in the world I create. It's a lot less annoying things……[sighs]
> R: Right, and do you write stories about yourself? Are you the character in your stories or …?
> Zara: I take elements of myself … but I don't basically base it a lot 100% on myself quite a lot of it, the story I'm writing

> at the moment... the girl is kind of like me; she's a bit of an outsider but she's….I think she's a lot sort of braver and stronger and a bit….[laughs] yeah.
>
> Page 246 Line 4 – 12

She also used her love of writing to help her with her internal emotions, giving her a release, being able to write down things when she is feeling annoyed, angry and when she is feeling good. Zara also experienced this form of escape in her love of reading, something that again was shared by others.

Alice also expressed a love of creative writing and drama, detailing how it gives a form of expression and movement that she enjoys and for her the combination of these two creative subjects would be a wonderful career option;

> Alice: I really enjoy English actually even if I find it hard to get everything down that's probably my strongest subject I think in terms of levels and everything
>
> Page 205 Line 15 – 16
>
> Alice: Yeah, your coming up with plays and stuff, I really….that would probably be like my dream job, like combining the two would be for writing plays or directing cos I love drama
>
> Page 206 Line 5 – 7

Alice described this love of drama as the ability to move the body but without some of the technicality that some subjects involve. She described her love of sports but stated the "independent" sports and recognised exercise does help. Most enjoyed some form of sport, albeit outside of the educational environment, and despite their difficulties with it, all of which were individual sports rather than a team sport. For example Mark spoke about golf, Rhys spoke about swimming, Isla spoke about cycling, yoga, karate and ballet, Alice spoke about running, Toby spoke about Judo, Esme spoke about Girl Guides and the extreme sports such as rock climbing she does there and Callum spoke about fitness and gym work. Three of the eight participants spoke of belonging to a form of cadets, although each with a different view of their experiences. Callum felt it was life changing, Mark attended but seemed ambivalent about it and Rhys did not really enjoy it. All three spoke of the ‘drill’ aspect of it and how this was quite difficult for them highlighting the physical difficulties that their dyspraxia presented for them.

13. “I’m ok now” – Passage of time

The participants in this study ranged in ages from 11 to 17, however despite the difference in age they all expressed an element of how time has developed their experience of having dyspraxia and it is through the passage of time that we can see how they have changed, developed strategies and come to a level of acceptance within themselves, even for the younger participants. For many there was an element of acceptance and realisation that they are ok now. Some described a difference in self-confidence and therefore a shift in who they portray themselves, often standing up for themselves, while others merely come to an acceptance of how things are when living with dyspraxia. It may be that the older participants appeared more settled emotionally with their dyspraxia as they have had longer to process it and deal with it.

Isla being the youngest, and having her interview not long after her diagnosis, still experienced a shift in her feelings about dyspraxia and the passage of time having allowed her to feel ok with it;

> R: And how did you feel when you, so when you have the educational psychologist come round and you didn't really like her but then they said that you had dyspraxia so how did you feel about that?
> Isla: I was really really upset
> R: were you?
> Isla: yeah
> R: why are you upset?

> Isla: Erm I think I thought I was weird and that I couldn't do things.
> R: do you still feel like that now?
> Isla: no I've got used to it now
> R: okay that's good.
> Isla: I kind of understand that that's the way it is so I just have to live with it.
>
> Page 137 Line 19 – Page 138 Line 4

Isla identified that she was ok with it now as she placed less importance on what other people make of it, appearing to feel confident in herself. She also described the realisation that she can not change it and so there is a sense of just having to accept it herself and move on;

> Isla: no I kind of think I don't really care what other people think any more.
> R: that's good. so what's helped you to think change from feeling one way to changing to feeling like you don't care what people think any more?
> Isla: I don't know, erm probably being helpful things and then realising that it's making a difference, erm yeah.
>
> Page 139 Line 5 – 9

When exploring this further Isla identifies that even though she feels ok with things now, she is still aware of dyspraxia having a big impact on her saying she still notices it and has not got used to it completely and as such is still aware, however asserts she is ok with it now. It appears then that she too is taking control over her developing sense of self and identity formation whilst being very aware of how she was and of the change the passage of time has brought, and is now framing herself as positive and confident;

> R: You seem very positive now about dyspraxia
> Isla: yeah
> R: yeah?
> Isla: I wasn't when I was diagnosed [laughs]
> R: no

> Page 179 Line 5 – 9

Zara also experienced this same self-acceptance as time has progressed, moving from a sense of sadness and feelings of desperation to an emerging sense of self-acceptance that comes with a better understanding;

> Zara: Yeah…. I think when I was little I was like…'why me?' but now I'm just yeah…well I've got it haven't I, I've just got to deal with it.
> Mum: I think generally you do get upset sometimes but it's not…I think you understand it a bit better now.
> Page 278 Line 23 – 26

Callum, on the other hand, being the oldest of the participants in this study, 17 at the time of the interview, was the only participant who was able to look back at his whole educational career; primary school, secondary school and further education. Interestingly there does seem to be an element of the passage of time which has allowed him to deal with his self-concept of his dyspraxia and allowed him to form an identity from his experiences. Upon leaving school Callum expressed how he changed – this may be due to leaving the environment that he found so damaging and unsafe, it may also be a sign of maturation and personal growth;

> Callum:….And it's weird cos once I got out of school I really started to do things that scared me, like now I'm kind of making a goal to do something that scares me every day.
>
> Page 410 Line 9 – 10

Rhys was in year 11 at the time of the interview, being one of the older participants there was a sense that through the passage of time he had grown to accept how things were for him, to identify his strengths and to gain some confidence;

> R:… Would you say the last few years have been happier than maybe there… With school and the dyspraxia maybe?
> Rhys: Yeah. Way less stress.
> R: Right.
> Rhys: generally getting on with everyone
>
> Page 71 Line 19 – 23

His experiences and developing sense of his own self-identity, of which his exceptionally strong sense of morals and justice were integral, have allowed him to come to a place where he feels comfortable and confident in who he is and does not feel defined by his dyspraxia or experiences with it. He has found ways of dealing with some of the challenges dyspraxia presents for him and has found an identity in the things he is good at.

Like Rhys, and others, Mark too talks about the passage of time and how he has developed strategies to help himself with the difficulties of his dyspraxia, yet with Mark there remained an element of internal conflict as he spoke. This was evident throughout his interview as he acknowledged his difficulties at times, whilst at the same time appeared to actively try and steer well away of acknowledging them;

> Mark: well usually I get like a link worker in lessons, I haven't had that much this year but I guess I'm more…..
> R: but you have done?
> Mark: yeah, I've been more like, what's the word I'm thinking of? Reliable now, so yeah.
>
> Page 28 Line 1 – 5

He refered to his abilities at school having improved with time as him being more reliable, this term suggests an improvement and something positive, an achievement almost. However, there were times when he was conflicting even about this. For example when speaking about finding his way around school he spoke of his organisational difficulties and how he loses things. In an attempt to show that he has improved over time he suggested that he has improved but we can see that he referred to both his ability to lose things, and his improvement and therefore not losing things, in the present;

> Mark: Well primary school is basically one big block, and secondary schools like got different blocks, **I did get lost a few times but now I've got used to it,** I know when most things are, so **I don't really get lost, I might forget what room I'm meant to be in** but I always find out eventually so. Yeah
>
> Page 29 Line 20 – 23
>
> Mark: Well you could ask for a map but yeah I probably lost that, I mean I got used to anyway, but yeah it's like cos **I lose almost everything**, well not almost everything, but quite a bit of stuff, quite small things **I usually lose**.
> R: Right okay. So what kinds of things? You say quite small things.
> Mark: Erm, well……[long pause] well nothing really, things, like little toy things, that's it really.
> R: Right and what about at school because you were saying they could give you a map but you say you might have lost it, but they give out quite a lot of bits of paper don't they? Are they sort things you would lose?
> Mark: Er, it depends I guess. **I don't lose as much now**.
>
> Page 30 Line 4 – 13

Marks sense of self was that he has improved with time, he can identify the things he feels he used to struggle with, however appeared to being reassuring himself that he has improved. Whilst many of these experiences appear to be evidence of an internal conflict, which could be thought of as a form of defence, it does appear that he was in some ways reassuring himself that he has improved with time. Whilst this could be thought of as a form of distancing himself from his dyspraxia, as described in theme 1, this may be a strategy that could be thought of as him taking control over his developing self and be part of the process of him forming his identity in much the same way as it appears Callum has done so. In any case Mark was clear he had begun to develop strategies as well as have a sense of acceptance of himself;

> Mark: A bit I mean I guess some of them are a bit different cos he said he struggles with motor skills, I struggle a bit with it but I don't really…it's not a great big deal now, yeah.
> R: and do you think that's because you've chosen not to do things that you might struggle with or that you've just got used to it or maybe found ways of doing things?
> Mark: I guess it's probably found ways of doing things and getting used to it really yeah.
> R: So would you say you've kind of accepted it as you've got older?
> Mark: Pretty much.
>
> Page 55 Line 7 – 16

For all participants the passage of time allowed this sense of self-acceptance, which developed from a better understanding, a recognition that they could not change the fact that they have dyspraxia, and the ability to find strategies and ways around things, either themselves or with the support of others. For some the formal diagnosis helped in the beginning of this process, as Callum points out it gave him something to contextualise his experiences by, a relief to know that there is a reason he struggles. For many this passage of time and emerging sense of acceptance was significantly improved by the perceived acceptance of others which helped them shape and form their own acceptance and therefore emerging formation of identity as seen in the case of Callum particularly.

In all cases however there was a real feeling of the passage of time being experienced as things getting easier, be this through their developing sense of realisation and acceptance in the diagnosis and in themselves, or through the many strategies they developed, and the acceptance of others. However what many participants experienced was a real process of change and personal growth which saw many take control and direct the formation of their identity.

Callum for example over time began to stand up for himself after years of being bullied and explained this was as a direct result of the confidence he had gained from his feeling of acceptance in the cadets unit he was part of;

> R: Ok so you started standing up for yourself. Was that around the time er that you said you'd had enough and you were standing up for yourself……
> Callum: Yeah that was only cos of the marines
> R: I was gonna say
> Callum: Cos I started to get fitter and get in to working out
> R: Was that around that time that you were learning to do push ups and…
> Callum: Yeah year 9 I started to like visibly as well appear a little bit stronger, I was stronger obviously from 1 to like over 100, but erm, people started to notice it as well like when you're getting changed people like being weird and like 'ooooh Mr muscles' and I'm like 'shut up'
> R: [laughs]
> Callum: But erm, yeah I was never Mr Muscles at all I was just like, that kid who has like a little bit of toned arms and like that skinny 6 pack, but like eventually I'd just had enough and like being, like the marines had just taught me like, to just kind of stand up for yourself and not let other people's opinions bring you down. Eventually that's why I just started fighting back and once Id defending myself or stood up for myself against everyone it just stopped.
>
> Page 406 Line 21 – Page 407 Line 11

4.2.5 Theme 5: "I can go at my own speed" – Right kind of help needed

The fifth and final theme that emerged from, and was grounded in, the data focused on the things that helped and is explored through four subthemes of; Learning support, Ways of coping, "They just got me" and "What I want others to know".

14. Learning support

For all participants there were differing levels of support received in education. For many the practical support received in formal education involved the use of strategies which often emphasised further their difference compared to their peers. For some this resulted in them refusing the support, like Callum when offered the use of a laptop, which he acknowledged he was able to write more on than he could by hand, yet refused because he felt insecure;

> Callum:…I think the main reason I just didn't use the laptop as well cos everyone looks at you a bit weird and you're that kid who has the laptop in class, which in year 11 actually a lot of people, there was a few people every class who had a laptop so I still should have done it but I still felt insecure about that a little bit
>
> Page 415 Line 24 – Page 416 Line 2

He identified that towards the end of his formal schooling others were using laptops however this support was perceived to highlight to others his difficulties, rather than allow them to remain hidden, and as such he would not use it. This highlights the importance maybe of how these young people want to be perceived, how they want their self to be presented to the world and the need to maintain some control over it. It also highlights the impact that these strategies can have on an already fragile sense of identity and that whilst they may be well meaning and certainly academically helpful they are not always being utilised due to the further identification of being different that they bring. This is further supported by the fact that Rhys for example did use a laptop and was happy to, however this was because the use of laptops was more common place among all students in his school, being an independent school, and therefore did not hold the same recognition of difference that it did for others like Callum.

Alice found that difficulties with IT prevented her from using a laptop even though she identified that in exams particularly she could not write fast at all, yet for Alice she felt there was no support available;

> R: Yeah, and have they offered anything like using a laptop or anything in school?
> Alice: No. I'm not that great with computers either, I find I.T. really hard, but erm yeah it hasn't I don't think there has been that much support to be honest and also I find it, I'm not sure if it counts but like in exams I find I get…I find it sometimes hard to write as quick as….they don't really…there's no sort of exception….or like you've got just like one minute or like something like that
> R: So you don't get any extra time in exams?
> Alice: No.
> Page 196 Line 3 – 11

Isla, Toby and Esme all had use of an Alpha Smart, which is similar in some ways to a laptop but also far more restrictive, as Esme points out you can only see part of the screen which for someone who struggles with organisational difficulties makes this far more challenging. For those who were happy to use a laptop however logistical issues also caused issues;

> Esme: Alpha smart normally in lessons but the end of year exams I use a laptop.
> R: Ok. Does that help?
> Mum: We're having a bit of a battle with the school at the moment cos they won't let you bring in your own IT but there are only 8 laptops for the entire secondary school.
>
> Page 325 Line 4 – 8

For some the support from school was useful whilst it lasted but there were instances where it stopped for no apparent reason and this was felt as very difficult, for Toby particularly. He had been receiving support from a teaching assistant in lessons at secondary school, particularly in English and Maths, and this would seem very important given his profound difficulties to make himself understood verbally, however due to not having a formalised IEP or ECHP this stopped and there was no legal duty for the school to provide anything;

> R: Right. Oh dear. And how's that for you Toby now that it's all stopped? Did you find it useful when it was there?
> Toby: Yeah.
> R: and how's that feel for you now that it's stopped?
> Toby: [makes a noise]
> Mum: it's a bit frustrating because you come home and say I haven't been helped today and I can't understand why sort of kids with dyslexia perhaps get helped and sent off to learning to support and Toby sees that perhaps he needs help and is struggling, he sees them getting help but of course he doesn't get the same sort of support.
>
> Page 292 Line 21 – Page 293 Line 5

Toby's need for support was very evident given the significant involvement that was required of his mum during the interview process. Whilst I was able to give Toby as much time as he needed to tell me his story and his lived experiences there were many times his mum needed to explain things for him so that he could confirm or add things as verbalising things was such a significant struggle for him. He did at times manage to articulate and verbalise some things with great difficulty, but when needing to explain something in depth the struggle was too much. The need for significant support in education for this purpose was very evident therefore.

Whilst the experiences of these participants highlights the need for differing levels of support and for this to be approached in differing ways, their experiences illuminate the inconsistencies in which support is delivered within education. Some experienced some teachers going out of their way to support, whether that be emotionally, practically or both, while others are experienced as actively inhibiting supportive strategies from being employed. Toby for example found one teaching assistant particularly tried to support him and also tried to get other teachers to understand and support him which was important to him. Some participants sadly found barriers to accessing offered support, such as with the laptops, whilst others would welcome such supports yet they are not offered these. For some their needs are not considered needy enough which further highlights the lack of understanding that surrounds dyspraxia and enhances the already emphasised position of difference, whilst negatively affecting their sense of self.

For all participants the family appeared to provide support for education, and provided a differing level of support than may be necessary for their typically developing peers and that is through the advocacy that they often provided to try and educate the educational professionals on how dyspraxia affected their child. For some their parents provided written forms of support such as Marks parents who produced a leaflet for teachers, or verbal support such as Alice’s and Esme’s mum who had to explain things at parents evening to teachers who seemed to have not understood their daughters difficulties despite the information being there, or Toby’s mum who had to literally translate for him at times. Indeed in all cases the parents played a supportive and essential role for these young people, one which they all experienced as positive yet with a sense of frustration that they required it at all. Callum explained his relationship with his mum for example;

> Callum: …..my mum was like a parent and a best friend
>
> Page 403, Line 12

highlighting the importance of this relationship for him and recognising that she supported and encouraged him to do things that he says would benefit him whilst acknowledging that he may not have appreciated that at the time, but he recognised it now. He expressed how he felt he could always talk to her about anything, even if he did not always choose too, and for many participants this experience with one or both of their parents was echoed.

15. Ways of coping

All participants described ways they have developed to deal with the challenges dyspraxia brings to them. For most, like Callum, this involved perseverance at times, as illustrated when he discussed how he could not do one push up yet with support and guidance he persevered and developed his physicality gradually. All participants spoke of exhaustion caused by their experiences with dyspraxia to differing degrees, and in differing ways; emotional, mental and physical. For Rhys this exhaustion was compounded by his need to travel far to school and hence having to get up early in the morning. As he knew this was an area he struggled with he developed a routine to combat the difficulties this presented;

> Rhys: no I get like half an hour on the way there it's only a 40 min trip so it's like half an hour there and half an hour on the way back so overall I make up an hour that I miss
> R: Yeah that extra
> Mum: But it's enough…it makes the difference
> R: yeah it's a long day otherwise
>
> Page 78 Line 18 – 23

Rhys explained he often would get up early to do his work as he found it too much at the end of the day and as such waking up early did not bother him, but to cope with the duration of the day naps were important to him.

Toby experienced a great deal of frustration with the things he found difficult and explained he too had found ways of coping with some of these difficulties he experienced, such as having his mum to almost translate for him, having practical help with tying shoe laces, and having the use of handgrips at school. Others spoke of methods they found that helped reduce their increased stress levels and as Alice explained these sometimes were relatively simple things;

> Alice:….it does help if I doodle sometimes, which is sort of ironic
> R: How does doodling help?
> Alice: I don't know, I think it just releases stress
> R: Ok
> Alice: I just…I like…I just really….I really enjoyed drawing and just like doing squiggles and just seeing what it'll become and making little funny faces and stuff like that….not so great [inaudible , laughs]
> R: [laughs] what do your teachers think of your doodles?
> Alice: I just scribble over them so it's just like a lot of big splodges or yeah
> R: But it's a way of relieving stress you said
> Alice: Yeah and I just find it quite therapeutic
> R: Yeah that makes sense
>
> Page 202 Line 12 – 24

For others finding something they were good at helped, such as when Alice explained she developed confidence through her ability to perform. Others like Rhys found that they were able to identify skills they had in other areas which gave them a sense of achievement which appeared to have helped counter the areas of difficulties. For Rhys this was his exceptional skills as a choral singer of which he was very proud to tell me and showed me a video of him performing. For many there were creative skills that enable a form of escape, especially in creative writing, drama and for Rhys cooking. Others had a love for sport or physical activities that were outside of education and allowed for going at one's own pace and a sense of freedom, such as Alice who run for a club outside of school despite changing lanes when running this brought her a sense of achievement and enjoyment with peers.

Many participants spoke of the coping strategy they had developed of making no effort because of the difficulties they experienced and therefore only trying hard for activities they really enjoyed, often excelling in these areas, such as Callum who got a B in English language due to his love of creative writing. It is clear then if they employ this strategy as a way of coping, that surrounding them self with familiar things would also benefit them and certainly was something that these young people appeared to do. Often throwing themselves into the things they felt comfortable in and that they could do well in, for Callum this was his cadets which he explained he became almost obsessed by, whilst for Rhys this was his singing, and for Toby this was in his Judo. This can be seen as a useful coping strategy, as it enabled them to be seen in a positive light by excelling at, or at least being good at, the activity of choice and again shows a level of regaining control for these young people in what is experienced as often an out of control world.

This experience of being in control of experiences is also portrayed through what many refer to as their method of organising, which appears to be a real need for many, yet in some instances could be considered as a form of organised chaos. This is due to many of the participants finding organisation itself a difficult thing, knowing what to do when, where to put things and how to place things is a real difficulty in everyday life as Alice points out;

> Alice: Erm well I guess at home it's more quieter so I just take more time to do things I set aside time, I try , this year another resolution is to be more organised and stuff, I just try to organise things, it doesn't always work but like to make things as organised as they can be. My room gets really messy but I am getting better at looking after it not neglecting it all the time. It's just like spatial awareness and stuff, just trying to think really hardly before I do things, so ok 'if I put this cup there and pick this up then' you know what I mean just getting the right order of things, so I think

> it's the process of thinking 'right what do I need to do here?' organising myself and getting it done like slowly
>
> Page 221 Line 2 – 10

This same difficulty with organisation is experienced in education by the participants and is experienced in the difficulty with academic work, knowing what to write and where, affecting educational grades when assessed. It is also seen in the difficulties experienced with other areas of educational life such organising their bags, books, clothing and so on;

> Mum: Do you find it hard organising your stuff for lessons and things?
> P: Yeah
> Mum: You're very sorted with your bag and everything aren't you?
> Alice: Yeah, I get that done the night before, cos I've got it I try to stay on top of it
> R: Yeah
> Alice: and stuff cos I know that I kind of thought in year 7 it was hardest, but erm I try to stay on top of it but it is still like even if you have everything in the right place it can still be hard to organise [laughs] so I try to like get it as good as like well done as I can.
>
> Page 201 Line 21 – Page 202 Line 4

For some, like Esme certain items are ordered whilst others are not so, something that is echoed by others;

> Mum: There are certain things you like to organise, aren't there? You're book shelves are all very ordered.
> R: Are they?
> Esme: [laughs]
> Mum: Your coloured pencils very ordered. But then you have a floor-robe
>
> Page 340 Line 17 – 21

Yet there is a feeling that these organisational skills have been something that Esme and others have needed to work on significantly, with Esme's mum pointing out that she had greatly improved in her organisation with her school bag in particular. Isla also experienced the need to organise her clothing saying this made it a lot easier for her;

> Isla: Yeah, it's getting better cos er, we had an extension so I've got a bigger room now so I can have a wardrobe and a chest of drawers whereas before my clothes were just living under my bed so it's easier to find cos I've memorised the draws I have draws for everything so tops, socks, trousers, hair stuff, and things like that.
> R: So everything is organised and you know where it is?
> Isla: Yeah and then in my wardrobe I try to keep it in sections so I have trousers, dresses, tops, skirts and things like that.
> R: and that makes that easier?
> Isla: Yeah
>
> Page 157 Line 2 – 11

For some however there was a feeling that in some areas this organisation was a little more chaotic. Mark for example identified that any difficulties with finding his way around the school building would not have been helped by the use of a map which would have been available as he was sure he would have lost that, and as such he got used to the layout anyway. Rhys for example identified that sometimes what seemed as disorganised and messy was actually his form of organised, or at least something he knew what to do with;

> R: Interesting that you say messy [to mum] do you think you're messy [to Rhys]?
> Rhys: yeah.
> R: ok.
> Rhys: Yeah, yep definitely.
> R: Is there a…are you happy with your messy?
> Rhys: I'd rather not be messy but you know I don't really mind

> R: In what way are you messy? Is your bedroom messy? Or…
> Rhys: Yeah.
> R: ok
> Rhys: There's always clothes strewn across the floor….although she'd say it was strewn across the floor…I say
> R: yeah what would you say?
> Rhys: I say….well the T-shirt I want to wear tomorrow is in that place on the floor, er…my trousers are there…er my hoody I threw over there and I can memorise like where I've put everything on the floor generally
> R: Yes, and so is your messy….
> Rhys: Organised…
> R: Organised chaos?
> Rhys: Yes yeah, yeah
> R: That's really actually very interesting
>
> Page 104 Line 1 – 21

Alice echoed this difficulty with organising yet identified too that what may seem messy to others was her form of organised;

> Alice: yeah that's thing organisation and spatial awareness, I can't…..on my desk I do things in a weird order cos I can't think to organise them right or put them in the right space and stuff so I have a like really clutter room cos I find it hard to organise things and put them in the right places or I'm like doing something like whilst holding a cup which I could just put down there, I know it sounds weird but like just doing things in the wrong order and not having it thought out that well and sort of hard from a practical…
> R: yeah, you say your room is cluttered but does it makes sense to you? Do you know where things are?
> Alice: Yeah it's like my messy know where things are
>
> Page 200 Line 12 – 21

Zara's experience of organisational difficulties highlight the issues that many people with dyspraxia suffer from when given a list of things to do, as she pointed out the issue was not always the task itself but rather the cognitive ability needed to organise and plan which order the things need to be done in;

> Mum: … the other thing is you find quite difficult is, if at home sometimes….if going out and sometimes I think perhaps *Zara* needs a little bit more help or organisation….. and if you say to her to do several things, ‘like get you coat, find your gloves, get your shoes they are in the kitchen’, oh I don’t know … and then get something out of the garage ‘your wellies are in the garage’ so you’re giving her lots of things…. you find it really difficult to think, what sort of … order.
> Zara: order to do it in.
>
> Page 266 Line 6 – 12

This highlights again the chaos that often accompanies these young people’s attempts at organising, be those physical objects or thought processes, but that often for them they find ways to be extra organised at times as well as having a form of organisation that makes sense to them within the apparent chaos.

16. “They just got me”

As expressed in other themes there was an overwhelming need to be accepted, understood and appreciated in education for these young people and when they did feel some form of acceptance this had a positive and significant effect on them. For many they did have feelings of being understood by others, be that parents, family members, siblings, friends and for some teachers, weather that was outside of education or in formal or informal educational settings. For Callum as discussed the most significant people he expressed as *“just getting”* him were his mum and the leaders, and others at his cadets. For Alice friendships with peers were important, she felt accepted by her friends despite recognising her difference and they aided her in her need for invisibility helping her evade the teacher's attention at times. She expressed how her difficulties with spatial awareness caused her difficulties often zig zagging whilst walking and therefore walking in front of people, but whilst her feeling frustrated at this she felt a sense of acceptance by her friends;

> Alice: Yeah it's fine yeah I think everyone's fine with it, I think erm…..although they are like….sometimes I think they wonder 'oh why are you always walking in front of me' and I just go to the side and like 'sorry'….I'm just drifting sometimes but I think yeah if I hadn't told people though they said "oh yeah unless you hadn't told me I probably wouldn't have known I probably would have just thought you were a bit clumsy" actually I think someone said that to me today cos we were talking about it
>
> Page 215 Line 25 – Page 216 Line 5

For others extended family were important, as Esme explains, she felt the same sense of security in being accepted by her family members;

> R:….you've mentioned your nan and granddad and uncles, do you get on with all of those…all your family?
> Esme: yeah.
> R: and do they get you and understand you do you think?
> Esme: Yeah.
>
> Page 362 Line 17 – 21
>
> R:….And what about your sister? Does she get you or is she just…?
> Esme: Yeah I think she gets me
>
> Page 362 Line 25 – 26

Esme revealed the importance of the security this brought her when she spoke about her aspirations for going to a 6th form, which her uncles worked at, and when discussing university and revealed she had already made up her mind which university she will go to, which it turns out is the university her mother and grandmother went to. Esme also speaks of another adult she knew who had dyspraxia and that this shared understanding helped her feel ok and is if they just "got" her as well, and it is clear this feeling was important to her. This feeling experienced by the participants of other people just *getting them* enabled them to approach things they may have once found difficult. For example Callum was able to overcome his difficulties physically because of how he felt understood and therefore able to go at his own speed in cadets;

> Callum: and they'd laugh with you, it wasn't like laughing at you like 'oh you're so dumb', it was just laughing…it was laughing at you cos you'd done something silly but it was laughing with you as well and then they'd be like 'oh this is how you do it'
> R: ok.
> Callum: and then you'd mess it up again [laughs]
> R: [laughs]
> Callum: and they'd be like 'alright teach you it again' [laughs] they would get fed up but they'd just keep teaching you it, they were really great people.
>
> Page 397 Line 1 – 9

For others however there was a sadness, a frustration, that whilst some may have just got them, others did not and they really wished that they did. The participants really wanted to do well at school and wanted to achieve. Toby for example really wanted to do well academically and worked on things at home but was frustrated that he was not getting the help at school and as a result said he did not like the teachers as they did not help him;

> R: yeah makes it very difficult when they haven't got the awareness. And that must have been very tough for you Toby being in school if you didn't feel they were helping.
> Toby: Yeah.
> Mum: and you used to get so frustrated when you came home from school and say nobody's helping me, you know I'm struggling didn't you? It started off well September for two weeks then it just went downhill nobody listened to Toby read, nobody helped him with work or reading or spellings.

> R: Right. And did you want to do those things Toby?
> Toby: Yeah
> R: So you wanted them to help you and you wanted to do the reading and spellings?
> Toby: Yeah.
> R: What was your favourite thing you wanted to do at school? If you had the help, what was the thing you wanted to do the most?
> Mum: get better at English was it?
> Toby: Get better at English.
> Mum: Was it? Yeah. Get better at reading and comprehension and writing, yeah.
> R: Yeah and did you do a lot of that at home? Did you do a lot of reading at home?
> Toby: Quite a lot.
>
> Page 289 Line 17 – Page 290 Line 11

Toby takes part in Judo outside of school and really enjoys it, having learned well he takes part in competitions. When asked about his Judo teachers he said he liked them as they were kind, supportive, understanding and they helped and taught him things. Callum's experiences in informal education, the cadets group he was part of, highlighted this similar experience of wanting to do well and that with the support and understanding of leaders/teachers he was able to achieve. Callum spoke of not caring about achieving well at school because he did not care, although this did not feel to be completely genuine and may have been a form of defence at wanting to achieve well but not being able to;

> Callum: Honestly it's just I didn't see it….I know it is a massive benefit to your future but I didn't see it that way and I still don't because there's already opportunities now…I'm hearing about people already at my age who don't…like no one's caring about your GCSE's so it's like some people do and for some routes it's a must….like it's definitely a must for A-levels and then through to uni but for people who aren't doing that they honestly they just need a kind of base level and as I said I just find it very hard to do stuff that I don't see worth my time like even though I do spend a lot of time like in bed and like on my phone I also value my time quite a lot

> like that's why I like to exercise a lot and like if I was better with money I'd be going out every day and having like loads of new experiences and stuff but….I don't know I mean I just wasn't ready…I just didn't prepare properly…
> R: ok
> Callum: But it's just cos I didn't want to….like I could have done a lot better but I just honestly did not want to, it wasn't like 'oh it's too hard' I probably said it was too hard but honestly could not have cared any less. I enjoyed food tech…but I didn't care about it cos I didn't want to be a chef or anything
>
> Page 389 Line 5 – 21

Isla too experienced these difficulties in school and wanted to achieve and do well but found that due to her issues with processing what is being taught as the teacher goes to fast, and her issues with panicking in tests, she was not being challenged enough and could not show her abilities;

> Isla: Er, PE [laughs] erm, I don't I don't really have any non-favourite subjects I like all of them, I don't like erm Maths and English as much, they're not as fun, cos I don't think my Maths teacher gets erm, she always goes way too fast, cos she goes through a set of questions to do at the beginning of a lesson and then I've only done half of them but I want to do all of them because the harder questions are at the end and I want to be challenged.
>
> Page 152 Line 21 – 26

For all the participants there was a desire to achieve and do well, be that in academic formal education or elsewhere in informal settings and despite the challenges they faced because of their dyspraxia with the right support and understanding they all appeared to be able to achieve and overcome such difficulties.

17. “What I want others to know”

As has been shown throughout the analysis a common theme is of the need for others to understand how it is for these young people living with dyspraxia. This is one reason why they all participated in this study because they wanted other people to understand their lived experience. There was a sense of wanting others to know how it is for them and what would help them. Zara highlighted the immense feelings of frustration and how for her this was an essential thing she wished others could understand;

> R: yeah. And what would be the one thing, if you could, you know, the one thing that you would want people to know – if you could tell people one thing about how it is to be a teenager with dyspraxia, or it might be more than one thing?
> Zara: Erm I’d say that it’s, I mean it’s really so frustrating, isn’t it? Like I said, the other girl with dyspraxia… she’s bright…she’s very bright, but she’s slightly... but I think she can’t … I think she can’t get her ideas out….she has problems with thought process, so I think she’s lots of ideas flying round your head but you can’t get it down and that’s frustration.
> Mum: I think it’s the frustration and perhaps is the fact the people just don’t…
> Zara: don’t get it, no.
>
> Page 271 Line 11 – 21

Alice also indicated frustration was a key feeling due to the inability to achieve what she wanted to achieve, and wanted others to know she was trying really hard and sometimes it is that she just really cannot do it. She identified that she would be more motivated to try harder if her efforts were acknowledged;

> Alice: Yeah it’s sort of like…it feels a bit like a dead end that your stuck, cos you tried to do what you can to the best of your ability but it’s like….I’m using this reference a lot but in dyslexia you wouldn’t get them to read the same book or something like….I think they’ve got to understand that I’m trying my best and I can only do my best, but like I think it

> should be more like well-known because it’s not fair if you don’t…if you can’t do something you just can’t do it, it’s not like I’m not trying or I’m just a bit clumsy or lazy or whatever.
>
> Page 194 Line 1 – 7

This need for understanding was a really core need upon which other things may build and as Alice put it, without understanding she cannot be helped, nothing will get better and the right kind of support will always be difficult to find;

> R: Yeah it does. If anybody could do one thing if there was one things that you wanted to sort of tell people what would it be to sort of try and alleviate some of that weight?
> Alice: I think…to understand really…in the end it kind of comes down to that because if you don’t understand you can’t empathise with someone and you can’t try and help them. so I can’t be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand what I’m going through and have actually taken time like teachers to look into properly so until it’s more well-known and people understand what’s happening I can’t…nothings gonna change for me…I’m still gonna find it really difficult, I might not get minutes on exams and stuff, it’s just not that heard about, not that known about even if some people have heard the name of it ‘oh I think I’ve heard of that, I’m not really sure what it is’, I can’t do anything until people are sure what it is, so I would say understanding really.
>
> Page 222 Line 18 – Page 223 Line 4

Mark highlighted the feeling of wanting others to recognise that despite having dyspraxia, this did not define him, or anyone else who had it. For him it was like any other difference, and this was important;

> Mark: ….I guess dyspraxia is a bit like dyslexia you might have a few struggles but yeah you’re still a normal person and everything.
>
> Page 56 Line 18 – 19

Isla emphasised the difficulty she faced if teachers went to fast and gave too much information at once, stating that she needs them to slow down and that she struggles with too many things at once and there are ways they could support her by writing lists down so she does not miss things;

> R: and if there was anything that you could tell people at school that would really really help, is this something that you would want teachers to know?
> Isla: Erm, not to go to fast
> R: not go too fast
> Isla: because I really can't do anything if it's too fast
>
> Page 164 Line 24 – Page 165 Line 2

Toby also expressed this as a key thing he would want others, especially teachers, to know, that they should explain things better and appreciate that it takes him a little longer than other people. Neither Esme not Rhys directly identified anything they wanted teachers or other people to know, however all had spoken of the need for understanding, so it could be inferred that this is a key consideration here and Callum spoke of the need for a good teacher to have an understanding of all diversity;

> Callum:….also I'd say they've got to kind of understand the diversity between how people learn like not everyone in a class is gonna just do well if it's just write, copy, write, copy or just reading out a text book and answering questions cos that's just not how I do…that's just not how I learn and but obviously you've got to do that in most subjects which is far enough but some teachers will mix it in with practical work as well which is good.
>
> Page 385 Line 20 – 25

When considering what they would say to other children who have been diagnosed with dyspraxia, as a result of their experiences, Isla offered support that maybe she had wished others had said to her, or indeed maybe they did say to her;

> R: what about if you could tell other children anything about dyspraxia?
> Isla: don't worry about what people think about you
> R: yeah
> Isla: cos it doesn't matter
> R: I like that.
>
> Page 167 Line 20 – 24

Isla confirmed that her reason for taking part in the study was the feeling that others needed to know more about dyspraxia and what it really means and was keen to support the progression of this understanding in any way she could.

For all participants the need to be understood, accepted, acknowledged and fully supported was important, as was the recognition that they could achieve things if they were given the right kind of support and allowed to progress at their own speed. This was integral to their sense of self-esteem and confidence and when supported by some teachers in formal and informal education it was seen to work well. All participants were able to fully explain the areas they found difficult in great detail and were able to clearly articulate how they could best be helped and supported and expressed a desire to achieve.

4.3 Conclusion of findings

The themes that emerged from, and were embedded within, the data listed in table 4, visualised in figure 1 and explored in depth in this chapter, highlight the lived experiences of these young people in education within the UK, exploring their experiences largely within school but also in informal education settings. What is known about dyspraxia is that there is no single profile of difficulties or severity, every individual's profiles of needs are unique, yet they often share many commonalities. The analysis of the data from these 8 participants supports this assertion as they each have their own unique experiences. What is apparent however is that despite the uniqueness there remain many commonalties especially with the way in which they make sense of these experiences. Additionally, whilst 5 superordinate themes emerged from the data, each with their own set of subthemes, it is important to understand that these are not stand alone themes. They converge and overlap and as such should be thought of as multi directional as visualised in figure 1. Some of the experiences expressed, as well as the way in which the participants made sense of these experiences, at times fall within more than one theme again therefore these themes should be thought of as converging, overlapping, multidirectional themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This current study has highlighted the importance of understanding how young people experience their lives and the way in which many differing aspects affect these experiences and the outcomes of these experiences. In this study the focus was on the intersection of dyspraxia, adolescence and education. Utilizing IPA as a method, the lived experiences of these young people has been explored in great depth.

This methodology enabled a rich and detailed account of the participants lived experiences in education to be explored, presenting their voices to be heard and for these experiences to be considered from a psychological perspective, therefore adding essential knowledge to the current understanding surrounding dyspraxia.

The findings from this study as presented in Chapter 4 identified 5 superordinate themes with 17 subthemes (see table 8 in Chapter 4).

The superordinate themes are;

- “I struggle a bit with it, but not really” – Complexity and internal conflict
- “I get twitchy when I’m nervous” – Recognition of incongruence & identification of Otherness.
- “I can’t be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand” – Need for empathy and understanding
- “I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility” Identity formation
- “I can go at my own speed” – Right kind of help needed.

Chapter 5 reflects on the findings gathered in this study, moving from the participant’s accounts of their experiences as presented in chapter 4, to presenting the interpretative account and reflections of the findings from a psychological perspective, informed by a Critical Disability Studies model and a humanistic standpoint.

5.1 Interpretative account of findings

Table 9, below, shows how the superordinate themes and sub themes from this study's analysis are considered from a psychological perspective utilizing a Critical Disabilities Studies framework. The psychological concepts are visualized in figure 4 below which indicates the way in which these elements overlap and are intertwined with each other. These conceptualisations will be discussed before an overview of how these then fit within a humanistic perspective is presented.

Psychological concept		**Superordinate theme**	**Subtheme**
Cognitive dissonance	**1**	"I struggle a bit with it, but not really" - **Complexity and Internal Conflict**	1. Realisation of difficulties 2. Normalising self 3. Disconnect from reality
Corporeal and embodied experience	**2**	"I get twitchy when I'm nervous" **- Recognition of incongruence &** **identification of Otherness**	4. Bodily experience 5. Feeling different
Psychoemotional disablism	**3**	"I can't be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand" - **Need for empathy and understanding**	6. Need for acceptance & understanding 7. Feeling misunderstood

			8. Social isolation 9. Psychological and Emotional impact
Internalised oppression	**4**	“I wanted to be a superhero with the power of invisibility” - **Identity formation**	10. Need for invisibility 11. Belonging 12. I’m good at that 13. “I’m ok now” - Passage of time
Distributed competence	**5**	“I can go at my own speed” **- Right kind of help needed**	14. Learning support 15. Ways of coping 16. “They just got me” 17. “What I want others to know”

Table 9: Psychological conceptualisation of findings

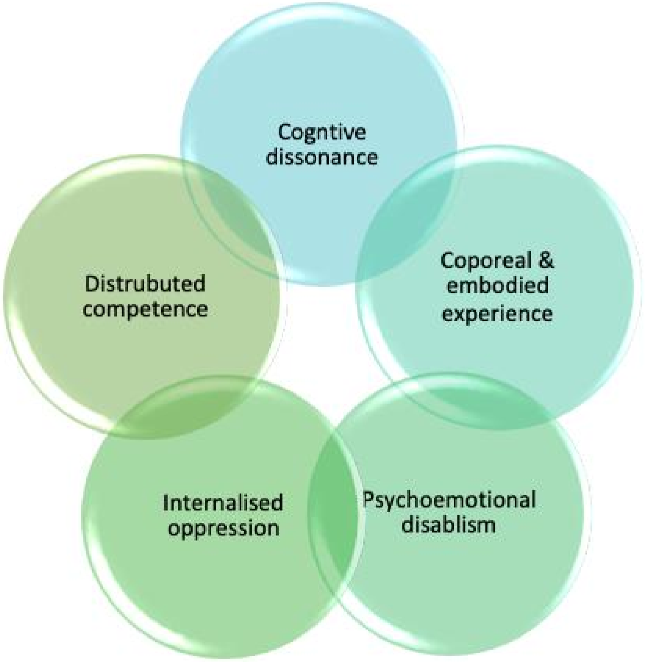

Figure 4: visualisation of psychological concepts

Critical Disability Study theorists view the distinction between impairment and disability as given by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976). Impairment is considered to be the presence of a measurable difference, here that would be dyspraxia. Disability is viewed as the exclusion of people with difference from mainstream life and in all domains (Goodley, 2018). Oliver (1996) suggested that impairment was an individual experience, whereas disability was a concern for us all. Thomas (2007) further explores this distinction stating that disability is; "a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well being" (p. 34). Goodley (2018) states that "Impairment is a deeply complex embodied and cultural phenomenon that is felt physically, emotionally and politically" (p. 7). He also highlights the need to consider the many elements of disability, including the physiological, as well as the embodiment of disability, but also to focus on the way in which it is socially constructed through the many barriers in society (Goodley, 2014).

The findings of this study highlight what Goodley (2014; 2018) is suggesting, that there is a physiological level of impairment involved in dyspraxia and an embodied level of dyspraxia, but that also there is a socially constructed level which presents many barriers, in this case to education, and it is these elements which act as a form of disablement for these young people. For the young people in this study there was an awareness of their impairment and the way in which many barriers cause difficulties for them, for many this led to the development of cognitive dissonance as a means of coping.

5.1.1. Cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance theory was first introduced by Festinger (1957) and has been very influential in psychological fields. The theory suggests that we can have pairs of cognitions that are relevant to each other and these can either be consonant (if one follows on from the other) or dissonant (if the opposite of one follows on from the other) (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019). It is suggested that it is psychologically uncomfortable to be in dissonance and that this motivates a person to reduce this dissonance in many different ways, such as altering their existing cognitions, adding new cognitions to create a new system of beliefs or by reducing the importance they give to the cognitions (Laat, Freriksen & Vervloed, 2013). “The person may try to change one or more of the beliefs, opinions, or behaviors involved in the dissonance; to acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus cause the total dissonance to be reduced; or to forget or reduce the importance of those cognitions that are in a dissonant relationship” (Festinger, 1957, p.26). Cognitive dissonance can be defined as a “psychological phenomenon that occurs when there exists a discrepancy between what a person believes and information that calls this into question” (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010, p. 293).

For the participants in this study cognitive dissonance was evidenced in many ways. Their experiences were complex and they often experienced an internal conflict between what they know, what their experience is, and what they want to feel. All participants were very aware of their difficulties, their impairments resulting from their dyspraxia, and this was further highlighted to them during their assessment and diagnosis. Whilst, for some, the diagnosis gave them a source of relief and a name to give their difficulties, it also brought about issues of difference and concern. Their recognition that these impairments made them different was evident and evoked emotional reactions in many. These reactions were overt for some like Zara for example, while for others they were more covert, such as for Mark. In all cases however these experiences were dissonant from what they considered ‘normal’ and from what their peers were experiencing and therefore were experienced as uncomfortable. As a result, many sought to reduce this dissonance by normalising their experiences and from disconnecting from their experiences. Rhys for example sought to reduce his difference by asserting his strengths therefore reducing the gap and as a result the impact that the dissonance could have. Mark sought to suggest his difficulties were largely in the past, by continually suggesting he was *“better now”*, or that his experiences were normal. This form of cognitive dissonance appeared to help him to make sense of the painful experiences he had and allowed him to move forward and cope with the experiences he was having as a result of his dyspraxia. Mark’s use of language was integral to his cognitive dissonance as was Callum’s. Mark used the word *‘but’* a lot to minimise the impact, and normalise his experiences whilst Callum suggested his experiences were *‘normal’* and did not affected him much. For the young people in this study there was a real need to downplay the impact some of their experiences had for them, to reduce them to something more *‘normal’* and to distance themselves from the reality of their experience. This cognitive dissonance may have served a purpose by preventing the damage caused by the reality of their experiences. It therefore may prove to be a mechanism to overcome the obvious deficits these experiences and feelings have for these young people that prevent them reaching their full potential.

Elliot and Devine (1994) posit that cognitive dissonance has an emotional as well as a psychological element to it. For the participants in this study this was certainly evident, the psychological element of reducing the dissonance experienced was palpable, but the emotional element of this was equally evident. For many this was overwhelming, as for Zara who got tearful as we spoke, the emotion of her experiences being at such dissonance to her peers caused her to become extremely overwhelmed with emotion. The recognition that she was different and needed support for that at school, particularly the emotional support, overwhelmed her.

Esme too experienced such strong emotions linked to this cognitive dissonance and the experiences she had and found it difficult to explain some of her experiences to me for this reason. This difficulty with recounting experiences was also evident in others; for example, Callum would say he did not remember things but then immediately begin detailing experiences that were evidence of the thing he had just claimed he had no memory of. This may well be due to him reducing the meaning of these experiences in order to make them more cognisant, to reduce that cognitive dissonance that is so uncomfortably felt.

Whilst Elliot and Devine (1994) suggest that cognitive dissonance has an emotional element to it, other theorists recognise that it aids as a form of emotional protection (see Horney, 1937; Festinger, 1957; Becker, 1973; Miller, 1980). It is the emotionally disturbing experiences that the participants in this study had which might have resulted in them making sense of their experiences by engaging in cognitive dissonance. They are actively, albeit unconsciously, seeking to normalise their experiences, distance themselves from the reality of their experiences and seek out the psychologically more comfortable feeling of being in consonance. This is a way of protecting themselves from the pain of their experiences and the pain of being different. However, this in itself may produce some distress, as this is a form of actively choosing to frame their experiences, by reducing the dissonance, however internally the psychological and emotional impact remains for them and needs to be dealt with at some point, in some way.

What is important to consider however, is that this cognitive dissonance is not always experienced, or necessary, but is experienced more when there are larger numbers of others with a differing view (Matz and Wood, 2005). This may well be the case for the participants in this study as there appears to be a difference with their experiences depending on the situation in which they take place. For example, Callum exhibits many elements of cognitive dissonance when detailing his experiences at school where the larger number or people had differing experiences and views to him and where he experienced significant bullying as a result. However, in a smaller setting, his cadet unit, his feelings of difference were less of an issue for him and he did not seek to normalise or minimise his experiences. In fact, it was quite the contrary, he was able to express what they were and how the other people accepted, supported and encouraged him. Others too experienced this when exploring their experiences with smaller groups, such as Alice and Isla who each detailed how accepting and supportive their friendship groups could be and how they enjoyed activities such as running, swimming and cycling and were able to identify their dyspraxic difficulties but in an accepting way in those environments. This therefore supports the idea that the cognitive dissonance is larger when the group is larger who have differing views, but is also evidence of how this cognitive dissonance is situationally dependant. It could be then that for these participants ensuring they have the other experiences in which they are more accepted, supported and encouraged acts as a form of protection against the negative psychological affects the cognitive dissonance causes.

5.1.2. Corporeal or embodied experience

The second psychological concept emerging from the data gathered in this study is that of the corporeal or embodied experience of dyspraxia in education and how this was experienced by the young people. Goodley (2014) suggests that there are many different elements of disability and that one of these elements is the experience of the embodiment of disability. The young people in this study reported the embodied experience of their dyspraxia, particularly within education, as being experienced in addition to the emotional and psychological experiences they had. Therefore, the corporeal or embodied experience of dyspraxia focuses on the bodily experience of the participants and how their bodily experience contributes to their psychological experience. It focuses on the bodily difficulties faced by these participants as well as the way in which they, and their bodies, relate to their surrounding environment (Hughes, 2004; Hughes & Paterson, 2000). In this study the focus was specifically on educational environments and the way in which their difficulties were enhanced in these environments.

For many the physical aspect of handwriting in school for example caused significant pain, rendering them unable to fully indicate their knowledge due to the difficulties within their body. Other physical difficulties experienced by these young people in the educational environment included difficulties with running, climbing, and participating in PE classes and extracurricular activities. In these situations these young people found often that due to their inability physically to engage with the activity they were unable to indicate their level of understanding or engagement with the lesson and this further highlighted their difference from, and to, their peers.

Loja, Costa Hughes & Menezes (2013) highlight that there are difficulties faced by those with disabilities due to the medicalisation of their differences defining their corporeal identities. Others support this view suggesting the medical model frames the corporeal identity of those with disabilities as one of abnormality and in need of correcting (Edwards and Imrie, 2003; Zitzelsberger, 2005). Other theorists question “What counts as a legitimate body” (Shilling 1993, p. 145) suggesting that disabled bodies do not matter as much as non-disabled bodies (Braidotti, 1996), whilst conflicting views argue that the impairment is experienced within the body, on the body and through the body and is culturally defined (Shakespeare, 1992; French, 1993; Hughes and Paterson, 2006).

For these young people a concern with being different can be seen as stemming from this medicalization of their dyspraxia, being framed as a difficulty, something wrong with their body, with them. This appears to define their identity for some of them and other people as they feel excluded from activities and from their peers. The accommodations that are in place within schools, such as use of laptops of other such equipment, appear to further act in this manner, highlighting their bodily difference and perceiving them as bodies that need help.

The embodied experience of many of the participants also highlights the lack of trust they have in their own body, and how this lack of trust has an impact on their sense of self, security and safety. Alice for example, despite having explained her difficulties to her teacher, finds herself hiding from the teacher as she fears she will be made to do sewing, which she cannot do. It is a concern that she experiences the teacher as not caring about her or noticing that she was hiding the entire lesson, as if she did not matter. This feeling remained with her and was internalised by her, compounding the already negative view she had of her bodily self, and placing her into a space where she experiences not being as worthy as others. Alice often felt as though teachers did not appreciate the struggle or effort she put into things and that they could only see the deficits.

As well as more obvious physical difficulties that could be seen, even if not understood, many of these young people's experiences were that they struggled in ways that were not so obvious, that were more hidden within their bodies and so therefore even less well understood. The difficulties expressed with coordination of thoughts, organisation and visual and spatial difficulties were less obvious to teachers for example but caused significant difficulties for the young people.

Despite the many bodily differences these participants experienced and the way in which their dyspraxia was embodied within them, they did not always experience this in a negative way. In fact, for many they were positive about the way in which they dealt with the way their body worked and the strategies they devised. The reactions of others often meant that their embodied experience was a negative one. When in environments where they were accepted, with people who supported them, they did not feel negative or as if their bodies did not matter; quite the contrary, they felt that their bodies did matter and they persevered. We can see this particularly strongly in Callum's experiences in his cadets' unit. His embodied experience was one of difficulty/difference, of inability to march in time with the others or do many of the activities that his peers were able to do. Yet with the acceptance, support and encouragement of the leaders, which filtered down to the other cadets, he was able to persevere and overcome these bodily challenges and achieve what he thought his body could not achieve. The emotional and psychological impact of this was evidently vast and by his own account extended into other areas of his life including back to the school environment.

Alice found her natural creativity enabled her to find ways that were congruent with her bodies abilities and was rightly proud of her ‘thinking out of the box’ to produce something for her textiles teacher. This proudness was short lived as it was not shared by the teacher, again placing her back into the role of “dis-abled”. Alice did however excel in running, outside of school with a local club. Running was something she did find difficult, as her bodily experience was such that running was challenging for many reasons, staying in lane being one of them. Yet she had a love for it and, again, was accepted and therefore persevered and enjoyed it.

Many, despite the obvious bodily difficulties/differences this brought, shared this enjoyment of sport. What was interesting was that for all participants this involved sporting endeavors outside of the formal school environment. For example, Isla enjoyed swimming, Toby enjoyed Karate and Mark enjoyed golf, all of these sports enabled them to participate in an activity where they felt their bodies mattered in a positive way. For others who disliked sport in all its forms they found their place and strength in their abilities in other ways. For Rhys this was through his singing, something he excelled at, enjoyed and was seen as a valuable member of the community.

Frustration and fear of one’s body were indicated from these participants when detailing their embodied experience. Fear that their body would not do what they wanted it to do, frustration when they desperately tried to get it to do what they wanted, often knowing what they wanted to do but being unable to execute it. These feelings are often compounded by the able-bodied expectations placed upon them by those in authority, such as teachers, and further highlights the lack of understanding that prevails within the education system (Goodley, 2014). The embodied experience of all the participants is that they have to work so much harder than their able-bodied counterparts' do, in an environment that is not conducive to them, with little to no understanding or appreciation of the pain, exhaustion or sheer determination that they experience on a daily basis from the moment they wake. They do not want special treatment, but would appreciate some support and understanding.

5.1.3. Psychoemotional disablism

Thomas (2002, 2007) and Reeve (2008) highlight the concept of psychoemotional disablism, which refers to the recognition that there are internal psychological consequences associated with disablism that occur from the different forms of discrimination, be that indirect or direct. Goodley & Lawthorn (2010) and Goodley (2011, 2014) suggest that this manifests in different ways, including affecting self-esteem and causing psychological distress. The findings from this current study highlight the psychoemotional disablism that is experienced by these participants (Thomas, 2002, 2007; Reeve, 2008).

For all participants there was a feeling of needing, and wanting, to be accepted and understood by others, especially teachers. They were aware of their difficulties but felt that they could not be supported until others understood how it was for them. However, their experiences were such that they felt they rarely received this much needed acceptance. Often they felt misunderstood, not worthy and not believed. Callum detailed how the teachers thought he was on drugs as they just did not understand the impact his dyspraxia was having in the school environment. Alice felt her teachers did not believe her when she described what she could not do and that they did not understand her level of effort in her work. This constant feeling of not being believed and being misunderstood, constantly having to explain themselves and yet still not being believed took its toll emotionally and psychologically, as Esme found when her teacher told her and her mum that what they had described was not dyspraxia. These experiences can undermine emotional wellbeing and can be just as damaging as structural barriers can (Reeve, 2002).

This concept of psychoemotional disablism can also be considered when looking at how these young people experienced social isolation. For some this was experienced from a very young age and in different ways. When considering Toby's experiences for example, having significant verbal dyspraxia rendered him struggling to verbally communicate with others, which was very socially isolating at times. Toby experienced high levels of frustration as a result of these experiences and often needed to use his mum to facilitate what he wanted to say. He did have positive experiences socially outside of formal education, e.g. when in his karate lessons. This provided social experiences that he was not getting at school.

Callum too experienced social isolation during beak time, as the boys all played football at break time and this was something he could not do. This was also felt as a loss, a sense of something which is shared among all these young people, of not being able to achieve the thing he wanted and a loss of social experiences. This feeling of exclusion, of social rejection, has a heavy negative toll emotionally and is compounding in its effect contributing to negative internalised feelings and it is this that is often more disabling. Shakespeare et al (1996) described these experiences as "[d]ealing with anger, self-loathing, and daily experiences of rejection and humiliation are among the hardest aspects of being a disabled person" (p. 42-43).

Reeve (2002) highlights that psychoemotional disablism focuses on the individual impact that these barriers have for people and the ways in which they respond. He describes these barriers as the experiences of social and structural exclusion and the way in which they affect the person emotionally. For the young people in this study the experiences of being mocked and teased by their peers, and at times by the teachers, contributed further to the psychoemotional impact with experiences of being bullied sadly experienced all too often. The emotional responses of this are evident in the young people with feelings of shame, embarrassment and frustration being reported. Interestingly for the female participants these feelings were often internalised, whereas for the male participants the feelings were felt and expressed more externally with anger, frustration and outbursts.

Thomas (2004) highlights a difference in barriers; suggesting that there are ‘barriers to doing’ as well as ‘barriers to being’. The ‘Barriers to doing’ suggested by Thomas (2004) are considered material barriers. For the young people in this study these ‘Barriers to doing’ are evident in the many areas mentioned where the young people found their bodies would not do what they wanted them to. For example they found there were elements in educational settings, and in their lives, where they could not do certain things that they wanted to and that others could do such as cutting, drawing, sewing, writing without pain, following concepts in a fast paced way and keeping up with their peers in the classroom to name a few.

For Thomas (2004) the concept of ‘Barriers to being’ is considered to be the way in which prejudice negatively impacts on the psycho-emotional wellbeing of the individual. For the young people in this study the ‘Barriers to being’ were far more disabling. The impact of the young people’s experiences on their psychoemotional wellbeing and developing sense of identify and of self, appeared in this study to have the most significant impact negatively.

Conversely however there were instances where the experiences the young people had were constructed differently, such as for Callum whose experiences within his cadet unit were felt as not disabling because the group were more accepting and formed elements of confidence in his growing identity and sense of self. Shakespeare (2006) highlights the notion that, in actuality, experiences of being disabled are both internal, to do with their bodies impairment, but also external and constructed by society. This research shows that there are instances where the young people activity sought to challenge this psychoemotional disablism, by resisting the impact having dyspraxia had for them and this can be seen when Rhys for example does not want to know other people with the same condition as him, does not understand why he would; he is resisting being defined by his diagnosis and therefore the impact it has on him.

It is clear that the concept of disablement is a complex issue, one that is interactive and the findings of this study support this notion. For these young people dealing with their embodied experience of difference, the internal emotions and frustrations this brings is difficult enough for them. They desperately wanted to be accepted, to fit in, and to not stand out from their peers. However many of their embodied experiences in a disabling world further disable them impacting negatively on their emotional and psychological well-being.

These experiences of psychoemotional disablism when internalised can lead to internalised oppression “We harbour inside ourselves the pain and the memories, the fears and the confusions, the negative self-images and the low expectations, turning them into weapons with which to re-injure ourselves, every day of our lives" (Mason 1992, p. 27). There is a need for more research, discussion and focus on the issue of psychoemotional disablism, and consideration of the way in which this leads to internalised oppression and how this impacts the lives of people with disabilities in general. This current research however begins this much needed contribution providing an understanding of how the experiences young people with dyspraxia may face constitute psychoemotional disablism in the educational environment and how the continuation of this disablism contributes to the development of internalised oppression.

5.1.4. Internalised oppression

There are different forms of oppression, with some theorizing a structural form of oppression (Young, 1990) which are considered to be the ways in which the inequalities and injustice of those that are oppressed are embedded within the norms, habits and rules that are produced in institutions through normal everyday life. Hardiman et al (2007) agrees that oppression is systematic and institutionalised and suggests that as a result the oppressive behaviours "often do not require the conscious thought or effort of individual members of oppressor group but are a part of normalized practices, policies and beliefs that become embedded in social structures" (p. 37).

There are thought to be three different levels of oppression, the personal/individual level, institutional/structural level and the societal/cultural level (Mullaly, 2002; Katz 2003: Hardiman et al., 2007). The individual level involves the "conscious or unconscious thoughts, attitudes, actions and behaviors of individuals that contribute to, and actively or passively collude with oppression" (Williams, 2012, p. 23). Institutional levels, of which education is part, refers to the ways in which the policies, laws and practices reinforce, whether intentionally or not, the oppression and legitimises this through these formal structures (Hardiman et al., 2007; Mullaly, 2002). The societal level is considered to be reinforcing oppression through the values, norms and believes of those within society (Hardiman et al., 2007; Mullaly, 2002), something which is arguably more prevalent with the increase in social media use particularly among the younger generation. Williams (2012) suggests that these three systems work simultaneously, ensuring the oppressed remains oppressed, and that all three levels are in a symbiotic relationship, depending on each other.

Internalised oppression is a social justice concept referring to the psychological consequences of "the material exclusion of disabled people from mainstream life, including false consciousness" (Goodley, 2011, p. 87; Oliver, 1996). David & Derthick, (2014) argue that internalised oppression is the way in which those who are oppressed come to use the methods of their oppressor upon themselves, as well as seek to align themselves more to their oppressor, losing their sense of self identity in the process. Internalised oppression is not a new phenomenon and its influence is recognised to be very strong and negative with power removed from the oppressed as indicated in the famous quote of Steve Biko, "The greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed" (cited in Esbjorn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009, p 425).

Williams (2012) points out the need for understanding the phenomenon of internalised oppression, stating that it "helps, in part, to understand how systems of inequality are reproduced and what happens to individuals who are differently positioned within these systems" (p. 17). In this case, it is therefore imperative that we understand how the systems within education, and the system of education itself, impact on these young people and how they are differently positioned as well as the implications of this positioning. Certainly from the current research it has become apparent that the young people who took part felt that they are differently positioned to their peers, that they do not fit in and that they are treated differently by teachers. This difference they perceived, when not understood or accepted, caused some of them to internalise these experiences and seek to remain invisible/hide. The need for invisibility may be in part due to the negative feelings of being positioned as different and as not equal to their peers. The feelings of pain when not listened to or believed resonate with the experiences of the young people and contribute to the need to hide and further contribute to their identification as different.

Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin's (2007) definition of oppression emphasises this notion of difference, as they state oppression is "A system that maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships and operates intentionally and unintentionally, on the individual, institutional and cultural levels" (p.58 cited in Williams, 2012). We can see from the experiences of the young people in this study that they are disadvantaged in many ways particularly in formal education. Formal education, within the UK, as experienced by these young people, seems to favour those without any form of difference. What is also apparent is there is hierarchy of *"difference"* where more commonly known conditions such as autism or dyslexia have some "status" and therefore some attention both formally in terms of interventions etc. and informally in acceptance of need/understanding of experience. In contrast these young people's experience is that they are misunderstood, incorrectly labelled and neglected in terms of access to education due to lack of knowledge. Furthermore, their experiences highlight how these young people, and others like them, are therefore maintained as different. Their experience often is that they are not worthy, and this disadvantage when compared to their peers is maintained within education. This negative educational experience can have long lasting impacts: Alice hiding underneath the desk and not being found; Callum left school with only 1 GCSE. Callum also identified the significant emotional and psychological impact these experiences had on him and his need to remain invisible. This need to remain invisible began in primary school but carried on throughout secondary school and further into his life.

Alice *“did her best”* and excelled in lots of areas that were different to her peers, yet she still felt she needed to hide away. These differences where she excelled, sadly, were not celebrated, and this resonates with most of the young people in the current study. Williams (2012) posits there are many differences among humans, and these differences, and the classification of them, are neither inherently good or bad. However he suggests that it is when we as humans place meaning on such differences that they become constructed as negative, with negative consequences. These constructed systems of oppression target the oppressed because of their differences and they therefore remain oppressed. He defines the concept of internalised oppression not only as a process, but also as a psychological state that impacts the self and identity, emotions, interpersonal relationships and mental health (Williams, 2012).

It is important to note that we, as humans, are capable of belonging to multiple social groups at any one time, but may not be oppressed in all groups and may benefit from privileges in some (i.e. being a white disabled person), while being disadvantaged in others (Williams, 2012). This is evident in all the young people’s experiences. Thankfully for them they each appeared to belong to groups where they were not oppressed, where they were supported, encouraged and/or celebrated but these mostly occurred outside of formal education (school), but were educational none the less. For Rhys, he experienced this support, encouragement and celebration in his choral activities which, while forming part of his formal education (via a scholarship), was not traditional formal education and therefore ran alongside his formal educational experiences. Toby had a strong supportive group through his involvement in karate, something which would have undoubtably helped him with confidence and physical coordination. Alice got these similar experiences through her involvement in the external running group and Callum experienced similar support, encouragement and celebration in his cadets.

Internalised oppression is considered to be a result of existing within an oppressive context (Williams, 2012), in this case the educational environment. It is taking within oneself the views and opinions of the oppressive context, the oppressive experiences they have and the encounters with others. Here this is the experiences within the environment itself, with teachers and with peers and it can be seen the experiences of these young people that it not only effects their individual sense of self, but it also affects the way they feel about others (Williams, 2012).

Internalised oppression is as prevalent for people with disabilities as it is for other forms of difference such as race or religion, yet for people with disabilities the message of *“being”* different can be seen in many areas from birth. These young people were very clear about this recognition of difference and their embodied experience, they were expressive of their need to remain invisible and their need to belong, yet these needs were seldom met. They may not have felt these desires so strongly had they felt accepted and understood by those in authority who had the power to filter down this message of acceptance to their peers, and therefore breaking down this institutional level of oppression.

The experiences of the young people in this study indicate they were experiencing internalised oppression, and there was often a desire to distance themselves from others with similar differences. When asked if they knew other people with dyspraxia most said they did not. Rhys was confused as to why his mother had tried to involve him with other young people who had a similar difference to him, not wanting to be defined by this difference. Others such as Isla showed an interest in hearing about who may have dyspraxia, but in all cases there was a desire to just be like their friends, not to be different.

For all the young people in this study these experiences of oppression both at an institution and internal level impacted their formation of identity. Some of the young people were able to reflect as they were older, like Callum, and had experienced more positive experiences in informal educational environments such as supportive leaders at his cadets unit who helped and encouraged him until he achieved what he set out to achieve. Callum attributed a great deal to his experiences at his cadets' unit to his formation of his identity. Others felt the passage of time had allowed them to complement their negative experiences with others that were more positive. There was also an element of the passage of time allowing them to settle with the diagnosis and therefore form an identity that incorporated their dyspraxia. But sadly for many of the young people in this study their experiences had such an adverse impact on them, the oppression they felt was internalised and they often had negative views of themselves, impacting on their formation of their identity.

These negative experiences also appeared to have an impact on these young people's sense of self-efficacy (their belief in their ability to achieve) and may well have led to practices of learned helplessness. Some newer theories of learned helplessness, consider that the brain actually starts from a position of helplessness and that experiences shape the way the brain develops, suggesting that if the brain does not experience the 'helpfulness' it maintains the position of helplessness (Maier & Seligman, 2016). When considering these young people's experiences in education it may be that they have not yet had enough of the right kinds of experiences to develop and move on from the starting position of helplessness in areas where their dyspraxia affected them and this over time has an impact on their self-efficacy, self-esteem and formation of their identity.

5.1.5. Distributed competence

Following on from the concept of internalised oppression the analysis of the young people's experiences in this study indicated elements of distributed competence. Distributed competence is a concept within Critical Disability Studies which refers to the way in which psychological competence is impacted by one's support network. It suggests that psychological competence can be either facilitated or hindered through these support networks and perceives that intelligence and capacity are more aligned with the quality of such networks rather than the individual's disposition (Booth & Booth, 1998; Goodley, 2010, Tobbell & Lawthorn, 2015).

These 'support networks' can take many forms. They can be what we may traditionally consider to be 'support networks' such as family or friends, but they can also mean the various professionals that work with these young people including the teachers in their school, leaders in informal educational groups and even peers within these environments. Distributed competence refers to the idea that there is a plethora of things that impact on competence. In the current study the impact could be on the individual and their specific difficulties, the environment, the teacher, the resources available, their peers and their family connections outside of school. It is about understanding that the difficulties are located within the disabling environment not their disabled bodies. This is evident within the young people's accounts in this current study when they detail how they experience difficulties in school, yet outside of school partake in physically demanding activities and excel at them and enjoy them. Toby, for example, has significant difficulties within school, becomes exceptionally frustrated and angry and feels he is not helped to move forward educationally, yet outside of formal education he excels at Karate, something he equally enjoys and is not frustrated; here he is supported and able to achieve. Callum too has similar experiences, feeling the environment outside of formal education more conducive to his ability to learn and achieve. Alice details how she struggles within formal education yet is a valued member of her running club outside of school and achieves despite difficulties staying in lane. It is evident then that it is not just the person's difficulties that contribute to their psychological competence, their ability to achieve or their ability to reach psychological fulfilment. It is the combination of their abilities, the environment they are in and the way in which others interact with them.

There are many different forms of barriers to those who live with disability (WHO, 2001) and depending on the disability, and to some extent the individual themselves, these barriers will differ. Certainly, for the young people in this current study it appears there are many barriers for them including some physical barriers due to the coordination difficulties dyspraxia presents them with, some social barriers, attitudinal barriers and policy barriers. What is evident however is that not only do these barriers differ between individuals, they also differ within individuals, emphasising the concept of distributed competence. This idea of distributed competence can be seen to be closely linked then to the differing barriers that have been discussed by Thomas (2004) as the ‘barriers to doing’ (material barriers) and the ‘barriers to being’ (psycho-emotional) and the way in which they impact on the development of one’s identity. For example some of the ‘barriers to doing’ are caused by the quality of the support networks one has, or the environment in which one finds oneself. For example, for many of the young people in this study the support networks they had differed in quality of support with different impacts on their psychoemotional development. For example, when understanding and support in the support networks was evident the young person was able to participate due to material differences, such as Rhys who was able to use a laptop and therefore was not hindered by his difficulties with writing. When such material support and understanding was not evident the young people suffered. Equally the ‘barriers to doing’ have been shown to be impacted by the distributed competence and all of the young people spoke of the impacts on their emotional wellbeing and development. When the support networks were good, for example with Callum and his cadet group, this had a positive impact, whereas when the quality was not good, for example Alice and her textiles teacher, this had a negative impact.

For the young people in this study this distributed competence means that in addition to the barriers presented, there were some things that helped. They all identified that their dyspraxia caused difficulties for them and impaired their abilities in some areas, but were very aware of what would help them to access education more successfully. Some of them were able to articulate this, and were successful in getting the support that helped, for example Rhys used a laptop and did not see this as defining him as having a difficulty, as it was common within his school for people to have a laptop for work. Callum on the other hand did not want to seem different and so did not use the laptop he could have borrowed. While Isla and Toby used an Alphasmart, which despite being difficult in some respects, helped them with writing and getting their ideas down on paper. For some of the young people there were things that worked well to protect their emotional wellbeing such as having support in the form of a place to go where they were understood, such as Zara who reported she would go to learning support where they would be kind to her and support her. She was clearly emotional when discussing this and whilst it was obvious that this certainly did help and provide support to her, she was aware that not everyone needed it and therefore it set her apart from her peers again and emphasised her difference.

The young people in this study had different experiences of support received. However for most they experienced negative interactions with teachers in formal education and this had a significant negative impact on their psychological and emotional wellbeing. Conversely, there were some instances of positive interactions experienced by all the young people to varying degrees, and in varying environments (formal and informal education) however sadly these were not very frequent. Toby for example had a teaching assistant who took particular interest in him and how best she could support him. Callum had a Maths teacher who he felt understood him and tried hard to make him not hate Maths and he recounted a particular PE teacher who differentiate the work so he could participate rather than exclude him. For many the support came mostly from their families. Some families were very proactive, taking in leaflets to schools for example explaining what their child's strengths and difficulties were. In all cases it was felt they were understood and therefore less disabled with their family members. There were instances of this in informal settings also with Toby reporting feeling understood and accepted in his Karate club and Callum attributing a great deal to the way in which he was accepted and supported in his cadet unit. It is clear therefore that there are many different things that contribute to the individual's psychological competence and some of these factors are important in protecting the emotional and psychological experiences of these young people. However, the negative experiences some have, with teachers for example, do not help and at times hinder their development and engagement within formal education.

All of the young people identified that they had developed ways of coping with the difficulties their dyspraxia presents them with, for example to deal with the sheer exhaustion Rhys slept on the school bus and Alice reported doodling to reduce her frustration. Worryingly however some participants reported coping by making no effort. This may well be a form of protection. Protection from feeling as though they have not achieved, almost as if you do not make the effort then it's no surprise when you do not achieve, but was reported always when discussing things they had difficulty with.

It is clear from the experiences of these young people that there are many factors that work to cause the barriers for them and there is a need to accept and realise that this is a distributed competence issue, not an issue with them individually. However, this acceptance and recognition needs to be taken on by all involved, such as teachers and policy makers because until this happens these young people and others like the will continue to be disabled by the many barriers around them. As Goodley (2014) highlights, disablism seriously damages the psychological lives of those who suffer it, as they are not only being hindered by their impairment but with the society that disables them as well. Therefore, it could be that it is this disablism that prevents them, or presents barriers to them, reaching self-actualization and progressing psychologically within their lives.

5.1.6 Humanistic perspective: Psychological consideration of findings

Having considered the 5 themes that emerged from the experiences of the young people in the current study (as detailed in chapter 4) as well as the 5 interpretive conceptualisations of these themes (as detailed here in chapter 5) these findings will now be considered in reference to the work of humanistic psychologists Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1951).

If we consider the findings from this current study, both the thematic analysis findings of the participants experiences as told by them (in chapter 4), as well as the interpretive analysis (in chapter 5), using Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and Carl Rogers (1951) core conditions we can see how these young people's experiences of dyspraxia in education affects their psychological development and development of self.

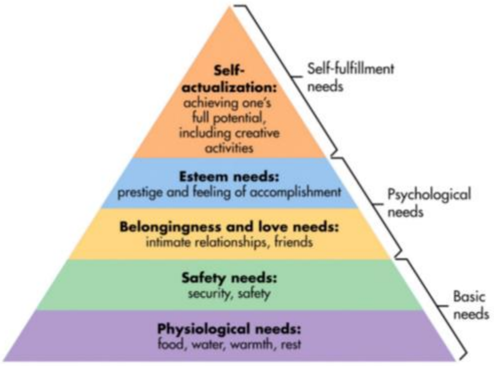

Figure 5: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)[9]

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[9] Sourced at: https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Maslow (1943) suggested that all human behaviour is driven by a set of needs. He considered these needs to be basic, psychological and self-fulfilment needs. The basic needs put forward by Maslow (1943) were physiological and safety needs; the psychological needs were belongingness, love and self-esteem needs. Maslow (1943) considered that if these four levels of needs were met then the final level, self-fulfilment needs (also known as being needs), could reach the potential of self-actualisation.

If we consider Maslow's (1943) work on the hierarchy of needs and the findings from these young peoples' exploration of their lived experiences of dyspraxia we can see that there are differing levels of need fulfilment as described by Maslow (1943). Firstly, looking at the physiological needs, these are the needs that are required to maintain essential biological and physiological functioning, including food, water, shelter, warmth and sleep. Certainly, from the young people's accounts of their experiences of dyspraxia in education, there appears little doubt that their physiological needs on the surface are being met. For example, none of them mentioned being deprived of food, water, shelter, warmth, sleep, and so on. However, the experience of having dyspraxia itself could be said to impact on these physiological needs if we explore their experiences a little further. Rhys for example talks about being so exhausted, in part through having a long trip to his school, but also as others explain, through exhaustion brought about by their dyspraxia. For Rhys this resulted in him needing to catch up with sleep on the bus journeys he took. Other young people spoke about the sheer exhaustion that having dyspraxia caused them. The daily activities that are generally taken for granted appear to be far more exhausting for these young people, due to the physical and mental exertion that they need in order to execute these seemingly simple daily activities.

If we look at Maslow's (1943) second level in the hierarchy of needs, that being the safety needs, it is evident that there are areas for these young people where their safety needs are not being met, or certainly are being affected. Safety needs include things such as protection, security, freedom from fear and stability. But if we think of these things and the embodied experiences of these young people with dyspraxia their safety needs appear to be precarious. Many of the young people spoke of not having trust in their own body, of finding many fine motor and gross motor skills that others take for granted exceptionally difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve. At times this meant their physical safety was compromised and left them feeling vulnerable.

Another area in which their safety needs were affected by their dyspraxia was in the area of being ridiculed, humiliated and bullied. Sadly, this was felt as being not just from their peers, but at times, even if not intentional, this came from teachers as well. This appeared to have the more significant impact on them, as these are people in authority who might be considered as there to help. The negative interactions with teachers were reported significantly more than the few instances of positive interactions being reported. Where these positive interactions were discussed they involved the teachers having empathy and understanding, and therefore acceptance.

Interestingly the young people, despite being significantly impacted by these seemingly negative experiences, appeared to understand and accept that maybe this was due to a lack of understanding on the teachers' part. However, the effect on their safety needs was very evident and they all expressed a desire to be understood, with Alice rightly pointing out that until she is understood no one can help her.

If we consider then the belonging needs in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, he suggests this includes things like love, friendship, family and intimacy. Certainly, from exploring these young people's lived experiences of having dyspraxia in education, and in general, there was a real sense from all of them that these belonging needs were not being met fully, especially in formal education. Interestingly, they were met in some areas, but largely these areas were outside of the formal educational environment.

For example, all of the young people appear to have very supportive parents, who helped to bridge the gap of knowledge with their schools by providing leaflets, information sheets and explaining and defending where necessary. All participants, but one, had a sibling, or siblings and many spoke of these being supportive relationships too, even though their siblings reminded them of the different difficulties that they had. Sometimes there were difficulties within the sibling relationship itself, but it was not felt that this was largely down to the dyspraxia, but rather just a normal part of sibling life. For Zara, those sibling relationships brought heartache. Seeing her younger sibling being able to do things that she could not do, or that she found difficult, was very emotional for her.

Friendships were important to most participants. Some friendships were very strong and most participants talked of having a few very close friendships, again where they felt understood and accepted. However, despite this many of the participants spoke of having difficulties with peer relationships within formal education. Callum, for example, spoke of being bullied right through formal education from early on in primary school until almost the end of his secondary school experience. Having friendships outside of formal education appeared to benefit him greatly and to mitigate against some of those negative relationships that he spoke off. He certainly imbued these external friendships with great importance and this may be because he felt like he belonged, was accepted and mattered to these peers. Importantly for Callum, he reported being able to take this newfound confidence in making friends back into his final year of secondary education and was able to enjoy this final year more than previous years. He also had a confidence to begin to approach people he had spent years with, but never really felt like he got on with.

Mark had a seemingly different relationship with peers. He spoke of having friends, but could not detail any experiences with these friends. He said that he had a few, but that they do not see each other outside of school and do not call each other. It certainly felt from Mark's experience that he did struggle greatly in this area. To differing degrees, all of the participants had difficulties in the area of belongingness and love.

Finally, if we look at esteem needs and consider that these include self-esteem, confidence, achievement and respect, we again can see how this level has been affected by having dyspraxia. The experiences of these young people as they have developed and grown throughout their education, particularly in secondary education, but also reported through their primary education, have had a significant impact on their self-esteem and their confidence to different degrees. For some, the experience of achieving has been greater than for others. For example, Rhys attended an independent school on a choral scholarship, thus being successful and recognised as such. He continued to enjoy the achievements of his singing and these achievements appeared to mitigate against some of the more negative experiences, giving him a sense of belonging.

Alice, for example, was very proud of herself for having achieved things that she felt she really struggled in, for thinking outside of the box when being asked to do something she knew she could not, and for being creative. Yet the constant disappointment of not having these achievements recognised by her teachers, appeared to take its toll for her. She did have positive friendships with a close group of friends and did achieve outside of school in more informal educational places such as her running group. For many these external experiences were important to mitigate the negative experiences that formal education offered.

Toby, who really struggled verbally to make himself heard, and to communicate with others, struggled greatly in many of these areas. Yet he too experienced levels of achievement, which gave him confidence and self-esteem outside of the formal education system. He took part in football and excelled in his karate classes. The self-esteem of many of the participants, and therefore their confidence, really did seem to be affected by all of their experiences. There were many times when this resulted in a negative impact, however there were also incidents where it was positively affected and for most they had both types of experiences in different settings. Callum for example, spoke a lot about how he had been negatively impacted by his experiences in formal educational, but also spoke of how his experiences in informal education, such as his cadet group, were so different and actually gave him some self-esteem and confidence that he was lacking. Others echoed this experience in informal educational settings, such as Alice's running group or Toby's karate group for example while others spoke of the positive effect their friendships had on their developing self-esteem and confidence providing spaces where they felt supported.

Isla seemed like an exceptionally confident pupil/participant, but when speaking about her dyspraxia, it was clear that this had affected her self-esteem and confidence in herself. She was one of the youngest participants in this study and sought reassurance from me that the things she struggled with were due to her dyspraxia. I would hope that for these young people progressing through secondary education, and through the difficult time of adolescence (like Callum, the oldest participant) they may come out the other side with a renewed sense of self-esteem and confidence, gathered from other areas of their lives.

When considering Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, these four areas of basic and psychological needs (the physiological needs, the safety needs the belongingness and love needs and the esteem needs) are all considered to be the lower needs and the final level in the hierarchy of needs is considered to be more of a ‘being’ need which Maslow (1943) called self-actualization. According to Maslow (1943) self-actualization is the desire to become the best that one can, and to achieve one's full potential. He believed all of these needs were arranged in the hierarchy that he proposed, and that in order to move up the hierarchy, the needs of the lower levels needed to be satisfied. He did however recognise that there are complexities in this, and that it may be possible to progress to a higher need even if the lower need is still in the process of being satisfied (Kelland, 2015). In any case, he believed that people are always motivated to do what is right for them and thus aim for self-actualization.

Looking at the experiences of the young people in this study we can see that all of the lower needs are being met to some degree, but that they are all being impacted as well by having dyspraxia, and the lived experience of that in education. We obviously need to consider that there will be individual differences at play here too as well as differing environments and these will influence how much of each level is impacted for each person. Furthermore, from considering the different ages of the young people it is clear to see that there is some form of progression, and therefore development of satisfying these needs as they move through adolescence. Equally, we can see that they have discussed how the progression of time has helped in many ways, by their development of ways of coping, from gaining support where they can, and from the experiences of those teachers who did try and did understand them. However, it is clear from all accounts of these young people, that all levels on the hierarchy of needs are being impacted to some degree and therefore not fully satisfied. However, all of the young people, appeared to strive and be motivated to do what is best for them, i.e. still striving for self-actualization. This supports the idea that these hierarchy levels are complex and do not necessarily have to be satisfied completely in order to move and develop further.

Carl Rogers (1951) agreed with the essential aspects of Maslow's (1943) work and his hierarchy of needs but suggested that there was also a need for an environment which promoted growth in which three core conditions were needed. These were genuineness, referred to as congruence, acceptance and unconditional positive regard and empathy. Rogers (1951) believed that without these three core conditions healthy relationships and personalities could not develop. Thorne (1992) suggested that Rogers (1951) concept of the core conditions was developed on his beliefs that if people have a discrepancy between their perceived self and their ideal self, then that they are in state of incongruence, which is felt as unpleasant. This is the same as the concept of cognitive dissonance which also believes that there is an uncomfortable feeling if our ideal self is different to that being presented to us.

Carl Rogers (1951) believed that these three core conditions were required in order that people could form healthy relationships and healthy personalities. He also suggested that the self, or the development of the self is created in relation to our experiences and interactions with others in the world. He called this the experiential field. and it is this experiential field that is the focus of these findings of what it means to live with dyspraxia in education. Rogers (1951) therefore believed that we need congruence, acceptance and unconditional positive regard and empathy in these experiences and interactions, in order that we could create a healthy sense of who we are and a healthy sense of self (Kelland, 2015).

Rogers (1951) work was influential in a number of areas, largely in the field of counselling psychology, but also in the field of education. He asserted that the education system is one of the most influential of all institutions in shaping the interpersonal politics of the developing person (Rogers, 1977). Certainly, when we consider formal education in the UK, children have to attend school from the age of four to 18, therefore formal education constitutes a great deal of their lived everyday lives. Thus, we should consider that formal education contributes so much more to the development of the person than just curriculum knowledge and there is a responsibility to understand what these experiences are in order that we can ensure the positive development of the child in all areas. Rogers (1969) work was influential in the progression of Person-Centred teaching and he suggested that the role of the educator was to ensure an environment that was conducive to learning and positive personal development, therefore incorporating the three core conditions.

Exploring the young people's experiences in this current study highlights how in formal education these three core conditions may not be sufficiently developed. This is worrying, considering the emphasis on a person-centred method within Special Educational Needs support and policy. The young people all spoke of a need to be accepted for who they were, including the things they found difficult. They wanted to be understood, and recognised for not being difficult, lazy or troublesome, but for the difficulties they faced and perseverance they displayed. This lack of acceptance, a core condition according to Rogers (1951) resulting in feelings of not fitting in. This is damaging to one's sense of self-esteem and confidence, and may be further isolating. These young people felt that the lack of knowledge surrounding dyspraxia, particularly how it affects them in education, compounded these negative effects for them.

Many felt misunderstood and as such had negative interactions with teachers, often punished for not having achieved something, with no recognition for effort or for the way in which their dyspraxia presented difficulties for them. This often resulted in them missing out educationally, therefore preventing them from reaching their full potential and further diminishing their already damaged sense of self. This need for empathy and understanding extended to peers and highlighted the impact the social isolation, as well as bullying, had on them. It was portrayed by most of the participants that the teachers, and the formal educational environment did not provide them with genuineness, acceptance and understanding or empathy. There were of course some examples of each of these three core conditions, to varying degrees, but not enough to formulate an environment in which they all could thrive and feel safe enough to aim and achieve their full potential.

It is clear that both Rogers (1951) and Maslow (1943) considered that all people are motivated to self-actualise and they both believed this to be a basic human motivation. Their views on how people achieve this may have differed slightly, yet they both considered that every person strives to develop psychologically and to improve and enhance themselves (Kelland, 2015). Rogers (1951) believed that negative psychological health was likely to develop if there was a discrepancy between self-regard and the positive regard received from others. An experience reported by these young people. It is clear from their experiences that they were affected to differing degrees by the development of negative psychological health in areas such as self-esteem, confidence, anxiety, sadness and anger. Yet these young people were resilient and had positive experiences elsewhere which appeared to mitigate and, to some extent, level out the psychological effects. Certainly it was reported that with time a certain level of self-acceptance occurred which will have contributed to better psychological wellbeing.

5.2 Limitations of the research

As with any study there are limitations, in this current study there is a consideration of the sample of participants. This current study was conducted in the UK, however all participants were from England and attended English schools. Therefore, these findings should be considered in the context in which they were derived. The experiences of adolescents in secondary schools will differ depending on many aspects, and the schooling experience will differ in different countries. There is also a need to consider the impact of culture on these findings, and acknowledge that these experiences may differ in different cultural contexts. Further research would serve well to explore these findings from a wider range of countries to be able to identify commonalities and differences due to cultural differences.

Being a qualitative design, this study's aim was not to generalize its findings to populations, rather it aimed to say something in detail about a small group of people experiencing the same phenomenon. As such this study sought to gather participants who were all of secondary school age. In the UK that currently ranges from 11 to 18 years old. The participants in this study indeed represented that entire range with the youngest being 11 and the eldest 17. This has enabled a deep understanding of how it is for these young people who all share the same phenomena of dyspraxia in secondary education and has enabled us to gather a range of experiences throughout secondary education, but it does not give us the experiences of a larger number of people of exactly the same age. As such it could be considered a limitation and future work may wish to focus on a specific age or specific year group.

Equally these young people attended secondary school all within England but from different geographical areas within England. Therefore there will naturally have been differences in their experiences due to their schools being within different Local Education Authorities (LA's) and with different teaching staff. Each school also differed, with most attending mainstream secondary schools but with some attending an independent school. Therefore whilst their experiences of the phenomena of having dyspraxia in secondary education is a shared experienced, their educational and geographical environments naturally differed. For this study the recruitment was satisfied and well considered for the purposes of the research aims, however it is something to consider going forward when planning future research in this area.

There were also differences in family structure amongst the participants. Some had parents who were separated for example and most had siblings. These family structure differences will have had some impact on the way in which their experiences were shaped also. Therefore, it is essential that these findings are considered in the context in which they were sought. For these children they were at a particular time in their young lives when interviewed and came from differing backgrounds, educational environments and home lives. Their experiences should be considered as their individual experience in their individual context. We can see commonalities amongst them, but also differences. But the emphasis of an IPA study is always to look in detail at the individual experiencing the phenomenon and therefore this criteria was successfully met. This enabled us to explore the deeper understanding of what it means to live with dyspraxia as a young person and how this impacts the way in which they navigate secondary education within the UK. It is essential to gather these unique individual experiences and explore the differences as well as the commonalities.

It is essential that we consider that the participants will have differing views of their experiences as they grow up. Their recollections of their childhood experiences will inevitably be shaped by their ongoing experiences and how they process internally these experiences and they will have different experiences as they learn to navigate their lives in differing environments. Further research would serve well to explore the detailed experiences of adults with dyspraxia in the work place for example, to identify if some of these issues prevail and remain significant barriers and causes of disablism.

5.2.1 Consideration of the limitations of IPA

Whilst IPA is still a relatively new approach it has been developed as a distinct approach within psychological research which offers a theoretical foundation and detailed guide to the procedure as already described above.

However, it is important, as with all approaches to research, to consider the critique of the approach and the perceived and possible limitations.

IPA assumes that “human beings are not passive receivers of an objective reality, but rather that they come to interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them” (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 88). IPA is also phenomenological and as such is concerned with individual subjective reports, which is in opposition to a formulated objective account (Flowers, Hart & Marriott, 1999). Further to these elements IPA is considered to be a dynamic approach whereby the researcher is accessing the personal world of the participant and interpreting their account of their world. Due to this dual faceted nature, one limitation is that this approach relies on the participants being able to fully articulate their experiences and thoughts (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Baillie, Smith, Hewison & Mason, 2000). In addition, it also relies on the researcher’s ability to ‘bracket’ their preconceptions and to be able to fully reflect and analyse (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Therefore, careful consideration of both the participant’s ability to verbalise, or communicate in another way, and the researchers experience and ability to reflect and analyse, is required when selecting IPA for a study.

Participants for this study were selected on their ability to communicate with the researcher (either verbally or through support) and their willingness to discuss their experiences. Due to the dual faceted nature of IPA the depth of disclosure from the participants was dependent on the dynamic between myself as researcher and the participant, and relied on my ability to elicit further details regarding what the participant chose to disclose. I have experience of conducting IPA studies as well as vast experience of conducting interviews for research. I am fully able to reflect and analyse, and maintained this throughout this study. As a tool for my reflection, I kept a reflective journal which I referred to when conducting my analysis and when writing up the findings.

Another possible perceived limitation to IPA, as in many qualitative approaches, can be the issue of small participant numbers. Whilst studies involving small numbers of participants do not lend themselves to generalisations in the way that studies with much largely participant numbers or quantitative studies do, IPA does not claim to offer generalisations. What IPA can be said to offer, amongst many things already discussed, is ‘meaning and context’ which cannot be gained from a quantitative study. As such it offers something distinct from a quantitative analysis, which can be usefully viewed as supporting and providing much needed meaning and contextual data to such studies already conducted on the given topic.

A further possible perceived limitation to this study could be the lack of triangulation of data. However, As discussed in chapter 3 there are many considerations as to how to ensure creditability and trustworthiness of qualitative data, with some researchers considering the terms borrowed from quantitative research as being inappropriate for qualitative studies (Kvale, 1995; Lather, 1993; Wolcott, 1990 cited in Ravitch and Carl, 2016; Creswell & Miller, 2000, Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Triangulation of data and the many ways in which this could be conducted were deemed inappropriate for this research due to the ideographic and interpretative nature of the study. As Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight a more appropriate method would be to assess the quality and validity of the findings, whilst Ravitch and Carl (2016) similarly emphasise establishing credibility as being an important alternative.

This current study therefore utilised Yardley's (2000) concept of sensitivity to context to ensure credibility, specifically using true verbatim extracts from participants transcripts to illustrate the interpretations made, with line numbers and page numbers to ensure the reader can identify the extract in its context and check the interpretation and full meaning. It ensured that enough detail was given in order that the study could be fully contextualised (Guba 1981, cited in Ravitch and Carl, 2016) to ensure transferability, and considered dependability by exploring the chosen methods and weather they were the most appropriate methods and techniques to address the research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Throughout the study the theoretical concepts integral to an IPA study were used and followed and the findings as a result emerged from the data as the participants lived experiences coupled with the researchers interpretations of how they made sense of those experiences.

5.2.2 Recommendations for future work

This current study has highlighted a worrying picture for young people living with dyspraxia in formal education. Therefore, it is essential that further research in this area is conducted. There is a need to explore the lived experiences of children and young people further and this could be conducted for each specific year group. This would be important as the experiences of the young people in this study show the challenges differ and change with age. It would be most beneficial to do a longitudinal IPA study following the same 8-10 children throughout formal education.

As detailed earlier, further research should be conducted in a wider range of countries to be able to identify experiences and if there are any cultural differences as all of the young people involved in this study were white British. Equally, there should be work that explores the different types of formal education to identify differences in children's lived experiences. Finally further research would serve well to explore the ongoing experiences of individuals in different domains, such as adults with dyspraxia in the work place to consider if the issues experienced by these young people are shared by adults.

5.3 Conclusion

Chapter 5 has taken the thematic findings of the young people's accounts of their lived experiences as detailed in chapter 4. It has then considered the interpretative analysis of these findings, developing 5 psychological concepts which emerge from the lived experiences detailed. These 5 concepts, drawing on work from the field of Critical Disability Studies, explain what the experiences of young people with dyspraxia are in education and how they make sense of these experiences. Chapter 5 then focused on how the work of Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1951), both humanistic psychologists, might explain these findings in relation to personal and psychological fulfilment. Finally limitations of the study were considered, along with limitations of IPA as the method of analysis before future directions for research were discussed.

Chapter 6 will explore the findings from this study in relation to previous literature, what the implications are and highlighting the contributions this study makes.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Following on from the participants accounts of their experiences as detailed in Chapter 4 and the interpretation of their experiences as detailed in chapter 5, chapter 6 will begin by considering the implications of this study's findings in relation to previous research and how the current findings fit with previous literature on the topic, before considering the contributions it brings to existing knowledge.

6.1 Implications of this study's findings in relation to previous research

Previous research in this area, explored in chapter 1 and chapter 2, had been dominated by the medicalization of dyspraxia as a disorder. This research was based around the views of professionals, and at times, parents, but rarely the views of children and young people. Even the literature that focused on exploring experiences of dyspraxia was sought from the views of the adults around the children, parents, doctors and teachers, therefore providing qualitative perspectives of others. As a result, children and young people had largely been marginalized in the literature. The concept of giving children a voice in research is a relatively recent phenomena and has taken time to be progressed in the literature. Whilst there is a growing body of literature surrounding dyspraxia it is only in relatively recent years that researchers have begun to explore what it is like to live with it, to provide the much needed qualitative account of how it is experienced. Again, this focus has been slow to include the voices of children and young people and this has been an extremely recent occurrence in the literature surrounding dyspraxia (see chapter 2).

The aim of this current study was to address this gap in knowledge in the literature surrounding dyspraxia and to hear the voices of young people living with dyspraxia so that we can better understand how it is for them. The current study identified five superordinate themes of; Complexity and internal conflict; Recognition of incongruence & identification of Otherness; Need for empathy and understanding; Identity formation; Right kind of help needed. These 5 superordinate themes detailed the experiences of the participants in their own words whilst the interpretative analysis of the findings identified psychological conceptualisations of these experiences as; Cognitive dissonance; Corporeal or embodied experience; Psychoemotional disablism; Internalised oppression; and Distributed competence. These findings were then discussed in relation to the theories of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers to explore the impact on the young people's ability to *"achieve"* self-actualisation.

The findings of the current study highlight the significant impact dyspraxia can have on a young person's life. Importantly however, it indicates how their experiences in education have presented barriers to them achieving, not just academically, but personally and more importantly has presented barriers to them reaching self-actualisation and feelings of worth. This has in turn a significant impact on their psychological wellbeing and their sense of identity.

In addition to these findings, these young people have identified skills in areas that are often overlooked. They have significant abilities to be creative, to persevere and be hard working. All of the young people expressed a desire for others to appreciate how difficult things were for them, not for sympathy but for understanding. They wanted to do well educationally, but for that needed teachers and their peers to understand and accept them as they were. It was hoped that by them telling their stories as part of this research, teachers, professionals and peers will begin to gain a better understanding of how it is to be a young person living with dyspraxia in a UK secondary school.

6.2 Current findings in relation to previous literature

The findings from the current study support many of the findings of previous literature discussed in chapter 2. Engel-Yeger & Hanna's (2010) study identified that children with DCD scored lower for self-efficacy on all subscales with the Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System measures used in their study in comparison to their typically developing (TD) peers and they also scored lower on preference to participate in leisure activities. Self-efficacy refers to the believe someone has in their ability to achieve something (Maddux & Kleiman, 2018) and the findings of the current study highlight the low self-efficacy beliefs of the young people who participated. There too were suggestions that they preferred to refrain where possible from leisure activities within the school environment. There was a difference however when those activities were more independent, solo and outside of formal education whereby almost all participants activity enjoyed leisure activities, this supported the similar findings of Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014).

Kirby, Edwards & Sugden (2011) identified many areas of psychosocial difficulties in their review of literature and identified that these difficulties have been noted in childhood and throughout into emerging adulthood. They identified that these difficulties may be compounded further by the experiences that emerging adulthood brings. There will be many new experiences that starting secondary school and progressing through the year groups brings to these young people, complicated by the many hormonal changes that occur during adolescence also. The young people in this study highlighted significant psychosocial difficulties similar to those in Kirby, Edwards & Sugden (2011) which in turn supported findings by Payne (2015) who emphasized feelings of frustration, stress, anxiety and angry outburst whilst other young people internalized these feelings. This current study identified a recognition of difference, or incongruence with peers and a feeling of Otherness as well as conflicted feelings which support findings from Kane & Farrants (2018) who identify that their participants aimed to reframe their difference in order to develop their sense of self.

Like Kirby, Edwards & Sugden (2011) the young people in the current study emphasized many coping strategies, including being creative to work around their difficulties, avoidance, acting as if they were not trying and were making no effort and relying on the support from others. Most of the young people in this current study identified family relationships as providing much needed support, both emotionally, through understanding, and practically by trying to educate their teachers, defending them where necessary and providing information on their difficulties. This finding supports similar findings of supportive family relationships by Payne et al (2013). The young people in the current study identified strategies that they used as a form of escape and for which they felt they had skills, these were largely creative skills with many identifying a love for creative writing, art, cooking and music. Payne (2015) also reported similar findings with non-physical, creative activities being used as a means of escape.

Like Kirby, Edwards & Sugden (2011) many differing profiles were identified supporting previous findings that there is no-size-fits-all profile of dyspraxia. Many areas of difficulty were reported in Kirby, Edwards & Sugden's (2011) review that were similar in this current study including reports of difficulties in executive functioning (EF) skills. These difficulties were also reported in Gagnon-Roy, Jasmin & Camden's (2016) scoping review which also highlighted the impact these EF difficulties had on performing academic activities in a timely way and in Payne’s (2015) study as well as Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad’s (2014) study and Kane & Farrants (2018) study. These specific areas of difference are important to academic success and were reported as areas of difficulty, and therefore resulting academic struggles for the young people in this study.

In Edmonds (2012) I drew on CDS to explain the findings of the adults reflecting on their childhoods, and like these young people in the current study there were feelings of being excluded by the formal education system, of not fitting in, of not being able to achieve due to the many barriers that were in place and as such feelings of disablism.

Many negative experiences within the school environment were reported in the current study which highlight findings from previous work including Edmonds (2012). Negative interactions with teachers were reported throughout the current study for all participants, and supported the findings of Edmonds (2012) in this area. Teachers were largely unsupportive, with a few exceptions, and as such negatively affected these young people’s self-esteem. As in Edmonds (2012) some of the young people in the current study felt that they were punished by teachers for things they could not do, and largely this was due to a lack of understanding. Edmonds (2013) reviewing the literature at the time highlighted the need for teachers to understand those with dyspraxia more, as the effects of these interactions are so damaging for these young people.

This lack of knowledge by teachers highlights that found in Payne (2015) with similar effects of being demoralized, disengaged and disadvantaged. The teachers misunderstandings increased feelings of frustration and sadness for the young people interviewed and support similar findings in Payne (2015). This lack of understanding and the impact it has on the young people supports the findings of Kane & Farrants (2018) also.

Many of the young people in this current study highlighted that they did not get the support required from their teachers which further supports findings from Payne et al (2013) who’s participants also reported feeling invisible and vulnerable. This is similar to the findings of this current study where the young people reported a need to remain invisible, for some this involved actively hiding, whilst for others this was as desire. This supported findings from Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014) which suggested their participants wanted to distance themselves from their diagnosis and therefore keep their dyspraxia invisible.

Payne (2015) also identified similar findings of needing and wanting to be invisible due to not wanting to be seen as different. This emphasized how the young people wanted to be like their TD peers, and desired to fit in and be accepted. The findings of the current study support these findings and this need for acceptance was very strong for the young people involved. Like Payne (2015) the current study identified that the desire to be accepted and understood was strong and was felt as being needed by teachers and peers.

Most felt accepted by family members and for some this provided immense comfort and safety to venture forward in life, for example Esme who planned to go to a university with family connections. For some there were valued relationships within education, mostly in informal settings, but a few in formal settings. As Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014) identified learning support assistants were particularly supportive to some whilst, for others, leaders of extracurricular activities provided much needed support and guidance.

Peer relationships for the young people in this current study differed. Many reported having a close group of friends who they felt understood them and accepted them and their dyspraxia. Certainly, for most these friendships were important to mitigate some of the negative effects that the school experience had for them. These findings support those of Payne et al (2013) and Payne (2015) who reported that despite experiencing social exclusion and bullying the young people in that study reported finding practical and emotional support in their friendships and had some form of social group they could reply on.

This similarity of the experience of bullying and social exclusion was shared by the young people in this current study and was experienced throughout schooling for some and supported findings by Lingham, Novak, Emond & Coad (2014) and Kane & Farrants (2018). Some of the young people however appeared to be more resilient to it, like Rhys, who took it upon himself and his close group of friends to try and eradicate it from his schooling system, while others like Callum were consumed by it for many years. What has not been noted before necessarily is the young people in the current study indicating that this exclusion and bullying occurred from their teachers in some forms as well as from peers. This is a worrying finding and one that certainly needs to be considered further.

A major difference in findings from this current study to the studies considered in the scoping literature review (chapter 2) and the vast literature base for which chapter 1 and 2 drew upon, is the application of a psychological view point, particularly with reference to a Critical Disability Studies and humanistic psychology interpretation. Only Edmonds (2012) had considered qualitative findings of experiences of dyspraxia using CDS. Therefore, this study’s findings and interpretations contribute much needed knowledge and analysis to this growing body of literature. Importantly it explores the ways in which these young people are hindered by structural processes within education, processes which should be helping all to achieve their best, but which currently do not and which affect their psychological wellbeing, academic progression and therefore their abilities to reach their true potential. This new theoretical framework provides a consideration of findings which support previous work in the area, with the hope being that it can provide a further level of understanding and therefore support for these young people.

6.3 Contribution of this study to wider understanding

The findings from this study support the idea that the profile of dyspraxia will differ for each individual. Some of the young people for example found it easy to ride a bike while others struggled significantly with this skill. However, there are many similarities such as tiring easily with handwriting and walking. It is clear however that no one-size-fits-all approach can be applied and neither can a one-size-fits-all understanding be applied. This study confirms what has been identified in the literature that there are a wide range of symptoms which vary in severity and what one child finds difficult with will not necessarily be the same for another child. In exactly the same way, even if two children experience the same symptoms they will inevitably experience it in differing ways and to differing degrees.

This study brings an important new element to the emerging literature that explores dyspraxia and young people’s experiences, by focusing on these experiences within education, but more importantly, by doing so through a psychological lens, thus considering an important developmental time for these young people and how their dyspraxia impacts on their ability to engage with education, what the barriers are and how all of these experiences affect their psychological development and wellbeing. This is a new focus of attention in this newly emerging field and one of great significance and importance for the understanding of children’s development more generally.

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AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WITH DYSPRAXIA IN UK SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

Volume 2 – Appendices

Casey Olivia Jane Edmonds

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2020

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research questions

Research question:

What are the educational experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools?

AIM: to explore the lived experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools and their understanding of these experiences as well as their understanding of the factors that influence their progression and attainment.

Secondary research questions

1. What does the exploration of the lived experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools tell us about their motivation, engagement educationally, socially and in extracurricular activities?

AIM: to contribute to knowledge surrounding educational engagement and social interaction for this group.

2. What does the exploration of the lived experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools reveal about their sense of identity?

AIM: To understand the sense of identity, self-esteem and confidence of this group of children and the impact the experiences educationally have on this.

Appendix B: Interview schedule

Your dyspraxia

How old were you when you were diagnosed?

How did you feel before you were diagnosed?

How did you feel after you were diagnosed?

What are the main symptoms of your dyspraxia that you feel affect you?

Peer and teacher relationships

Can you tell me about your experiences with your friends and peers?

Can you tell me about your experiences with your teachers?

Educational engagement.

How much do you enjoy school?

What are you favourite lessons and why?

What are your least favourite lessons and why?

What are your strengths at school?

What do you find most difficult?

Support at school

Are you involved in the decisions regarding your education? For example pcp, iep etc

Do you feel able to talk to people at the school about your dyspraxia?

Do you feel supported in school with your dyspraxia?

Do you feel your dyspraxia is understood in school? If so how, if no why not?

What additional support do you receive for your dyspraxia?

What support do you feel helps you achieve your goals?

Barriers to success

What kinds of things at school do you feel are preventing you from achieving what you want to achieve?

Do you feel your Dyspraxia is understood at school?

Extracurricular activities

Do you attend any school clubs?

Which ones?

Why did you choose them?

Do you enjoy them?

Appendix C: Information letter Parents

Parental Information sheet

University of East London

Cass school of Education and Communities

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London E15 4LZ

University Research Ethics Committee

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the program in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Fieulleteau, Ethics Integrity Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD

(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk).

The Director of Studies

Dr Sharon Cahill

Or

Casey Edmonds

0208 223 6417

Cass school of Education and Communities

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London E15 4LZ

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools

Project Description

The aim of my research is to find out what the experiences of secondary school aged children with Dyspraxia are in the UK. In order to do this, I hope to speak with children with Dyspraxia who are aged between 11 and 17 years old about their everyday experiences in school and how they feel their Dyspraxia affects them. As little is known about how a child experiences their Dyspraxia, and even less is known about how they experience school, it is hoped that this project will contribute new knowledge about how it is for children in the UK who have Dyspraxia. Often children are not asked how things are for them, and this is especially true for those with Dyspraxia, therefore hopefully your child will find it beneficial to be able to express their experiences fully. The methods I will use to facilitate discussions with the children in this study include using drawings and photographs produced by the children to help them describe their experiences and what is important to them as well as ‘wikis’ which are an easy to use software platform enabling children to create and produce their own content which can be used as a way of exploring the issues regarding their experiences.

Confidentiality of the Data

So that I can remember clearly and accurately what your child says I would like to record the interviews, I will do this by recording with an audio recorder. These recordings will only be heard by myself and once the project is complete they will be destroyed.

The wikis will be password protected and only accessible by your child and yourself and myself as the researcher. Any drawings or photographs will be given an identifier number so that they can be anonymized.

Anything your child says in the interviews will remain confidential and will be anonymized when I am writing up the findings so that all names and identifying features will be changed in order that your child can not be identified. However due to the small numbers of participants in this study it may be possible that you as parents may recognize some of your child's information. Should your child disclose anything of a serious nature which I feel puts them or others at risk, I will discuss this with them and discuss the need to inform the appropriate adults in order that their safety remains.

If any drawings or photographs are to be used as data, I will ask your child and yourself to sign a separate consent form for each drawing or photograph authorizing their use as data, otherwise they will only be used to facilitate discussions.

The data will be securely stored and kept for the standard 5 years after which time it will be destroyed.

Location

A location of your child's choice

Disclaimer

Your child is not obliged to take part in this study, and is free to withdraw at any time during the project. They may also withdraw their data at any point up until the point of analysis, at which point it will be impossible to disentangle their data from that of other participants). Should your child choose to withdraw from the program they may do so without disadvantage to themselves and without any obligation to give a reason.

Appendix D: Information letter Child

Young person Information sheet

University of East London

Cass school of Education and Communities

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London E15 4LZ

University Research Ethics Committee

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the program in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Fieulleteau, Ethics Integrity Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD

(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk).

The Director of Studies

Dr Sharon Cahill

Or

Casey Edmonds

0208 223 6417

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Stratford Campus

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London E15 4LZ

Project - An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools

My name is Casey Edmonds and I am studying for my PhD. I am doing a project looking at what the experiences are of children aged 11-17 who have Dyspraxia, especially their experiences in education/school.

I would really like to hear about your experiences of your Dyspraxia, your experiences of school and your experiences of learning. Currently there is very little known about how children and young people experience their Dyspraxia and especially how it affects them at school, I hope that by talking with me you will be able to express your experiences which will help to educate others about how Dyspraxia is experienced by children your age.

Our talk would be private, although you are welcome to have someone with you if that is what you wish and our talk can take place where you feel most comfortable.

So that I can remember exactly what you have said I would like to record our talk using an audio recorder. Only I will hear the recording and it will be deleted at the end of the project.

I will write up our talk but will change your name and any other information that identifies you when I write it so that no one will be able to identify you if they read it, however because I am going to be speaking with a small number of children it may be possible for your parents to recognise some of the information as yours. Everything we discuss when we talk will remain confidential, however if you say anything which I feel puts you or others at risk, I will discuss this with you and will let you know that we need to speak to an appropriate adult to ensure that you are protected.

As well as talking with you about your experiences I would like you to be able to create a ‘wiki’ which is a visual way of representing information about you using software on a computer. I will show you how to use it and you can choose whether or not you want to use it. I would also like to use drawings and photographs as a way of you expressing your experiences, and again you can choose if you want to do this or not. All of these things can be used during our talk and may help us to focus on the things that are most important to you as well as help you explain your experiences. If we decide that any of your drawings or photographs are to be used as data, I will ask you and your parents to sign a separate consent form for each drawing or photograph saying that you are happy for them to be used as data, otherwise they will only be used during our discussions.

You can ask for the interview to stop at any time and can withdraw from the project at any time without needing to give a reason. You may also withdraw your information from the project at any time up until the point at which I analyse it as at this point it will be impossible to separate it from other people’s information.

If you are happy to talk to me as part of my project please can you sign the attached consent form.

Appendix E: Consent form Parent

Parental consent form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent for my child to Participate in a research project

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which my child has been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to my child, and they have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which my child will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that the research will involve my child being interviewed as well as producing visual data such as producing a wiki, drawings and photographs if they choose to and this has all been explained to my child and to myself.

I understand that my child's involvement in this study, and all data from this research, will be anonymized, however it may be that parents may recognize information from their own child. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the raw data. It has been explained to my child what will happen once the research has been completed.

It has been explained to me that my child and myself will be requested to give consent for the use for any visual data using a separate consent sheet which will state the items identifier number and what we consent the visual data to be used for.

I hereby freely and fully consent to my child participating in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.

Having given this consent I understand that my child has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to them and without being obliged to give any reason. They may also withdraw their data up to the point of analysis.

Parent's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ……………………………………………………………………….

Parent's Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ………………………………………………………………..

Investigator's Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ………………………….

Appendix F: Consent form child

Child consent form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research project

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above research project ☐

I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep ☐

The research has been explained to me ☐

The use of wikis, drawings and photographs has been explained to me ☐

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions ☐

I understand what the research project is about and what my involvement in it is ☐

I have been assured that my participation in this research will be confidential ☐

I know what will happen to my data after the research project is completed. ☐

I know I can withdraw from the research at any point ☐

I know I can withdraw my data up to the point of analysis ☐

I agree to take part in the research project ☐

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ……………………………………………………………………….

Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researchers Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ………………………………………………………………………..

Researchers Signature ……………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ………………………….

Appendix G: Visual data consent form

Consent form for visual data

Child & Parent

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent for visual data to be used

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools – Implications for policy

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above research project ☐

I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep ☐

The use of my drawings or photos as data has been explained to me ☐

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions ☐

I understand how my drawings or photos will be used ☐

I am happy for the following drawings or photos to be used for the following purposes ☐

Drawing/photo identifier number	Consent for:- use as data	Consent for:- reprinting in thesis	Consent for:- use in publication	Consent for:- use in presentations	Child consent	Parental consent

Participant Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ……………………………………………………………………….

Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Parent Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ……………………………………………………………………….

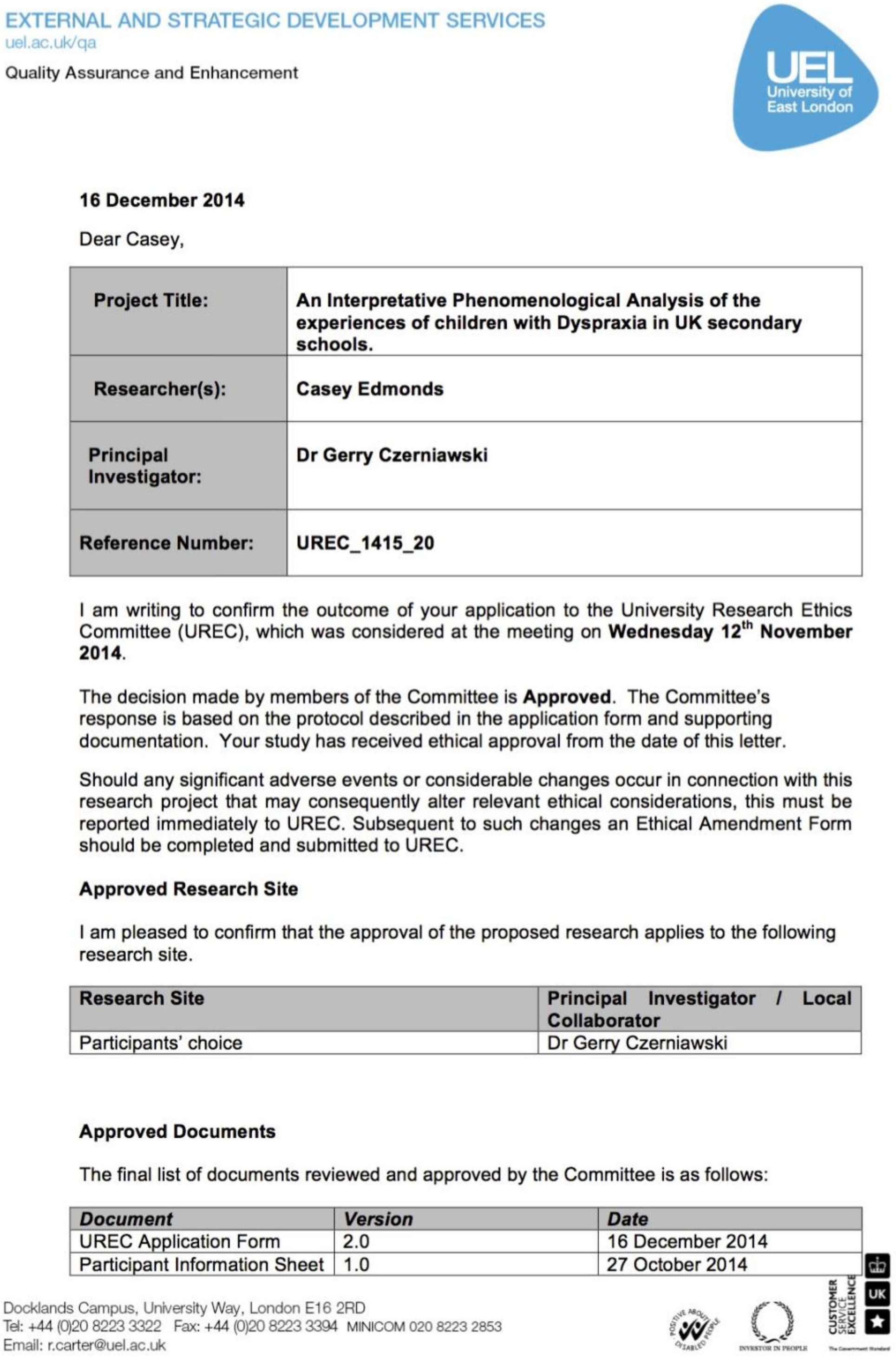
Signature ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researchers Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ………………………………………………………………………..

Researchers Signature ……………………………………………………………………………………….

Date: ………………………….

Appendix H: Ethics approval letters



EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
uel.ac.uk/qa
Quality Assurance and Enhancement

16 December 2014

Dear Casey,

Project Title:	**An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools.**
Researcher(s):	**Casey Edmonds**
Principal Investigator:	**Dr Gerry Czerniawski**
Reference Number:	**UREC_1415_20**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 12th November 2014**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	**Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator**
Participants' choice	Dr Gerry Czerniawski

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	***Version***	***Date***
UREC Application Form	2.0	16 December 2014
Participant Information Sheet	1.0	27 October 2014

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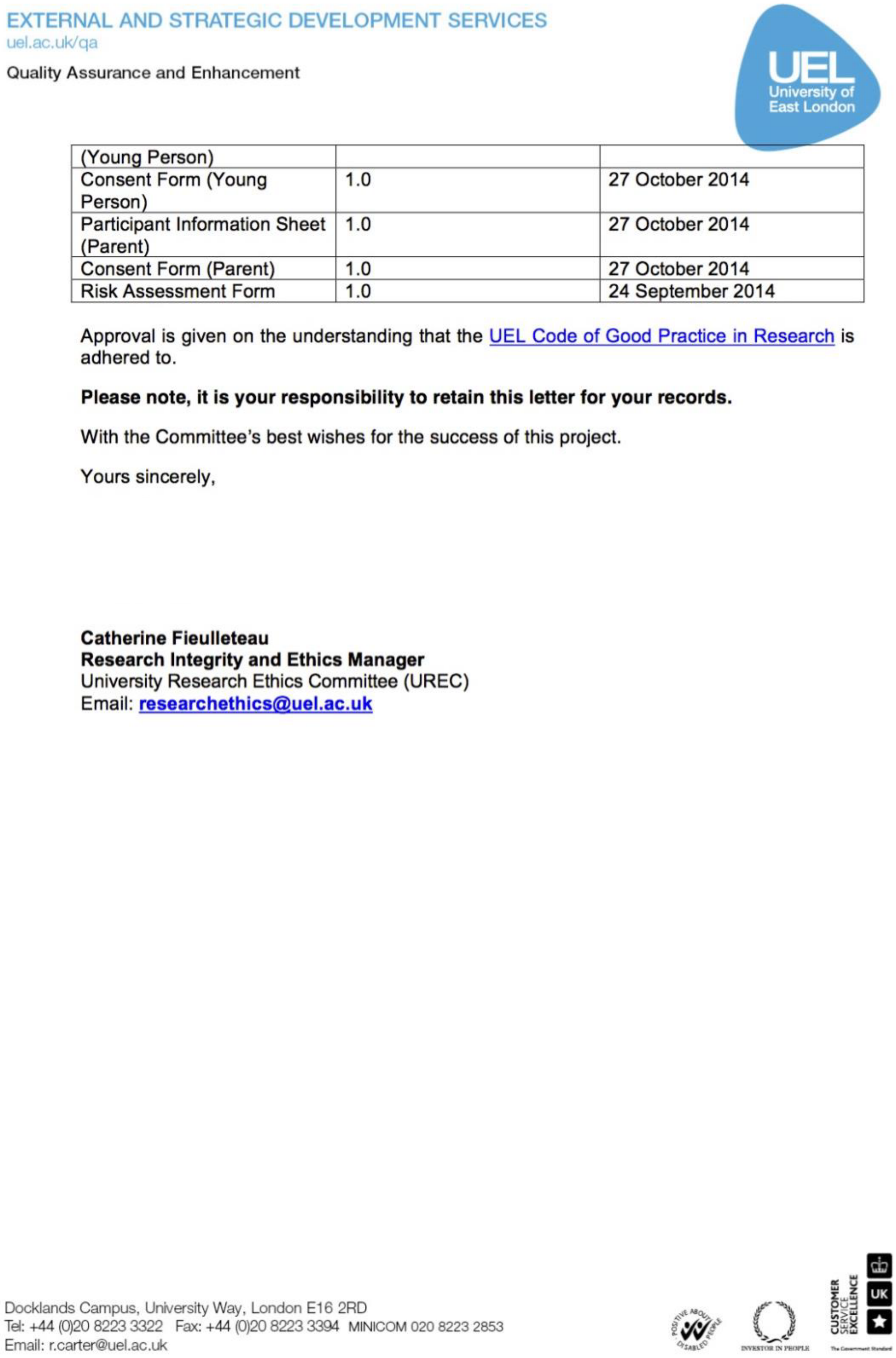


(Young Person)		
Consent Form (Young Person)	1.0	27 October 2014
Participant Information Sheet (Parent)	1.0	27 October 2014
Consent Form (Parent)	1.0	27 October 2014
Risk Assessment Form	1.0	24 September 2014

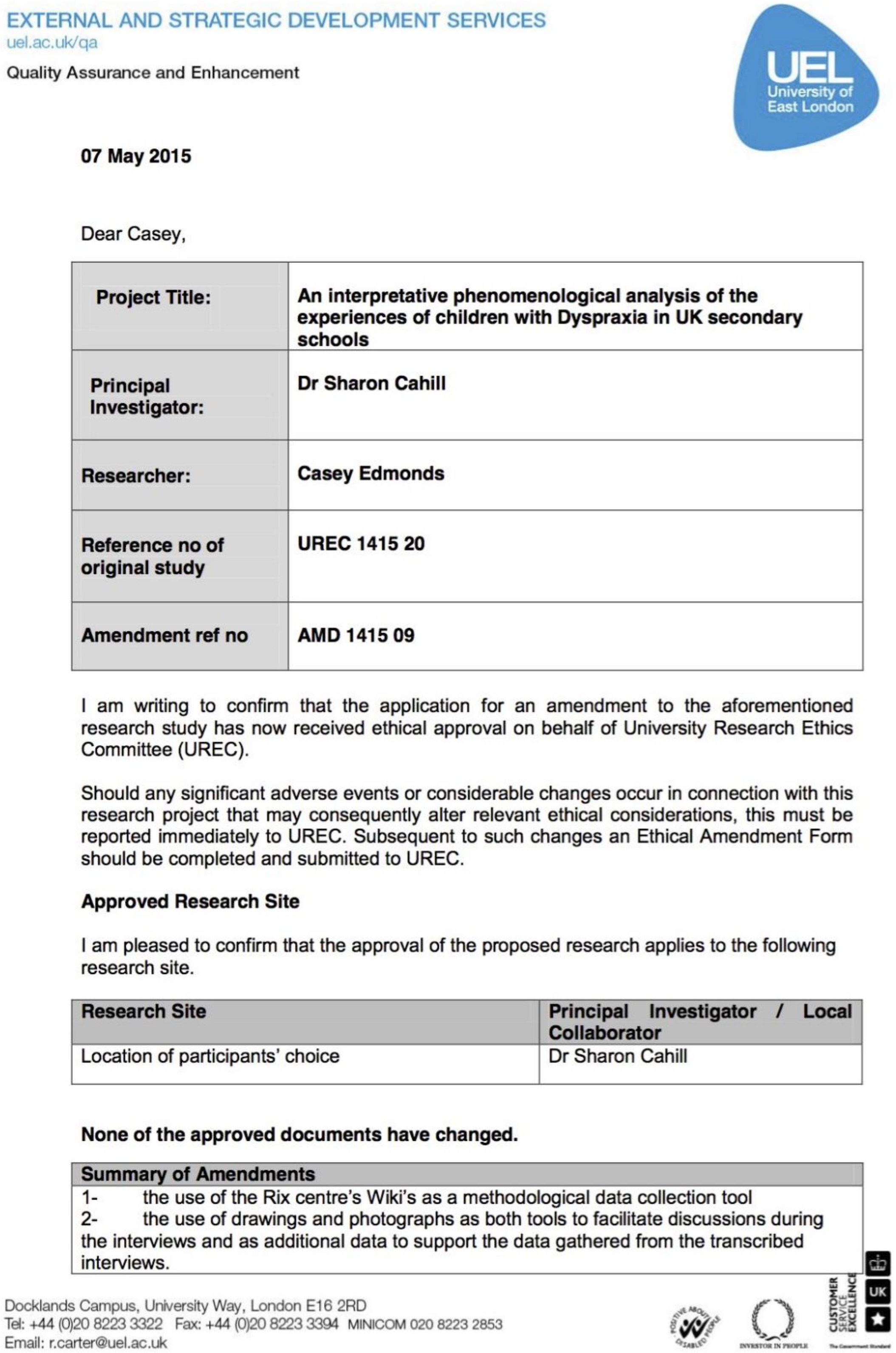
Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Fieulleteau
Research Integrity and Ethics Manager
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**



EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
uel.ac.uk/qa
Quality Assurance and Enhancement

07 May 2015

Dear Casey,

Project Title:	**An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experiences of children with Dyspraxia in UK secondary schools**
Principal Investigator:	**Dr Sharon Cahill**
Researcher:	**Casey Edmonds**
Reference no of original study	**UREC 1415 20**
Amendment ref no	**AMD 1415 09**

I am writing to confirm that the application for an amendment to the aforementioned research study has now received ethical approval on behalf of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	**Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator**
Location of participants' choice	Dr Sharon Cahill

None of the approved documents have changed.

Summary of Amendments
1- the use of the Rix centre's Wiki's as a methodological data collection tool 2- the use of drawings and photographs as both tools to facilitate discussions during the interviews and as additional data to support the data gathered from the transcribed interviews.

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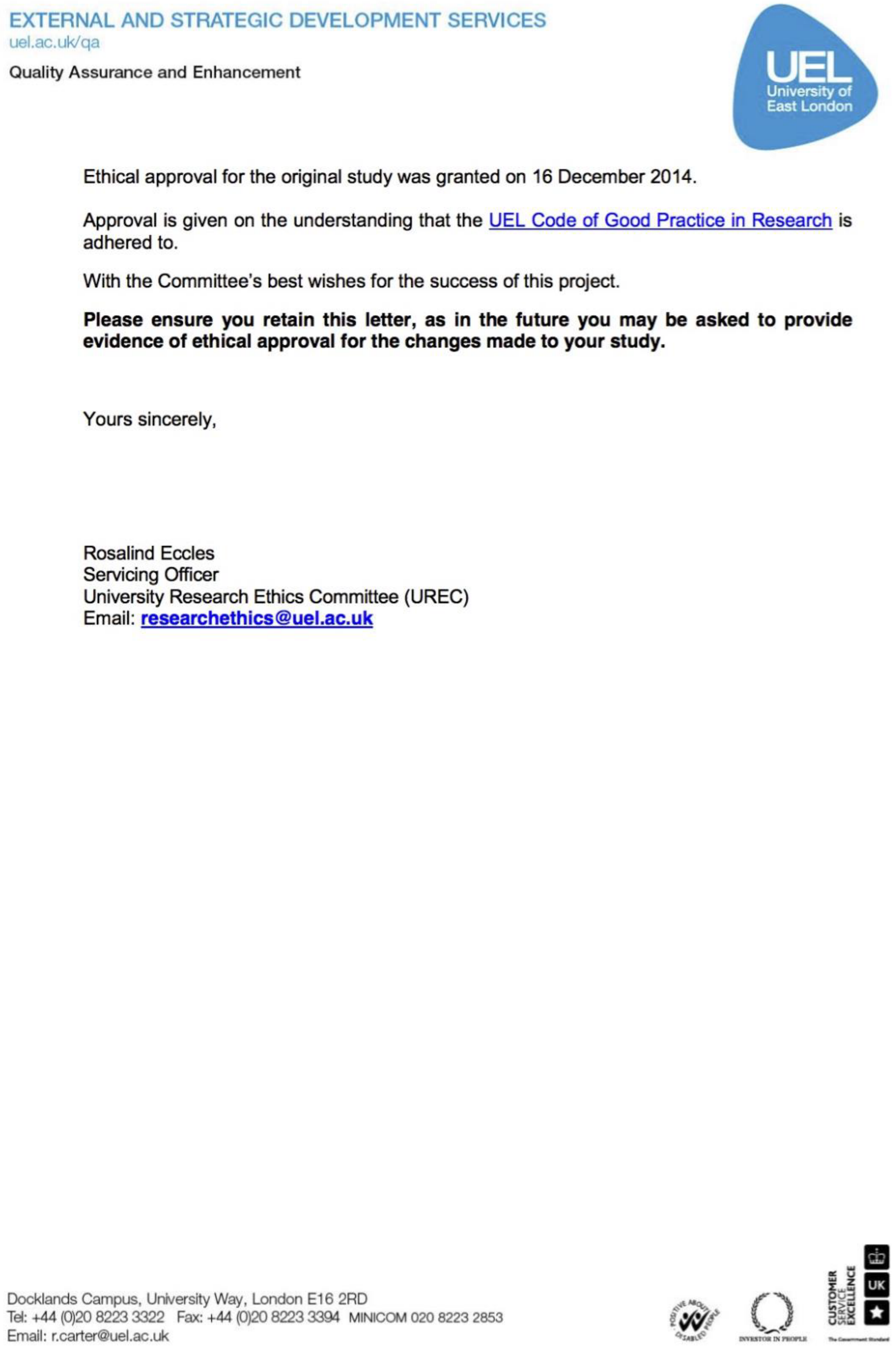


EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
uel.ac.uk/qa
Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Ethical approval for the original study was granted on 16 December 2014.

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Good Practice in Research is adhered to.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Please ensure you retain this letter, as in the future you may be asked to provide evidence of ethical approval for the changes made to your study.

Yours sincerely,

Rosalind Eccles
Servicing Officer
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Email: **researchethics@uel.ac.uk**

Appendix I: DBS Certificate

Appendix J: PhD-1 (M) Mark Interview transcript.

(R: = researcher Mark: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place at UEL. Only the participant was present)

R: So did you have any questions before I start asking you questions?

Mark: I will probably think of some as we go along.

R: You'll probably think of some, yeah, okay but please feel free to not answer anything or change the topic or whatever, this is your chance to tell me all about dyspraxia. So I've got some kind of ideas of things that I think might be useful to talk about, they might not be what you want to talk about erm so I've kind of done it in this mind map, just because this is how my mind works. So yeah, so shall we start with how old you were when you were diagnosed? Do you remember?

Mark: Not really my mum and dad told me I was probably around about, I don't know, probably about eight or something but I might have had it before then so I'm not really sure.

R: Yeah, do you remember going and being assessed?

Mark: what before?

R: yeah, well do you remember when, I mean you might not, because it might have been so long ago, but do you remember going and seeing anybody who then sort of diagnosed you with dyspraxia?

Mark: not really, I don't remember going to that.

R: okay, okay. Have you heard of….sometimes it's called dyspraxia and sometimes it's called developmental coordination disorder, have you heard that?

Mark: I’ve heard of that a few times, but not that much.

R: Not that much, so you don’t prefer one term over the other?

Mark: I prefer dyspraxia.

R: okay. So if you can’t really remember being diagnosed can you tell me a bit about how you feel, your memories from when you’re younger, how you feel dyspraxia had an impact on you?

Mark: Erm, I don’t seem to remember it having like a huge impact, I mean……..today still dyspraxia’s not really that bother me that much.

R: okay.

Mark: I mean yeah I’ve had a few struggles in school but everyone has that, so….. Maybe I have more than often but it does usually affect me, but not like that much, but quite small ways I don’t really recognise.

R: okay, what ways do you think it affects you?

Mark: Erm.

R: because you said in some small ways it does……

Mark: Some small ways. [long pause] Erm I’m not really sure about that.

R: No, okay. And how old is your brother? He is younger than you isn’t he?

Mark: he was 13….today’s 27th isn’t it?

R: Yes.

Mark: he was 13 on Sunday

R: oh okay and you’re 16?

Mark: yes.

R: okay so you must be, are you in year 11 at school now?

Mark: Yeah.

R: Right okay doing GCSE’s?

Mark: (agreed by making noise)

R: how's that?

Mark: Erm yes it's a bit of a lot to process, but it's gonna have to be like that.

R: what subjects are you doing, because you get to choose some of them don't you?

Mark: Choose, yeah I've chose Media, French, Support and History.

R: ah okay. So erm, do you think…in school, you said you had some struggles but that everybody does, in what ways do think you've had struggles?

Mark: well, it's not so big now but I used to struggle in Maths.

R: right okay.

Mark: because that's sort of become my weakness, but now I'm not so bad at it, don't know if it happened over sleep or something, but I'm not so bad as I used to be.

R: okay. And did you get some help when you were struggling with Maths at school?

Mark: I got a bit of help not like too much.

R: right, how did they help you?

Mark: Erm they'd usually take me out of the lesson that….well I can't really say that it wasn't that important…..

R: Yeah so they'd take you out of other lessons.

Mark: Yeah.

R: Okay and then what? Did you have one-to-one support with a teacher?

Mark: yeah.

R: yeah okay. And how did you feel when you were struggling with the Maths?

Mark: Erm, I just guess…….I was struggling really….yeah it's like my brain was
going to sleep pretty much and that was it I think, nothing drastic.

R: right okay. And so did you ask for the support or did they offer the support?

Mark: I think the school offered it, but my mum might have emailed them to say, I'm not sure.

R: Yeah. And how did you find it when they took you out of some of your other lessons to give you that?

Mark: I guess it depended on which one really

R: right. Some lessons are better to miss then?

Mark: Some depending….

R: Right. So what ones did you enjoy missing?

Mark: I can't even remember which ones I was taken out of to be honest.

R: Okay. But was it….did you find it helpful when you had those sessions one-to-one?

Mark: Quite helpful yeah.

R: Yeah, okay. And how about your teachers, at school? In secondary school? How do you think, erm, your relationship with your teachers was?

Mark: Yeah good I haven't got into real big trouble or anything like that.

R: Right. And do you think they understand your dyspraxia or…..?

Mark: Erm, I don't, I don't really think so I think they know I've got something but, cos usually, I don't know if they're gonna do it this year, but on parents evening they usually have this little thing saying about I've got dyspraxia and all that.

R: Right okay, what's that then?

Mark: It's like a mini leaflet my dad makes

R: Oh wow, oh okay, and does he give that to the teachers?

Mark: He gives that to the teachers after.

R: Oh okay that’s really handy. Okay. Did he do that since you’ve been in secondary school or was that when you were younger as well?

Mark: Erm, he’s done it since I was in year eight.

R: Ah okay.

Mark: So not that long but a bit though.

R: Yeah. So how do you find that, your dad making leaflet to give to your teachers?

Mark: It’s quite helpful, I guess. Yeah that’s it really.

R: Okay. So do you think once they’ve got that leaflet do you think they understand a bit more?

Mark: A tiny bit I guess not like a big difference, but yeah.

R: Okay. It’s quite helpful though actually to give them a bit of information isn’t it?

Mark: yeah

R: Because it’s not as well-known as I don’t know dyslexia say, so yeah that’s quite useful. Okay and to do you think your teachers…….I mean none of your teachers are here and they’re not going to know you’ve talked to me, so you can tell me anything and everything…but do you think your teachers have been supportive, or do you think sometimes they have not been so supportive?

Mark: I guess……..they’ve been quite supportive, a few of them have been, but not like too supportive like LSA’s and all that, so yeah.

R: so the LSA’s have been supportive?

Mark: quite supportive yeah

R: okay so what makes them supportive then? What is it that……

Mark: well usually I get like a link worker in lessons, I haven't had that much this year but I guess I'm more…..

R: but you have done?

Mark: yeah, I've been more like, what's the word I'm thinking of? Reliable now, so yeah.

R: so what did your link worker used to help with?

Mark: anything, any lesson really.

R: And you said that you've been more reliable now, so what were the issues before?

Mark: I don't think it was like there was any issues because I was quite new and shy and all that, as everyone is, yeah so…….

R: yeah and have you been at the same secondary school since year seven?

Mark: yeah

R: yeah okay. And was it one that…cos…when you were at primary school……did you go to the same secondary school as a lot of your friends, or was it very new?

Mark: Erm, well there is a few people from my old school, but I'm not too friendly with them, and others…… my other friends I think one went to Harrowell, a few went to St Edmonds.

R: Right okay. So moving from primary to secondary school you to make new friends really?

Mark: yeah

R: and how was that?

Mark: Erm, it wasn't…..well it was a bit difficult, but I sort of made more friends before the year ended really.

R: right okay so it took a bit of time

Mark: took a bit yeah but nothing that bad.

R: So what do you think it took time to make friends, because you said it was a bit difficult that move

Mark: I guess it was quite, being a bit shy, cos year six you're the biggest and year seven you realise how small you are compared to the others and as I've realised now the year sevens get smaller and smaller, I mean literally smaller and smaller so yeah.

R: Right okay and I imagine, I don't know what primary school and secondary school they are, but quite a lot of primary schools there's a lot less children per year isn't there, so you suddenly go from quite small school to quite a huge school.

Mark: Er yeah, huge yeah.

R: Right okay. And what about finding your way around, because I know for some people with dyspraxia they sometimes have difficulty finding, you know they get used to this is my primary school and that classroom is there and that one's there, and then suddenly having to move classrooms, because in primary school you're in one classroom usually, aren't you, but secondary school you have to move about for different subjects, so how was that?

Mark: Well primary school is basically one big block, and secondary schools like got different blocks, I did get lost a few times but now I've got used to it, I know when most things are, so I don't really get lost, I might forget what room I'm meant to be in but I always find out eventually so. Yeah

R: Yeah, I guess that's the same for a lot of children isn't it? Going up from primary to secondary school, it's quite confusing. Did they do anything to help you…..I know at my son's school they gave a map to the children so they could remember, because like you say there's different blocks aren't there, the Science block the Maths block, was there anything particular they did to help you with settling in?

Mark: Well you could ask for a map but yeah I probably lost that, I mean I got used to anyway, but yeah it's like cos I lose almost everything, well not almost everything, but quite a bit of stuff, quite small things I usually lose.

R: Right okay. So what kinds of things? You say quite small things.

Mark: Erm, well……[long pause] well nothing really, things, like little toy things, that's it really.

R: Right and what about at school because you were saying they could give you a map but you say you might have lost it, but they give out quite a lot of bits of paper don't they? Are they sort things you would lose?

Mark: Er, it depends I guess. I don't lose as much now.

R: Right. But you used to?

Mark: [Made a noise to say yes]

R: And so how about friendships? Both at primary School and secondary school? You said that moving from primary school to secondary school it was a bit difficult but by the end of the year you got some friends, how were friendships when you were at primary school?

Mark: Erm, I didn't have as many, I probably had about five and quite a few that I knew quite well, and yeah.

R: and with the friends that you had did you play the same sort things?

Mark: yeah pretty much.

R: and what kinds of things did you do? At lunchtime a lot of boys tend to play football don't they and things like that?

Mark: Erm, I'm not a football fan, so, there were a few days we played football but not that often.

R: So what kind of things did you used to do with your friends?

Mark: We just usually hung around, pretty much, yeah.

R: and where those friendships good?

Mark: Yeah.

R: and did you see them after school as well?

Mark: I've seen one a few times after-school, but I don't really contact them as much as I used.

R: You've got new friends at secondary school?

Mark: Well I think so, I haven't really contacted……I haven't contacted them……[rolls eyes upwards while thinking]…………how long has it been……….. so I haven't contacted them in five years, well coming up to six, so yeah.

R: Is there any reason for that?

Mark: Erm, there's not really a reason it's just haven't contacted each other.

R: Yeah Okay. And what kinds of things do you do outside of school? Like any hobbies or clubs or anything like that?

Mark: Well I go to this like youth club on Mondays but that's…..wait is there anything else? Is that it?......Well that's pretty much it, there are a few golf sessions but that's it, that's quite rare usually.

R: Who do you do the golf with? Or is that just on your own?

Mark: Erm there's usually a few, it's like…….junior sessions, yeah.

R: Ah ok, that's good, so you quite like golf?

Mark: Yeah, it's quite relaxing compared to others.

R: So do you think….cos you said you don't like football, are you not a football fan, you don't like watching it, or do you not like playing it?

Mark: I watch it on and off but yeah not…..

R: not a big fan?

Mark: No

R: But those kind of sports like football where everyone's running, do you like taking part in those or are you just….

Mark: Erm well not usually but it gives you like something to do, usually, I'm not usually that bothered so….I just do it.

R: But there's something different about golf? A bit more relaxing you said.

Mark: A bit more relaxing yeah, you still move around but you're not like running or getting tackled or anything like that.

R: Yeah, no golf is quite relaxing actually. So you said you go to a youth club on a Monday, is that tied to a school or is it a church thing or….

Mark: It sort of a….don't know how to explain this….it's a religion thing, but it's not like too religious.

R: Yeah. So is it a…do you go to church?

Mark: No.

R: So you're not particularly….well you don't have to go to church to be religious, but are you religious?

Mark: Not really no.

R: No, so it's just a youth club that you go to and it has a slight religious element to it?

Mark: Yeah pretty much.

R: Ok. And what kinds of things do you do there?

Mark: Er, er, just normal things really, so, play a few games, usually others like come in the group, cos it's got an army thing as well, I can't say army thing, it's not cadets or anything like that, but it's like a kind of army theme-ish as well, yeah so it's got different ranks and all that.

R: Ah. So you said it's not like a cadets….

Mark: No its not cadets, it's not like serious or anything, you can have a laugh, yeah.

R: And do you have an army uniform or…

Mark: Er, we have a uniform, it's not like army kind of thing.

R: Right, what's the uniform like?

Mark: Just blue, pretty much.

R: Right ok.

Mark: It's not a particular thing you have to wear.

R: Yeah.

Mark: Well it is but you can wear like…….pretty much, like if you forget it like they won't tell you off for it, they'll say bring it next time or whatever.

R: Oh ok, and so what kinds of things do you do with that army side of it?

Mark: Er basically…drill….that's it.

R: Ok, so what like marching?

Mark: Yeah

R: Ah, and do you take part in any kind of events?

Mark: There are a few events that, cos there's other like….it's in a….it's basically spread across…I don't know whether to say UK or….yeah spread across the UK so like Scotland and all that, yeah.

R: So what's the youth centre called? Cos you said its spread across the country so….

Mark: Well, er, it's called the ABCD

R: Ah ok, I've not heard of that one, I'll have to have a look at those. But you enjoy going there?

Mark: Yeah

R: And is it a lot of other…erm children is not the word is it? You're 16, I hate saying children that makes you sound like you're that big, but lots of other people your age? Or is it kind of a wide age range?

Mark: Well they've got a junior section and a senior section so I'm in the senior section. The senior sections like 11to whenever basically

R: Right ok, and then they have the junior section

Mark: The junior section is….I've no idea, I think it's like 7 to 11 or maybe 10.

R: Ah ok, so is there a lot of people that go?

Mark: There's quite a bit yeah

R: So what do you think it is about that….how long have you been going as well?

Mark: I must of went for the senior for about 2 or 3 years.

R: Ok, so what do you think it is about that that you like? Cos you've been going for quite a while.

Mark: I guess it's like meeting people roughly your age or a bit older and yeah.

R: and are they different to the kids at your school?

Mark: Erm…I mean there's one that goes to my school that doesn't live that far from me….so yeah.

R: Ok and do you like the drill?

Mark: Well…..[laughs] it's not bad, it's a bit, it gets a bit boring cos you know what the moves are and all that, but yeah.

R: Yeah my son is in a cadet's thing and it sounds very similar but he does a lot of the marching and the drill and stuff. Quite interesting. And so you go there once a week?

Mark: Yeah.

R: But other than a bit of golf there's no other clubs or anything?

Mark: No that's it.

R: Ok. And did you used to be involved in any other clubs? Had you tried anything like scouts or……

Mark: No. My brother went to cubs but I didn't do anything.

R: You didn't fancy that?

Mark: No.

R: Ok. So going back to school, how do you manage homework? Do you find….

Mark: Well….homework………erm it depends I guess.

R: On what?

Mark: Like the subject. Cos now I've got the support option which helps more time to do homework and all that so if you don't finish it, you've got most of it done, you know what to do so yeah you finish it at home, yeah that's pretty much it.

R: so that support option, is that in place of a GCSE? Or on top of…...isn't it?

Mark: Erm well you don't have to do an exam, so….

R: No, so that's kind of a space to….

Mark: That's a space to do stuff pretty much.

R: Yeah and are there teachers there? Or support?

Mark: Yeah there's a few teachers, there's like from…cos we've got…not sure about upper school…it's like learning support and language support so yeah

R: and so it's in there?

Mark: Yeah

R: and how many people are in that group?

Mark: Erm not that many, 2. So there's more space to do stuff and yeah.

R: Ok that sounds really useful. And do you like going to that? Do you think you get a lot out of that?

Mark: Er yeah it gives me more time to do stuff and yeah.

R: and can you use that space to…..cos if you've got teachers or learning support people there with you in that time, do you use that space to sort of ask any questions?

Mark: Erm well not really, if you've got any like worries then they'll probably just save up anything but nothing yeah

R: so it's just a useful space to do, get the work done then?

Mark: Yeah pretty much.

R: so do you get a lot of it done in that time?

Mark: Erm yeah pretty much

R: and is there anything about, do you think you get more work done in those session than you do during normal lessons?

Mark: Erm…….probably about the same to be honest

R: Ok, so it's….cos I was just wondering whether it was more helpful to be in a smaller…

Mark: It is a bit more helpful to be in a smaller class you got more done and stuff, I mean others you've got a big class they're gonna ask questions and yeah not gonna get much work done in the time and space.

R: Right. And in your normal lessons, erm, normal lessons…I mean the lessons other than the support lesson, but in those lessons…how long are they? Are they an hour?

Mark: An hour.

R: an hour long yeah, so quite often teachers have got to fit in quite a lot of stuff in to that hour haven't they, how do you find that? cos I imagine that they'll put things like on the board and they'll give homework out.

Mark: Yeah erm, nothing sort of that bad, there's always some….I don't want to swear…

R: You could swear.

Mark: But basically some idiot or whatever or some person that's really annoying, yeah

R: And how does that impact on you when they're being annoying?

Mark: Erm, just annoys me.

R: So are they being annoying to you or just being…

Mark: No, just annoying as a whole.

R: Yeah, but that's quite distracting isn't it?

Mark: Yeah.

R: and do you find, if they've distracted you, do you find it harder to concentrate on what you were trying to…

Mark: Erm not really.

R: No, I think I would, I'd find it very hard. Yeah but it's quite annoying while they're…

Mark: Pretty much.

R: and do the teachers handle them very well?

Mark: Erm they tell them off, but I mean there’s one he’s like…I don’t think he means to be annoying but…I can’t say he’s pretty much….he hasn’t got many friends and all that…like he’s sort of an attention seeker and yeah he swears quite a lot and everyone teases him and makes him swear….yeah pretty much…he’s annoying when he swears and then he usually makes…when he talks he usually says like whatever swears usually and makes that more louder than the others…yeah.

R: and that’s really distracting isn’t it?

Mark: It is a bit yeah.

R: is there anyone that tries to wind you up?

Mark: Not really no.

R: No. Have you ever had any issues…I mean lots of children with or without dyspraxia have times don’t they where they sort of sometimes get bullied or be teased about something and kids can be cruel sometimes.

Mark: Yeah I got bullied in like…well I didn’t really get….well I got bullied not like beaten up and all that back in primary school yeah and that was it and erm I do get teased a bit but that’s like joke tease and that so nothing that drastic.

R: Right. So is that…cos you said that’s sort of joke teasing, is that people that you would consider to be your friends or is it other…

Mark: Erm well I wouldn’t say they were my friends but I’ve known them quite a while, they’re not bad people.

R: So how does it make you feel when they, even though you say its joke teasing, do you take it as a joke or does it…

Mark: Erm if I was younger I probably wouldn’t, but yeah probably would bit now, not ever joke but yeah.

R: I wonder why they do that, children like I say can be quite cruel to each other at times can't they?

Mark: True

R: And what about during the school day, I imagine your lunch break is the biggest break isn't it? You don't get any other…

Mark: Yeah the lunch break is about an hour, yeah.

R: Right and do you get any other?

Mark: We have….usually the day works two sessions then little break like 15 minutes, then another two lessons then lunch and one more lesson and that's it.

R: And the end of the day.

Mark: Yeah.

R: So what do you do during your lunches? It's quite a long time?

Mark: Erm nothing much I just have mu lunch and hang around a bit and that's it really. Nothing.

R: So there's no sort of groups or clubs or activities at school?

Mark: There are but I don't really attend them.

R: You don't want to?

Mark: Not really [laughs] pretty much.

R: If there was something that you…if they could put on anything at lunch time what would be something that you would like to attend?

Mark: I don't know really, I haven't really thought of lunch clubs or after school clubs…..yeah.

R: Ok. So what kinds of things…cos I said to you about hobbies before didn't I and you go to the youth club on a Monday and a bit of golf, what kinds of things interest you? Maybe that you don't do as a hobby but that you kind of like doing? I mean are you a music person or a film person or reading or….?

Mark: I'm a bit in to films cos I chose media….erm……but that's it really, there's nothing that special, I'm not very musical, I just listen to whatever's on the radio, yeah.

R: Ok, so in your spare time, when you come home from school, if you've got any homework that you haven't done in the support sessions I imagine you try and get that done?

Mark: Yeah.

R: And then what would be like a typical evening then, if you weren't going to the youth club?

Mark: Erm……do the homework and then get free time till dinner and then after that it depends on what time….watch a bit of TV or something then get ready for bed and go to bed really.

R: Ok. Erm, and so….growing up you said you don't really remember going and seeing anyone who diagnosed that you've got dyspraxia but what kinds of things do you think….did you have difficulty with anything particularly do you remember? That you friends maybe didn't, so I don't know riding a bike?

Mark: Erm, well not really. I can't really ride a bike, I used to be alright but now, cos usually what happens is you know you like do something quite good and then you leave if for a year or something then you're like crap at it and yeah.

R: you forget how to do it, yeah.

Mark: That's it really yeah.

R: Right, but did you find it easy to do when you were doing it?

Mark: Erm, well it took me a bit of time cos you know I had to pedal and stuff and yeah.

R: but it's not something you….

Mark: It's not something I do.

R: fancy doing. Not something you need to do I guess is it?

Mark: No

R: so is there any other things that you found difficult or do you not think of it like that? You don't see them as things that you found difficult, it's just the way it was?

Mark: I might struggle a bit but that's it really. Yeah nothing, not difficult I won't go hulk and smash everything.

R: No.

Mark: A bit, maybe just a bit annoyed, but that's it really. If I'm a bit annoyed my mum and dad would probably shout at me, yeah.

R: Ok, and what makes you annoyed? Are there anything….

Mark: Well anything really, well not anything I'm not that gullible but pretty much, I mean obviously my brother cos he intimidates me a lot.

R: Oh does he?

Mark: Yeah.

R: What does he do to intimidate you?

Mark: Well usually just, cos I think he's got OCD, well we think he has anyway cos he always touches people, he usually just touches us in the wrong…not in the wrong places but like wrong times.

R: Right.

Mark: Yeah, he keeps…..I don't know but ever since he's been in year 7 he's acted like he knows everything, it's a bit….I often think that's a younger sibling kind of thing when they are in secondary school but it's a bit annoying.

R: And does he go to the same secondary school as you?

Mark: Yeah.

R: Right. And how's that?

Mark: Erm, I don’t really care because I don’t see him as much, I mean I’ve seen him on and off but yeah.

R: But not as much?

Mark: No.

R: And what else does he do? Because you’ve said it’s annoying when he intimidates you, is there anything else that he does that intimidates you?

Mark: Erm….

R: I’m not going to go and tell him by the way.

Mark: [laughs] er well its usually, when I want to have a bit of private time in my room doing my Facebook or whatever he usually just randomly come in doing nothing, just annoying, usually stealing something from my room which he gets back anyway, yeah.

R: and you don’t share a room then?

Mark: No don’t share a room.

R: I bet you probably like that having your own space. Younger siblings can be erm….I have two boys, well I have three children, my youngest is a girl, and er yeah my middle son tends to terrorise his older brother as well, doing very similar things going into his room it can be quite annoying cant it? And how do you react to him when he’s doing things like that?

Mark: I usually just either tell him to go away and he usually like mock me or whatever and yeah. Usually I just stand up and he’ll usually go out my room and step back then I’ll probably…Ill usually pretend to chase him where my door is I’ll stop there and he’s usually by his room so yeah.

R: and then he goes and leaves you?

Mark: Pretty much and then he…it depends if he comes back, he has done that a few times.

R: You said that he was just turned thirteen.

Mark: Yes just turned thirteen.

R: Yeah so there's three years between you?

Mark: Yeah.

R: and has he always, has that sort of dynamic in your relationship always been there or has he changed as he's grown up?

Mark: No it's pretty much always been there.

R: really? Ok.

Mark: Well apart from the fact that he always thinks he's smarter than everyone but that's it really.

R: Right and he's always been like that?

Mark: No he's never always been like that it's since he's been in secondary school for some reason.

R: Teenage hormones?

Mark: Probably yeah.

R: and so do you have any other siblings?

Mark: No.

R: No just the two of you. Ok. So in school have you got any particular subjects that you really like?

Mark: Not really.

R: No, so what made you choose….cos you said you chose Media, History, Support and what was the other one?

Mark: French.

R: French that's it, so what made you choose those subjects?

Mark: Erm well because I'm not sure if ever school does but by the time you're in year 9 you pick them, they gave us a booklet and it had each subject and what it like had or contained and I was reading it and was thinking of what best suits me and yeah.

R: So what is it that you think best suits you? What made you pick those subjects?

Mark: Well Support I pretty much knew I was going to get that anyway, erm but History I've always been a bit interested in that cos I'm quite a Doctor Who fan and he usually goes back in time and stuff and yeah.

R: So you thought that'd be interesting?

Mark: Yeah I'm not sure if that's the reason but yeah.

R: ok and French, cos I imagine you've been doing French since you were there….

Mark: I've been doing French since I was year 7 and I got a bit better at it since so yeah.

R: and do you enjoy learning a new language?

Mark: Yeah pretty much

R: and you said you like films and you were doing Media because of that. And what about erm handwriting? Do you find…have you found over the years…because people with dyspraxia find that quite hard erm…have you found over the years your handwriting has been an issue for you?

Mark: Er yes it's been an issue.

R: in what way?

Mark: It's like it's quite messy, bit hard to read, I mean what I've found out now if I take my time and do it, it can be a bit more clearer but yeah, usually I rush it and it looks a bit messy, you can read an odd word and that's it.

R: and so at school do you use a laptop or anything?

Mark: Yeah I use a laptop for some subjects.

R: Right ok and is that easier for you?

Mark: A bit easier and it’s a bit time consuming cos you have to load everything but that’s it.

R: But once you’ve got it all up and the document open and you’ve loaded it all do you find it…do you find that you can write more when you’re on a laptop than you can…..?

Mark: Er………………I’m not sure cos people have different handwriting sizes so yeah.

R: I just wondered whether it’s easier maybe to type on the laptop than…

Mark: I guess it depends really for me it’s a bit easier but depends on others…

R: Right and in your exams have you got a lot of….cos History will that have quite a few written exams I’d imagine….

Mark: Well the History one has got two papers…………I mean I’ve done it on the laptop, I think you can do it on the laptop but yeah.

R: and do you think…you’ve said you’ve done it on the laptop so have you done mocks?

Mark: Yeah I’ve done mocks. I did mocks in March, got another one I think the week before we split before Christmas or the week before that I’m not sure I know we’ve got it in December.

R: and how do you find exams?

Mark: Erm, I mean I’ve got separate accommodation, I’ve had anyway, cos…..a few…I can’t remember this must have been September little like tests to see if you need any extra time for exams, yeah.

R: Oh ok yeah, and so do you get extra time?

Mark: They gave me extra time anyway but they just wanted to test if I need it.

R: Yeah I think they have to test and send it off to the exam board don't they?

Mark: Yeah.

R: So you should be able to have extra time and I imagine you'd be able to use the laptop in exams?

Mark: Yeah, well it depends which one, but….

R: Yeah yeah and do you think those things will help you in the exams?

Mark: Erm yeah probably.

R: and do you get nervous before exams or….?

Mark: Erm,………well….I was a bit nervous in the mocks but that was it really, not really that much of a nervous person.

R: Yeah sometimes the nerves can take hold and…

Mark: Well I am a bit nervous but I don't really recognise it.

R: Right ok. That's interesting. Are there other things that you possibly don't recognise?

Mark: Er….

R: Any other feelings or emotions that you don't recognise at the time?

Mark: Yeah pretty much.

R: Right and what kind of things….what kind of emotions are they do you know?

Mark: I can't really think no.

R: What makes you think you don't recognise them? Does someone point out to you afterwards or…?

Mark: No no I think I can guess cos yeah pretty much

R: You just realise afterwards?

Mark: A bit yeah.

R: and how do you deal with that if you've at that time you've not realised what it is that you're feeling but then you realise afterwards, how does that impact on you?

Mark: Well I don't realise straight away but it's like I don't really realise but things like this and I can pretty much realise that, I don't recognise everything that happens to me yeah.

R: So how do you feel being interviewed by me?

Mark: [Laughs]

R: How did you feel coming here? Were you nervous about that?

Mark: Er not really yeah.

R: and you're alright talking with me?

Mark: Yeah.

R: Good. Er, so you said you don't really have a particular subject that you love, but do you have one that you really don't like?

Mark: Not really. Yeah.

R: So would you just say that you kind of indifferent about all your subjects?

Mark: Pretty much yeah.

R: In the middle?

Mark: In the middle yeah.

R: and are there that you particularly…that you find harder than the others?

Mark: There are a few but that just depends on erm what's it called…..curriculum. Cos you know I think after next year they'll all change, yeah.

R: Yes, so what ones do you find harder than others at the moment?

Mark: [Long pause] I'm not sure.

R: Well what part…cos you said it depends on the curriculum, so what parts of the curriculum do you find harder? Is it sort of…I don't know is it when they…if they're explaining a lot of things?

Mark: It's probably a bit explaining a lot of things, I guess what the problem is usually is like cos I've got, as you know I've got half term at this moment, but things like that a week before I'm usually tired and that and yeah, might not take in everything, it might go in one ear and out the other, yeah cos like those things really.

R: Then is it harder if you've been tired and then you've had a week off and so maybe something's haven't gone in, like you say they've gone in one ear and out the other and then you've had a week off, is it harder when you go back?

Mark: Erm well not really but I guess they might recap some stuff.

R: Ok so does that help when they recap?

Mark: A bit yeah.

R: and is there anyway, cos different teachers have different styles don't they but some teachers will stand up and just talk at you whereas other teachers might do things visually they might so of put up slides or get you to watch something and break it up a bit, is there anyway, any particular way that you prefer to learn that goes in easier?

Mark: Well they pretty much do like other like PowerPoint anyway, they don't talk for an hour, yeah.

R: and is that helpful having something visual to look at? And do they give you those PowerPoints if you need them? Or are they just in the lessons and that….

Mark: Well the History ones cos for the mocks they gave us a bit like revision guide I think that was a PowerPoint but that was it really.

R: Was the revision guide useful?

Mark: It’s a bit, they don’t really give us anything to take home like that. Yeah.

R: Ok, and what about after school, what are you going to do? Do you know what you’re going to do after your GCSE’s?

Mark: I’m indecisive at the moment.

R: OK. What are your options? Have you got anything that you’re thinking about?

Mark: Erm I was thinking of doing an apprenticeship I had this little thing before we went on half term and yeah it’s sort of broadened a bit, but the problem is you usually your thinking of something then something else and you might think again and stuff so I think schools usually over exaggerate a bit. So yeah.

R: Right, in what way?

Mark: Er…………its usually like cos I think you’ve probably know that half the schools going to be a bit different and they keep repeating it and it gets a bit boring cos you know they’re gonna say that at least a few times.

R: So you said you were thinking of an apprenticeship, is that because they came in and gave a talk on apprenticeships?

Mark: Er no I was just thinking of it, cos you learn on the job and you get paid, that was the main reason.

R: What kind of apprenticeship?

Mark: I was thinking a Media one, but I haven’t…I probably should look in to it but yeah, haven’t looked into it, I’ll probably look into it November maybe Christmas.

R: Yeah, you’ve still got your GCSE’s coming up haven’t you? So you’d quite like something in media then? There’s quite a few apprenticeships I think in Media, that could be quite interesting. And what is it about an apprenticeship, you said you get paid and you learn on the job so is there anything else?

Mark: I guess it's sort of a work experience thing. I guess the only probably is there's not like that many left.

R: I don't know I think there's quite a few now coming, there's….I'll find a website actually that I can email it over to you, they've got all kinds of apprenticeships on there, I think they're trying to sort of get more apprenticeships.

Mark: Apparently they're quite hard to get.

R: Yeah possibly, but erm, it'd be interesting thing to do though. Do you find that you learn better like that on the job rather than doing exams?

Mark: Er it depends I guess. Cos usually you know year 10 before you leave work experience, they got rid of that when I was in year 10.

R: Did they? You didn't do it?

Mark: No.

R: oh that's a shame.

Mark: But then my parents said like its better off without it because even though it might be a bit useful if you have a thing that you want and you do it and you don't particularly like it then yeah might have to change your mind and all that so yeah.

R: So you don't feel you missed out buy not doing the work experience?

Mark: I did complain but them when my mum and dad said it, it sort of made sense, yeah.

R: Have you had any other kind of work experience? Have you had a little Saturday job maybe or done any voluntary work?

Mark: Erm I did a bit of volunteering for Duke of Edinburgh but that was it pretty much.

R: So was that…cos they do Bronze, Silver and Gold don't they? So which one did you…?

Mark: I’ve done up to Silver so far.

R: Oh brilliant. And you do a lot of trekking for that don’t you? So you took apart in that?

Mark: Does get a bit tiring, yeah, you pretty much have to. It’s like my mum does want me to do gold but I’m just like….for a week, cos I pretty much can’t walk constantly for like three days.

R: How long was the Silver one? Was that three days?

Mark: Silver one’s three days two nights.

R: and so you did that one, that’s really impressive. So it’s a week for the Gold.

Mark: Well Gold one’s a week yeah.

R: Did you enjoy doing it though?

Mark: Yeah its quite fun but don’t think I’ll be…don’t know if I’m doing Gold. I mean you can do till 25 so maybe when I’m a bit older then I’ll consider it, not now, pretty much.

R: And you said that you find it quite tiring walking for three days?

Mark: It does get a bit tiring but yeah.

R: Do you have any aches and pains when you walk for that long?

Mark: Usually but you can have a break so yeah, you don’t walk constantly, your legs might get blisters and stuff but that’s it.

R: And do you think that you find it more tiring because you’ve got dyspraxia or not?

Mark: Not really.

R: Cos anybody walking for three days is going to find it tiring but do you think you find it more tiring?

Mark: Not really I think I find it normal I don’t think it’s something to do with my dyspraxia, it’s just normal.

R: Just normal yeah, I was going to say anybody walking for three days is going to find that tiring so yeah, I wondered whether just because of dyspraxia and coordination and things like that whether it was more tiring, but like I say I think I’d find it tiring for that long. Erm, so have you got any hopes and dreams for the future beyond you know, when you think of yourself in 10 years’ time, or have you got any kind of aspirations of what you’d really love to do?

Mark: Not really. Yeah.

R: Ok. And would you say that school, think of primary first, would you say that was a good experience, a bad experience, a bit of both?

Mark: I don’t…I think primary school is sort of setting you up for what things you’re supposed to be doing and stuff like basic skills and then erm secondary school is like preparing you for what’s gonna happen. Yeah that’s it really.

R: and did you enjoy primary school?

Mark: Erm yeah I enjoyed it but yeah.

R: and how about secondary school?

Mark: Erm it was alright cos I got a new Head Teacher who started back at Easter cos erm my other Head Teacher quit probably this time last year so we had a replacement from Essex, one from Essex and yeah they found a new one, yeah schools been a bit different since then.

R: and so it’s been different good or different bad?

Mark: It’s been a bit more stricter but that’s it really, cos many people complain but then I guess if you’re gonna get a Head Teacher like new they’re obviously gonna overlook something’s yeah.

R: So it’s got stricter since the new Head Teacher’s been there?

Mark: Not that stricter but a bit more yeah.

R: How's that for you? Do you find that better?

Mark: Not really I mean it gets a bit annoying cos you got used to something for about I don't know a few years and then you got something else.

R: Right so what kinds of things are they changing?

Mark: There's like….erm….like keep to the left while you're going down the stairs when the other head didn't really care much, as long as you don't if the teacher has coffee as long as you don't knock that off then that's fine, yeah pretty much.

R: Gosh so you have to keep to the left, so what happens if you don't, if you muddle up the left and right?

Mark: Well apparently you get a detention but I doubt that happens.

R: Right so you haven't had a detention?

Mark: No.

R: I think a lot of the things that happen in schools, those kinds of things, can sometimes be really difficult can't they because it's not like you're trying to do something wrong but if they've got all these various rules , it's quite hard. Are there lots of rules at school of things you must do and mustn't do?

Mark: I don't think there's lots but I think there's quite a bit.

R: Is there anything you particularly find difficult at school?

Mark: Like?

R: I don't know erm, I mean when you go in to school in the morning do you have an alright day or is there something that really niggles like you say you know if you have to walk to the left you find that a bit disorientating?

Mark: I guess it depends on the lessons you've got really. Yeah.

R: Just some days might be better than others?

Mark: Some days yeah.

R: And what about PE? Do you enjoy PE at school?

Mark: Erm, yeah it's alright I mean in year 7 to year 9 they usually taught you some stuff, but like year 10 – 11 they don't really give a crap, you just do whatever, well not whatever but yeah but like they probably expect you know what to do and yeah.

R: Do you like PE?

Mark: It alright yeah.

R: So you don't have a particular favourite subject or a worse one?

Mark: Not really.

R: That's good. You say you don't remember being diagnosed but how do you feel about dyspraxia? How do you feel about having it?

Mark: Er I guess when I was a bit younger I thought it was a bit of a bad thing but now I think it's not that drastic. It does affect me in ways I don't usually recognise instantly but yeah going to the conference thing usually learn a bit more about it and yeah.

R: Right ok and that's the dyspraxia foundation conference isn't it?

Mark: Yeah

R: so was that really useful then?

Mark: Yeah.

R: and you said it affects you in some ways that you don't realise at the time what kinds of things?

Mark: I guess cos they say I can be a bit gullible usually.

R: Who says that?

Mark: I don't know some person last year.

R: Oh at the conference?

Mark: Yeah. Or was it this year? No it was this year, said erm cos he was on this program years ago, not years ago but while ago and yeah, he's like it's a part of a trip down somewhere like people with disabilities so like limb loss and all that and he said he was like the only normal looking one, and yeah.

R: Right. So this was someone at the conference that was saying this, do you recognise those same feelings in yourself?

Mark: A bit I mean I guess some of them are a bit different cos he said he struggles with motor skills, I struggle a bit with it but I don't really…it's not a great big deal now, yeah.

R: and do you think that's because you've chosen not to do things that you might struggle with or that you've just got used to it or maybe found ways of doing things?

Mark: I guess it's probably found ways of doing things and getting used to it really yeah.

R: So would you say you've kind of accepted it as you've got older?

Mark: Pretty much.

R: And are there other ways that erm…cos its interesting you say about it being kind of a hidden thing, erm because with something like dyspraxia it is, it's not something you can see or…so are there other things that you think that having been to that conference and having heard other people that you recognise in yourself?

Mark: Er……………………………..a bit.

R: Anything in particular?

Mark: Not really.

R: But you said that you found it helpful to go to those conferences?

Mark: Yeah.

R: Ok. And if there was anything that you could…..if I was to say to you what does dyspraxia mean to you….is there anything that you could say?

Mark: Erm………………………………………………….not sure. Yeah. I'm not sure how they do it, I'm gonna say email people and stuff, because I can guess they've got my mums email so yeah.

R: Who….sorry….whose got your mums email?

Mark: The conference.

R: The conference has got your mums email? Ok. Yeah. And if there was anything that you could tell schools….not about yourself, or it could be about yourself, but if you wanted to tell schools one thing so that they could understand dyspraxia…is there something you'd particularly want to tell them?

Mark: Not really.

R: Ok. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me about? That you think it would be important for…you know like we said you know nobody's done research asking the person with dyspraxia how they feel so is there anything that we haven't discussed that you would like, that you think is important that people know?

Mark: Not really. I guess dyspraxia is a bit like dyslexia you might have a few struggles but yeah you're still a normal person and everything.

R: Yeah I think that's very important. So for you is it true then that you've had a few struggles but as far as you're concerned you're a normal person those are just struggles other people have?

Mark: Yeah.

R: But might be different struggles for different people.

Mark: Yeah.

R: Yeah I think that’s very true, we’re all very different, we all have different struggles and erm so yeah I think that’s a really useful thing for people to understand. The only other thing I think I’d ask is you said you get some support at school and that that is generally ok, do you think that there is anything that is preventing you from achieving what you’d like to achieve? There might not be but is there anything you think is a barrier?

Mark: [Very long pause]……………..not really, none that I can think of anyway.

R: No that’s fine, there might not be, I just wanted to check. Is there anything else you’d like to say or tell me about?

Mark: [very long pause] not really.

R: ok, alright then, if I think of anything further, would you be happy if I emailed you or asked you any questions? There probably won’t be but if I do would it be ok to contact you and ask you?

Mark: Erm yeah.

R: and how have you found talking about all of this?

Mark: Erm, yeah nothing too drastic or anything.

R: alright then, well thank you very much for talking to me and I hope it’s been useful and it certainly will be for the research. If you’ve got anything you want to ask me once you go home or anything you think I should have told her about that you know you’ve got my details and can email me or call me. Sometimes it’s after we’ve gone away from the situation that we think of things so if anything comes to you and you want to let me know that’d be great and you’ve got those contact details. Ok, well thank you.

Appendix K: PhD-2 (R) Rhys Interview transcript.

PhD-2 (R) Interview transcript.

(R: = researcher Rhys: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place at a coffee shop chosen by the participant, his mother was present and his younger brother was sat a little way away from us)

R: I thought we start by you telling me a bit about….I know we spoke a bit on the phone….but a bit about how old you when you were diagnosed with dyspraxia

Rhys: I don't know…what about 12….no younger yeah….ages ago….

Mum: 2010 your report was done

R: Ok so 5 years ago

Rhys: Yeah 11, 12 ish yeah

R: Do you remember much about your dyspraxia beforehand? Did you know it was dyspraxia before?

Rhys: Erm….no not really just generally felt like 'ah ok that makes sense'

R: and what made sense? What kinds of things did you have difficulty with maybe?

Rhys: Erm….well…I always had like terrible handwriting ….er…couldn't catch calls or whatever so I was terrible at basically every sports in the school.

R: Right, did you like the sports at school?

Rhys: Not particularly. No.

R: What was it that you didn't like about it? Was it because you had difficulty doing it?

Rhys: Probably. I just couldn’t understand any of them and like the most I could ever keep track of the ball so I’d just be standing like in one place trying to figure out where I need to go next….which team I’m on

Mum: as a tiny…I can remember him at 6 months with all his friends rolling a ball towards him and he was all excited and he would just look at it rolling towards him and going ‘what do I have to do with this’ and he’d have to roll it back to you [inaudible] on his face and like ‘ok I’ll do what you want me to do but….’

R: ‘what do you want me to do’ yeah, ok so at what age did you notice…

Mum: 6 months I noticed that

R: At 6 months yeah

Mum: [inaudible] I’d say afterwards ‘I’m really sorry but I have to go home’, I didn’t really and I was quite depressed so it was part of the family attitude really and there wasn’t anything particularly remarkable in my family

R: Yeah

Mum: and now I mean…

R: yes part of that…

Mum:…in my family has dyspraxia and therefore we’re all quite coordinated on somethings and really totally uncoordinated on others.

Rhys: I think I was alright at hockey….like just about

Mum: yeah you were

Rhys: I was alright at hockey

Mum: Put something between you and the ball

Rhys: Yeah

R: Ok so was that…yeah…so having the hockey stick..

Rhys: Yeah not very good at cricket though

R: Right ok

Mum: But had a desire to be

Rhys: yeah

R: yeah I was gonna say did you want to be good at sports?

Rhys: Not really. I like swimming…I really like swimming….still like swimming.

R: ok.

Mum: But that didn't come easy did it?

Rhys: no like first school we were only able to have one a month because we had an outdoor swimming pool that was always shut down cos it raining or something and one time…there was like this massive storm so yeah.

R: Yeah not much fun in an outdoor pool.

Rhys: Yeah.

R: So erm where did you go for the assessment in dyspraxia? Who assessed…?

Rhys: Erm….

Mum: Would you like me to forward it to you now?

R: Oh that'd be really interesting, yeah I'll keep it all confidential. Erm so at the assessment how did you find that?

Rhys: Erm alright I just got asked a load of questions…wasn't exactly sure like what the point of it was but I was like…yeah it was ok.

R: Right. And you said afterwards that once you were diagnosed you actually thought that that made sense.

Rhys: Yeah.

R: So how was it then? It all made sense….were you upset?

Rhys: No.

R: or relieved or happy or…?

Rhys: Yeah in some ways I was quite happy about it I was like 'oh ok I'm not just like terrible at everything….there's a reasons I'm terrible at everything'

R: Right ok, and did that help then?

Rhys: Yeah like a few years after…so from two or three years ago I was able to use a laptop in lessons

R: Right

Rhys: and so that means I've been doing…all my work done faster and so you can actually read it all that sort of stuff….erm so that's helped a lot

R: Right ok. And was that…did the school suggest that using a laptop or was that something that you and mum thought of?

Rhys: Erm…

Mum: In his report it was suggested for the first time when he was 10 and 5 months suggested that erm if he could learn to touch type which he did very quickly

Rhys: Oh yeah

R: Right so you can now do things a lot quicker on the…

Rhys: I can now literally just like look at the board or whatever I'm meant to be writing down or whatever…just look at that and be typing it down

R: Wow, I need that skill….I have to look at my hand

Rhys: I can be typing it down at the same rate as the teachers' typing it down if they're writing it in the lessons

R: Right, so do use that in most lessons now?

Rhys: Yeah. There's like…the only lesson I can't use it is Maths cos that's Maths which isn't practically

R: Yeah, yeah and how do you feel using…dose everyone in your class use a laptop or…are there many people that need to?

Rhys: Well quite a few can use laptops, depends really cos that school basically everyone owns a laptop, erm depends on the teacher really so some teachers will let you use a laptop if they feel you actually need them other teachers will just let you use one if they think ‘yeah if that helps’ and some of them will only let you use them if you’re allowed them in exams.

R: Right. And so you’ll be able to use it in the exams won’t you?

Rhys: Yeah, so I’m allowed to use it for every lesson.

R: excellent.

Rhys: if it’d help yeah.

R: And so at primary school then, I mean you said you had difficult with handwriting and board games and things like that...

Rhys: Yeah

R: How was the rest of primary school? Did you enjoy primary school?

Rhys: Erm overall I suppose yeah, erm it took me ages to learn how to read and write properly though but I caught up really quickly and was much better than most people at it when I figured it out but…

Mum: It took a while…

Rhys: yeah took me a while to figure it out…

R: Right ok yeah, yeah

Mum: [inaudible] but when you caught up…you started reading at Christmas in year one by the end of year one he was reading was about 8 and a half

R: Right

Mum: and he was only five and a half [inaudible]…….skilled on the same course that was the difference with my whole family….[inaudible] …teacher training which my brother do the same things cos he’s thirteen years younger masking *Tim’s* [*Rhys* ’s younger brother] dyslexia nicely cos…[inaudible] the same school he went to for 6 months said they thought it was dyslexia…..his reading [inaudible]….they both thought he wasn't and it thought it was dyspraxia. Some teachers thought it was a major problem.

R: Right. And so did you think it was a major problem at that age or were you not really aware at that age?

Rhys: No, not really aware, I mean I knew my handwriting was bad but that was…

Mum: Break times [prompting *Rhys*]

Rhys: Erm, yeah I think I might have found it kind of like harder to socialise with like large groups of people

R: Right.

Rhys: Like in a one on one conversation…easy…or like a larger conversation with people I know…easy….but….

Mum: you were also kept in at break times as well to finish work

Rhys: Oh yeah

Mum: Do you remember that awful teacher?

Rhys: Yeah it was like I wrote slower so yeah

R: So you had to stay in and catch up on work?

Rhys: Yeah that was…oh yeah

Mum: Yeah she used to reduce him to tears

Rhys: I remember that….now…that was Maths

Mum: she used to say he was not paying attention, not focusing and that he needed to stay…. in order to focus

Rhys: Didn't like that teacher

R: No!

Mum: he sounded perfectly reasonable when I was talking to him he sounded perfectly reasonable and then I got angry with *Rhys* not having breaks and then

I spoke to my mum and she said ‘no, write them a letter’ and you know that’s not going to….but it’s the way he was doing it sounded very…

R: Sounds very plausible yeah. That must have been awful then, so that was in your primary school?

Rhys: Yeah.

Mum: The impact now….you’ve still got from that teacher…the anxiety reaction tend to pick your skin and you picked and picked and it used to be horrific, really, really bad and it was bleeding in school, it was all over his hands in class it was every scratch…so his anxiety levels were really quite high

R: Right

Mum: and that is in direct [inaudible]

R: Yes

Mum: It was usually obviously…..sorry you probably don’t remember cos she left after

Rhys: Yeah I think I’ve blocked it out

R: Yeah, I was going to say how did you deal with that then? So you don’t really remember a lot about her then?

Rhys: Yeah

R: But you remember some of it?

Rhys: Yeah, not really actually….as I said I think I blocked it out.

R: Right. How old was *Rhys* at that point?

Mum: He must have been 6

R: Right ok. So yeah it might be partly that you’re a bit young to….and also probably that you’ve blocked out some of those memories. So if you were being kept in at break time to finish work then that would have been the time that you would have gone out and socialise with the other kids in the class, how did that feel having to stay back in?

Rhys: Erm, can't quite remember…let's think…like didn't quite feel happy about it obviously I was like 'ok I'll get this done like really fast and just make no effort what-so-ever'….literally just like oh ok random stuff…

Mum: You tried really hard

Rhys: Ah did I? Ah….well that's what I remember….although that's probably what I think I remember

R: But you feel you were writing random stuff

Rhys: Yeah. Yeah. That's probably what I remember anyway.

R: So how was break time with friends then, so if you were being kept back and then you would go out how did you get on with other kids?

Rhys: erm I actually got on fairly well with quite a few people.

R: Right, but with small groups you said it was easier?

Rhys: Yeah.

R: What about ….playground….cos I know when I pick my kids up sometimes they're charging around and it's so noisy, did anything else have any effect on you in the playground with them all running around?

Rhys: Erm, yeah there was a fair bit of running around I think, just like tag whatever.

R: Yeah and did you like games like that?

Rhys: yeah I like games like that.

Mum: We did have some teachers raising some concerns that his best friend *Ethan* his teacher said she has some concern about their friendship

R: Right

Mum: and she maybe ask *Rhys* about it, so I said to him "*Mrs Steward* says about *Ethan* and says he's your friend" and he says " oh yes he's my best friend" and so I said "what do you do at break time?" and he said "Oh its hilarious mum, he pushes me over and we laugh and then he pushes me over again and we laugh" and at this stage *Rhys* had no top to his skull….he had surgery…[inaudible] cranio-facial abnormalities when he was born so that bit of fontanel that didn't close…

R: That didn't close up yep so pushing over is not a great game

Rhys: I'm fairly good at…yeah I think I'm fairly good at getting along with people

Mum: yes, but you didn't get riled by it all did you?

Rhys: no.

R: so you quite enjoyed the game of pushing over?

Rhys: yeah, though I more remember the one where like we'd each grab an opposite end of the scarf and run around until one of us fell over

R: [laughs] it is funny that games that yeah…

Mum: The teacher had concerns that someone an acute [inaudible] as together as they were but *Ethan* thought it was great as he was the youngest of 6 [inaudible] his friend and didn't get cross about it either

R: Yes, I guess being the youngest that's probably the only opportunity you do get to do that without…yeah, so then you were about 10 or 11 when you were diagnosed so how was the end of primary going into secondary school once you were diagnosed…

Mum: [inaudible] so there isn't a

R: Ah there isn't it just goes all the way through? Ah ok.

Mum: And by the time he was diagnosed he was a chorister as well

R: yes you mentioned that and was that part of the school the chorister?

Mum: Yeah.

R: How did you get into that?

Rhys: I really like singing.

R: Ok, so it wasn't something you had to do? It was a choice?

Rhys: Yeah.

Mum: You had to sing, as part of school but from the age of 4 he heard the chorister sings for the first time and when he was 4 and he said "mum I want to do that when I'm older" and that's never shifted.

R: Oh wow. Excellent.

Mum: it's very very competitive to get in

R: Yes

Mum: and he continued to say "I'm going to do that"

R: At what age did you get in to do that?

Rhys: Erm well we ended up moving to a whole different school at the age of 8 ish cos I think the thing what happened was like there was one more place in year 4 and it was between me and the choir master's son

R: Oooh

Rhys: yeah. Also the choir master liked people who were fairly good at singing but also could do sports and whatever for some reason, his son was fairly good at singing but could also do sports and whatever

R: And he was his son

Rhys: Yes

Mum: he wasn't allowed to choose him obviously, the people he chose the had to continue to work [inaudible] the choir master's son then took a [inaudible] eighteen months to make a full chorister [inaudible]

R: oh dear

Rhys: yeah

R: So you got that final place?

Rhys: no

Mum: [inaudible] we did back up interviews at various schools, *Newpark academy* and *Beacroft* were very keen

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: And *Phillips Academy*…my ex was [inaudible] at the time and he wanted to move back to here and [inaudible] at the time it was *Phillips Academy* was the better choice of school for you really wasn't it?

Rhys: Yeah.

Mum: More laid back I think.

R: So is *Phillips Academy* where you are now?

Rhys: No. That only goes up to year 8 so…

R: Right oh ok.

Rhys: So moved away from there at like 12 or 13…and then went to *Deerfield* which is really close, went there for a year but then *Tim* had like really bad dyslexia so we thought we probably have to move to *Senfield* to get him to go to a good school for that and so then I moved from *Deerfield* after a year of there to *Appleford Abbey* and like apparently according to a load of studies and also because of stress and not wanting to move straight into GCSE's I retook year 9, so…

R: So then you would have been the oldest in your year?

Rhys: Erm not quite because…

R: Well one of the oldest.

Rhys: yeah one of the oldest.

R: Yeah. Ok and how was that then going from being the youngest, or one of the youngest in your year, and having the difficulties that you did to suddenly going into a new school being one of the oldest?

Rhys: Ah yeah its good like a lot easier, I'm understanding a lot more, like less stress, a lot less stress, cos…I'm not worrying about stuff so much, I mean GCSE year now and most things going fairly well I think.

R: So you're in year 10 now?

Rhys: er yeah I think so, no wait year 11

R: Year 11 so the second year of your GCSE's

Rhys: Yep.

R: and what subjects did you choose?

Rhys: Er well obviously I have to do English and French as….and the three sciences are like compulsory thing but on top of that I choose RS, History and Music

R: Ah ok.

Rhys: Oh yeah….I have to do Maths as a compulsory.

R: Maths yeah I suspected. I didn't think you'd get away with not doing Maths. Ok so History, RS and Music.

Rhys: Yeah.

R: Now the music I can understand because of your interest in singing and everything like so what is it about History that you really liked?

Rhys: Erm well I find it kind of interesting but also I'm just like fairly good at it, I've always been fairly good at it and it was mainly a choice between that and Geography and overall I've generally had worse Geography marks and just found it more boring, much boring

Mum: Graphs… major problems because of presentation, but yeah, a laptop and that massively ….also boarding really helped because the Geography always didn't get him but he was also a sports teacher and finally after a couples weeks boarding it was obvious and suddenly twigged and anything that *Rhys* didn't do was never done out of malice, you know if you wanted somebody to run school [inaudible] the first hand up would be *Rhys* , he was very keen to please, he just might not have actually got what he had been asked to do all the time

R: Yeah

Mum: and the attitude was shitty at the school.

R: Right ok, and so do you board now or was it just a short period of time?

Rhys: Yeah I board like once every week now, as I can't…like….

Mum: [inaudible] and get back in on the bus

Rhys: erm like so like choirs on a Wednesday's originally and started when the bus would leave so yeah….

R: So you board one night a week?

Rhys: Now they've moved it to Friday and it's before the bus leaves but the bus doesn't run on a Saturday morning so can't get back in without having to get home so.

Mum: [inaudible] for free when it's necessary.

R: Right ok, and how is it boarding then?

Rhys: It's alright generally I use Fridays like cos there's a proper institutionalised prep session, I generally use that to like get all my work done and print everything out so that's…

R: So you're doing quite a long week then cos you're doing Saturday mornings as well so you're 5 and a half days a week erm in school and the extras

Rhys: Yeah.

R: Ok, but you enjoy it?

Rhys: Yeah. I get along with….there is no one in my year I don't get along with….people in the year below are just annoying

R: yeah

Rhys: like literally everyone in the year below is annoying

R: yeah I hear that from my son as well [laughs]

Rhys: People in the year below most of them are like nice

R: Yep ok

Rhys: erm and the people in the year above I don't really care about.

R: ok, and will you stay…so this is year 11 so you'll do your GCSE's at the end of this year won't you?

Rhys: yeah.

R: so will stay on, is there like a sixth form at that school?

Rhys: yeah, yeah erm so hopefully just depends on money

R: yeah, would you like to stay on then?

Rhys: Yeah.

R: So would you say that this school and this stage of your childhood….I hate calling people children when their 15/16….I don't mean to call you a child….but at this age of your life would you say the last few years have been happier than maybe the….with school and the dyspraxia maybe?

Rhys: Yeah. Way less stress.

R: Right.

Rhys: Generally getting on with everyone.

Mum: Learning support…dyslexia, dyspraxia so their support [inaudible]….they are one of the better…..giving *Rhys* lots of additional stuff…..I knew people who went there in the 80's who had dyslexia at the time was the [inaudible] as dyslexia wasn't as recognised.

R: buts really good that they recognise dyspraxia as well cos a lot of schools have heard of it but don't know an awful lot about it, erm so it's really good that the do recognise that and have that …

Mum: the head of learning support's fantastic, I mean he's not had that much contact with us they had an open day [inaudible] they've got children who take three years to get through A-levels…

R: Yeah it takes just that bit longer.

Mum: And they do… for the….if *Rhys* stays for 6th form they do A-levels and switch to higher not just B-Tech and but they have said…happy doing B-Tech plus all the additional stuff to do the A-levels, but they've been really proactive and communicative the identical UCAS Points that you can get and actually encouraging the kids there to do things like…you do lots of countryside management and stuff don't you…

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: So they can do that on a farm outside…

Rhys: also on a Wednesday afternoons you've got like a community service session for like helping out

R: Excellent

Rhys: so like this term I've been helping out on the farm, erm….last two years you had to do CCF for some reason which was….yeah

R: What don't you like about that?

Rhys: I'm sure it's fun at some places but most of what we did there was drill you know marching back and forth, having to get your feet in sync, having to run really far er if you didn't have everything perfect….

R: Oh ok, it’s like a cadets thing?

Mum: yeah like it, really confused or…

Rhys: They were like out of two years there were I think four fun sessions maybe, that being the camouflage session….one where..

R: Where you had to paint yourself with camouflage?

Rhys: Yeah, I like camouflage

R: Yeah that does sound fun, yeah

Mum: Plus he’s fantastic at tree climbing

Rhys: Riffle

Mum: so he can hide under trees

Rhys: Oh yeah

R: Oh brilliant

Rhys: Oh yeah, no last year erm so like the year before I managed to win some competition, I was really annoyed at the end of it though cos the guy said whoever won the competition [inaudible] but he didn’t acknowledge everyone in the competition, I don’t think he liked me very much.

R: Oh no, that’s no good!

Rhys: Yeah I forgot about it after a while but it was kind of irritating, then last year when the year below us were doing it me and this other guy just hid up a tree.

Mum: It is funny cos you know 95% of teachers said ‘oh he’s my favourite ever’ you know cos the teacher downstairs in reception she said ‘you’re not allowed to have favourite but he’s mine’, they think he’s fantastic, others [inaudible] cos they don’t understand

R: Yeah I mean that’s largely the experience I’ve heard form a number of people and why I want to do this PhD, because there’s as much as you can know about….and as I was saying to *Rhys* earlier,…. You know we know a lot about what professionals say dyspraxia is, what the symptoms are….we still don't know enough about that but we know quite a bit but unless you actually have an understanding then you can't really….you will be irritated because you have the lack of knowledge and understanding actually it goes a huge way I think….

Mum: Its only once they acknowledged [inaudible] there's teachers that got it all the way through and realised how bad it was….

R: yeah but it won't really get it down on the paper…

Mum: [inaudible] a bit of contact…then he started typing

Rhys: I think…..now I remember like….it's not particularly relevant just funny like this one time in Maths like the teacher asked me to do a question, well on the bottom she said I got this one wrong, so I went back and redid it and got the exact same answer and kept taking it up like 5 times in a row, and then on the 5th time she was like 'oh wait this is right'

R: Oh no!

Rhys: 'oh I'm sorry I'm sorry' and I was like 'oh'

Mum: But also a teacher….when you were about 7, he was put in set 2 for Maths….I don't think…I had any different ways of explaining to her….so he was stuck with this division sum and he was really frustrated with what he was being given for homework and I was always ……I did division with him and from that moment he could divide…because he understood what he was being asked to do….prior to that the explanation never made sense to him.

R: Yeah it's the abstract

Mum: It's just continually doing it, when he went to year 6 and [inaudible] his ability was where it was and in the exam he wasn't having extra time really cos they keep saying….he scored the top mark of the year….[inaudible]…

R: and is it the timing to sort of get everything down?

Rhys: Erm yeah I need to make sure I ask for extra time, or at least extra time where I can't use my laptop cos some cos obviously there's sort of papers where you can't type everything for example Science papers most of them are like…part tick box question part….connect the answer things, fill in the gaps and then there's a few like 6 mark long writing things like two or three paragraphs ones but apart from that…yeah

R: And do you do those by hand then?

Rhys: Yeah I do those by hand.

R: So you're doing the choristry, are you doing any other kind of…extra….you told me about the cadets thing as well…do you still do that?

Rhys: No, I moved to helping out on the farm

R: Right…so there's a farm on the school?

Rhys: Yeah, like I signed up originally for a life guarding course but then they couldn't organise that and so all the other choices were taken by people who hadn't signed up for that as they first choice which meant I was left with a choice of ….let's see er….litter picking, helping out at the farm…that was it….litter picking and helping out at the farm.

R: Ah ok, so how is helping out at the farm? I think I'd have picked that one too.

Rhys: Oh it's alright actually

R: Is it?

Rhys: Yeah I don't mind the smell or anything cos….

R: Is it a lot of sort of lifting and moving things around?

Rhys: Yeah, a couple of people like didn't want to do anything and so are now helping out like at the farm shop where we go after school

Mum: Oh really?

Rhys: Yeah like they were so stubborn that they didn't want to choose anything that they ended up getting one of the best things and so I was kind of annoyed about that

R: Yeah

Mum: He really gets on well with the people at the farm shop

Rhys: Yeah

R: Yeah, that would have been a good thing to do.

Mum: You started doing Fencing thing as well didn't you?

R: Ah ok.

Mum: You're doing that a lot after school, well all of us are doing that

Rhys: Yeah that's fun

R: Oh wow are you doing it as a family?

Rhys: Oh excellent

Mum: I love it

R: Do you? Yeah I think my two boys would like that

Mum: Really good fun.

R: So I always imagined fencing as being….you know I've seen it on telly and I've seen people doing it…but what is it about that that you like?

Mum: He wanted do it …[inaudible]

R: Oh really?

Rhys: And then like I heard that the option ….and I was like yeah sure that sounds fun

Mum: I signed just me and *Tim* up and then it was like "Why am I not doing this?"

Rhys: Yeah.

Mum: "What about me", yeah he couldn't do it but it clashes, but when he went to *Appleford Abbey* he was so excited cos the school did fencing but then he couldn’t do it cos the choristry group disappeared and they couldn’t do it cos it clashed with the boys so you were a bit put out weren’t you?

Rhys: Yeah, I also couldn’t do any marshal art for the exact same reason.

R: Of the choristry practice?

Rhys: and also like the beginning of last year I was also able to do karate but the person who was doing that stopped for some reason, so I got my first belt but basically all I’ve learnt is how to prance around the room in a fancy way…

R: Yep useful skills [laughs]

Rhys: Yeah and how to punch better

Mum: You were very good at judo when you were little

R: excellent

Rhys: If I ever…

R: if you ever needed to

Rhys: yeah

Mum: He doesn’t do anger really to you?

Rhys: No not really

Mum: very occasional you know lashing out at his brother but you know he has to be pushed to the nth degree

R: I often wonder if erm….yeah us mums do know a lot more than you think we do [laughs] my children are the same

Rhys: We get on well

Mum: You do you get on brilliantly, you do have to be pushed a lot before you snap, which is the same as me whereas *Tim* is more like my sister…volatile

Rhys: All you have to do is to like go to *Max’s* house and have sleepover

Mum: I’m well aware that I’m very lucky cos they do get on exceptionally well

R: They were lovely actually when you went downstairs and *Tim* asked *Rhys* …..he was so polite I thought

Mum: [inaudible]

R: Yeah how is getting up in the morning

Mum: I get him up at 5.40

R: Ohhh how is that?

Rhys: Erm fine I like waking up early, for example at [inaudible] for a bit I never wanted to do my homework before bed so Id purposely wake myself up at like 4 in the morning and do it then, it made sense to me

R: Yeah

Rhys: It made sense to me, also I went to bed at a sensible time

R: yeah I was gonna say

Rhys: I'd be going to be 8 so I'd still have 8 hours ish sleep

R: Yeah so do you think you work better in the mornings?

Rhys: yeah I think so, it's just that works best for me that's all

Mum: apparently he wakes up just long enough to get to school don't you? And then he goes to sleep on the way to school on the bus, so he gets an hours nap

Rhys: no I get like half an hour on the way there it's only a 40 min trip so it's like half an hour there and half an hour on the way back so overall I make up an hour that I miss

R: Yeah that extra

Mum: But it's enough…it makes the difference

R: yeah it's a long day otherwise

Rhys: yeah it's also nice to have a couple of naps during the day

R: Yeah. So erm what about teachers, your mum was saying that 95% they kind of understand you

Rhys: erm yeah generally get on like well with teachers

R: and do you feel that the give you the support and understanding that you need?

Rhys: Yeah

R: Apart from the one when you were in primary school

Rhys: Yeah

R: and so do you have a statement…they're changing them now to Education, Care and Health Plans.

Mum: *Rhys* has been in an independent school all the way through so the additional support is provided is paid for so therefore there's..

R: No need, right ok, huge bill

Mum: Well he's never needed, or they've never put in place…..that was acknowledged after….[inaudible] in terms of external

R: So it's all been support within school?

Mum: Yeah.

R: So what would you say your favourite subject or your favourite thing at school would be?

Rhys: Just one subject?

R: No you can have more than one.

Rhys: Probably RS and music

R: RS and music

Rhys: RS is all learning about other religions, like religious tolerance and all that sort of stuff

Mum: Ethics

Rhys: Yeah ethics and all that yeah it's brilliant I just like that, like it's nice to know everything about other religions or whatever and everything about that. And then Music, I'm just good at it, I like singing and performing and whatever

R: Do you play any instruments as well as singing?

Rhys: Yes Piano and Viola

R: Ah ok

Rhys: And like I'm going to try and sort myself out next holiday getting like to teach me guitar, not like really loads, just so I can use it to accompany singing, just some chords

R: Yeah that'd be good. So what do you think you're going to do beyond GCSE's so have you got plans of what subjects you'd like to study or…in an ideal world….

Rhys: Ah well for A-levels er RS and Music I think are definite and then probably the three Sciences just because they're like useful

R: yeah very useful yeah and do you know what you'd like to do longer term? You know what you'd like to do as a career or….?

Rhys: Er well….er Id quite like to…..well for a while focus has been on starting a café and my friend also wants to start a café so we've decided to like as a proper thing put money together and start a café together, I've known him since year 4….8 years…half my life

R: Ah ok, so you both quite like the idea of running something like this place?

P; Yeah, ah yeah maybe like…probably a bit smaller to start with

R: Yeah, yeah this is very big place

Rhys: Yeah no it'd be nice to do that but also like that's apparently not the best way to make money so also might get another career so like to start with and have this café as the extra thing if I get enough money from the other thing

R: Yeah

Mum: We have for example discussed the advantages of what's possible like in the middle of *Wexford* [inaudible] really lovely lifestyle but still you know the things the added insight if you've got dyspraxia and you've grown up with a brother whose got dyslexia you actually have some kind of understanding of [inaudible]……focusing on what you're interested in…..you know…..not just what you're very good at but what's actually going to be enjoyable long term is a lot more difficult

R: Yes, it's very hard isn't it at this age to even sort of think 'what do I want to do' and it often changes but yeah if you can get that balance between what you're good at and what you are interested its very good. I didn't realise…I took my son to a 6th form thing a couple of years early as I wanted him to think about it….and I hadn't realised quite what opportunities there are now….that makes it worse in a way I think as there's so many options

Mum: Yes that's what I kept saying about university as well isn't it, cos actually think really hard about what you really want to do you know and it's there for the rest of your life I suppose….[inaudible] know what you properly what you want to do

R: Yeah….I actually went when I was 25, not that I'm saying you should leave it that long at all, but erm and I wished I'd gone a few years earlier but I think you're right about knowing what you want to do and it wasn't until that age that I thought 'ah I know what I want to do now' erm.

Mum: Its difficult isn’t it focusing on one thing. We’ve been talking about all the way through because of the level he is singing at you know a choral scholar opportunities available to help boost your tuition fees, cos *Adam’s* sisters have done that haven’t they?

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: *Adam’s* sisters were choristers and went to Cambridge and were in choirs which helped off set

R: Yes off set the very large fee’s

Rhys: I think they sing at weddings now don’t they?

Mum: They used to do that, from the age of 14 they set up a little business and sang at weddings charged £75 each you know very pretty girls singing……substantial difference to their money you know sort out a car or…but you know it’s different isn’t it? There’s an easier market for girls to do that kind of thing whereas boys ….well you know a nice tenor at a wedding….

R: I was gonna say

Rhys: I could probably do funerals

Mum: You could.

Rhys: Bit morbid but you know.

Mum: They also had that captive market going cos their dad obviously knew…[inaudible]

R: So do you think you’ll want to continue with the choristry?

Rhys: Er yeah

R: Yeah you like that?

Rhys: Yeah I like it and there’s no reason why not.

Mum: there’s this bizarre thing you know he’ll be belting out Greenday in the car and then walking off in to the alley and the next thing you hear is this angelic voice…he can switch form one thing to another…..it's always hilarious cos we've always had all four choristers to stay a lot…..*Ethan, Rhys* friend, his closest friend, he has ADHD doesn't he?

Rhys: Yeah he does

Mum: anyway another one had Asperger's, and er

Rhys: Which one was that?

Mum: *David* ….mum told me

Rhys: Ok

Mum: She's erm…..one of his older siblings is diagnosed and she just said to me once quite evidently he has Asperger's…..I think she was planning on waiting for the Ed Psych when he was coming up for GCSE's at which point it would be useful

R: Yes

Mum: Prior to that the school he was in there was no point…[inaudible] and then one year …..*Steve*……you know for the rest of you were we were going to make Pizza and we had to do it secretly [inaudible] depending on variation….would you like something else for supper….I really like Pizza

Rhys: Our friends now we would always make pizza on the first night

R: Ah ok

Rhys: Like we can do something else but Pizza must always be eaten on the first night….it's the law

Mum: this is every half term and several times during each holidays you know when *Ethan* comes to us for a couple of days and then *Rhys* goes down to him for a couple of days later. I think for my school you know….friends clashed…things have moved on since I was at school and it's acknowledged

R: Acknowledged yes

Mum: and it is different though isn't it cos some people still think it's better to be surface friends with….

R: With everybody than to have really close….

Rhys: Oh I get on with everybody

Mum: Oh I know you do

Rhys: I can have a chat with most people but yeah a small group of close friends.

Mum: Also because most of us pretty much [inaudible] the school courts they don't do a lot of meeting in the holidays do they? Most of you go back to your families and then that's you until the end of term because they get so much time…

Rhys: I've got good friends there but like no one as close as like anyone from *FFF*

Mum: no we don't have anyone from like [inaudible] like friendships that are constantly on Facebook, there's nobody who actually comes and stays….then they go home and just ignore each other…just Facebook each other and then come back.

Rhys: The more social people have had parties

Mum: I'm sure they have, but there's a huge distance you know, he's got people in his dorm from Russia

Rhys: Russia, Spain, Germany….apparently next year we'll have an Italian in….er…

R: That must be really interesting as well

Rhys: yeah, yeah

Mum: that's the whole thing in terms of sheer level of affluence….

R: Yes

Rhys: yes its gone beyond the point of 'look how much money we have' to 'you know how much money I have I don't need to show it off'

R: oh really

Rhys: yeah, but occasionally you do get…an example one time this German kid wanted to buy some Raybans who went on to their website and there was a site advert saying these sunglasses are in fashion and they cost like 400 quid he brought them and they were some of the ugliest and like strangest looking sunglasses ever and everyone was like ‘what the hell are you wearing’ and he’s like ‘the website said they’re in fashion’ and were like ‘no they’re terrible, you shouldn’t believe what the website tells you they just want your money’. Haven’t seen him in a while though.

Mum: I think it’s actually less snobby people [inaudible] *Tim’s* much more…[inaudible]

Rhys: I tell him you need to blend in really, you need to blend in even with needing 60% bursary…more…

Mum: 60%. My ex-husband is trying to stress that you know he should go to the grammar cos we can’t continue to pay……trouble is the grammar is one of the top 50 schools in the country its fantastic…..erm pastoral care is non-existent and the acknowledgement of special needs [inaudible] you don’t just have to pass your 11+ because they can’t take past their 11+ they only take people they’ve got room for so it’s the top [inaudible] and if you misbehave….

R: cos they can just get someone else yeah

Mum: so although 6th form is an option for a lot of people, it’s difficult isn’t it….from going form actually having classes for 12…..who don’t judge or whatever…..some teachers are like that form the word go they don’t realise that he might be…he couldn’t be…for several minutes and his grasp is very good and some would just shout at him to pay attention and focus

R: Yeah its funny isn't it the erm…peoples idea of focus….my son can do that too and he will be staring off and I sometimes say "you're not listening to me" and he goes "yes I am you just said…" and he just word for word…

Mum: yes but it's a discomfort partly about meeting eyes

R: yes

Mum: cos I know I mean the teacher downstairs she definitely erm thought he was on the spectrum when he was tiny probably cos she used to be like "he's very unfocused isn't he?" cos he was 4 and 10 weeks when he started school his obsession with Thomas lasted until he was 4 and a half.

Rhys: [starts singing the Thomas theme tune]

R: [laughs]

Mum: yes but he was focused on trains and he would do that lying on his side and rolling around and I think cos most of the other kids were 6 months to a year older than him that showed up, half way through the reception year the obsession disappeared as if it had never been but I could definitely tell when she was talking at me that was what was going on. He's very affectionate, although having said that I've met more and more people with children who have Asperger's and who are on the spectrum who are not [inaudible] it's very difficult….we've got friends who's whole family have traits and could very easily be on the spectrum, and Barry says, well it used to be called extreme motor syndrome and his belief strongly is that everybody in the world is on the spectrum just at very mild end.

R: Well that's the thing with the spectrum is it does go from very mild to very severe and everything in between and if you look at the classification of what you would need to diagnose, quite often…when I was studying I would sit there and go I know someone who does that….I know someone who does that' you know we've all got….yeah I remember the lecture sides would come up and they'd go 'Asperger's…this, this, this and this' and I'd sit there and go 'I do two or three of those' [laughs] you know so I think everybody you know…and a lot of dyspraxia, ADHD, Autism, dyslexia they all overlap and erm…

Mum: it's funny that's how they described it to you…

R: yeah there's an amazing graphic, I can send it to you if you've never seen it, but it just lays it all out, it's just black and white graphic someone has done with circles erm but it just shows you…..you know you can see that someone with dyspraxia could have a few symptoms from…..

Mum: You know *Sarah* who admins that group gets furious about anything about Asperger's and you just read what she's written particularly in the admin group and you just think are you serious…[inaudible]…

R: so do you know anyone else who has dyspraxia?

Rhys: erm I don't think I know anyone who actively has it particularly but I definitely know people who have it

R: Who you suspect have it?

Rhys: Yeah.

R: ok, I just wondered if you had any kind of erm like obviously the school are very supportive and understanding but I just wondered if you were you know like your mum's part of this forum thing online and I wondered if you had anything yourself as part of a group or anything

Rhys: No not really.

R: Is it something you want to be part of?

Rhys: not too bothered really no.

Mum: It's quite funny ever since he was born he's been….we used to go to…cos he [inaudible] they're both… [inaudible] …my ex-husband…. [inaudible]...severe chromosome abnormality…[inaudible]…so we were part of a group that did that….not interested, so we didn't do that, craniofacial abnormalities…the plastic surgeon head of surgery…no interest, no interest in going off to the group where you meet up with the other children, none what-so-ever….I actually asked you a few weeks ago didn't I? If you had any interest in meeting up….

Rhys: yeah, it's like who says their gonna be any different to other people, they're literally going to be going to a group of random people who happen to have a similar like skull thing

Mum: I get it completely

R: no, no I do and I'm not suggesting that you should be part of a group

Mum: no and I felt that I should offer

R: offer yes

Mum: [inaudible]….whereas now arm myself with knowledge and read up as much as possible but you know that's my way of coping, it's clearly not your way of coping is it?

Rhys: mmmm

Mum: zero interest.

R: it's true I think….my way of coping is similar to yours I think and erm my son also has dyspraxia so when I found out that he had dyspraxia I was the same as you bombarding myself with every bit of information I could find to the point I'm now doing a PhD on dyspraxia……erm but he has no interest either erm you know and I keep saying to him 'would you like….nope, nope' and it's not that you know that he should and not that you should I just wondered what other people's thoughts were

Mum: Do you find there's a gap between girls and boys? In terms of perceptions erm with the girls as far as interest and [inaudible]….still lots of girls furious that their choices have been taken away from them and [inaudible] and for boys by and large not interested…why would you want to….there are a few boys…[inaudible] and I just wondered what the girls were like with dyspraxia are they more likely to be involved and more interested?

R: Erm, I haven't so far….although I have got a series of interviews coming up with girls…e.rm but the girls that I have interviewed so far there hasn't been a difference as such with the interest I suppose although maybe slightly more erm but not dramatically but possibly slightly different in the way they have processed it and dealt with it and I think for the boys that I have interviewed they are very much sort of 'well what…its fine' sort of thing whereas the girls have gone through a real phase of taking it really negatively into themselves….so yeah, so that was the main difference that I notice so far.

Mum: I wonder as well weather [inaudible] and being told very firmly that it's not our information to hold on to, that it's our children's information, I wonder whether that's impacted on the way that I found out and sharing information with the children cos it astonishes me how many people had a diagnosis for the child and not shared that information with them and feel they're going to use it as an excuse you know and my experience of talking to umpteen parents of kids who have been diagnosed is they have never used it as an excuse but as an explanation, it's their information, why would you not tell them.

R: My son did use it as an excuse once!

Mum: yeah?

R: in a very funny way though. When I was trying to get him to do the dishes

Mum: [laughs]

R: and er which… him and his brother have to do the dishes every day… there's one chore in the house that they have to do every day and it's the dishes and one day he really just didn't want to do the dishes and I was saying to him 'just go and do them they just need doing' and he said 'mum you know I'm dyspraxic, I might smash the dishes' and I said 'don't [laughs]' and he 'oh alright then….it was worth a try'.

Rhys: Actually to be fair I have smashed two of my favourite plates

R: Have you?

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: Absolutely

R: Oh he's smashed a lot of things and dropped a huge cheesecake and…

Mum: ever since he was tiny…and since 6 months he's smashed two….

R: oh really, and what were they?....you say your favourite plates…what were they sort of plates that you don't necessarily eat from plates?

Rhys: Oh no I eat from them, they were like the ones I ate off most

R: So what was special about these plates? You just liked these plates?

Rhys: Yeah, they were plates that were given to me, one had a lion

R: a lion?

Rhys: Yeah, a lion, slightly more aggressive

R: Aggressive lion? [laughs]

Rhys: [laughs] they were slightly more aggressive plates than the other plates

R: So what other ways…I was gonna ask you…what ways does your dyspraxia still play out…so smashing the plates sometimes maybe?

Rhys: Yeah er…

R: is it still sort of….

Rhys: well more like I have a high tendency to drop stuff, like obviously still can't catch really…although I can sometimes for example when were we were doing [inaudible] practice and someone was chucking mars bar I literally just reached out behind me and grabbed it in mid-air [laughs] not even looking and I was like 'oh wow' I can't even believe I managed that.

Mum: I don't think it's just that he can't catch, I think he can't catch under pressure

Rhys: Yeah

R: Yeah, it's…

Mum: with people watching you

R: but that's what everyone says about…

Rhys: It's probably more a matter of whether you actually care about the thing you catching

R: Yeah, I wondered whether that was….when you were saying you found board games and sports at school and that you didn't particularly enjoy them and weren't particularly good at them…I wondered if whether the level of enjoyment might be to do with the added pressure of other kids watching or relying on you or….you know sometimes…do you prefer doing anything active on your own rather than in a….

Rhys: Erm well I like swimming and er tree climbing

R: and tree climbing

Rhys: And tree climbing yeah, despite everything else I have really good balance

R: oh really

Rhys: like in my entire life I've fallen from a tree once when a branch snapped under me and to be fair it was a small branch and I was just being stupid and staying on it for ages and I saved myself from that with only a graze there and there.

R: oh wow

Rhys: I think it was really good fun…like adrenaline…that was brilliant…I'd do it again if I could, like if I could relive that memory

R: and do it all again

Rhys: yeah that'd be brilliant, erm [laughs]

R: So do you like anything like rock climbing, abseiling or anything like?

Rhys: Oh yeah climbing just generally is fun, yeah

R: and were you always good at climbing a tree or was it something you had really had to kind of…

Mum: They go to that school from 10 months old and erm from the moment they could walk they had no fear and would climb everything, I helped on a breastfeeding support group and it had one of the long disabled access routes down to the garden that was the only way out to the garden was down this huge long route and I remember being upstairs helping a woman and suddenly someone saying to me "Oh *Rhys* is on top of the climbing frame" and he was two and he'd gone to about 10 feet up in the air and I had to go "well done darling, now get down" [laughs]

Rhys: [laughs]

R: [Laughs]

Mum: mummy's calm here, but you go to everyone else's house and there were no stairgates and he'd be straight up the stairs before anyone would notice and of course he had no top to his skull, so I wasn't worried about his climbing it was what happened if he falls you know cos he's got no protection.

R: Yes and when did you have the operation to fix that?

Rhys: Er…

Mum: 6 years

R: at 6.

Rhys: mmmm

R: So you probably won't remember too much about….I was just going to say were you worried about it…

Rhys: I can just about remember…

Mum: *Tim* had just been born so I had you know a 9 week old baby and erm surgery and I had to be at the beginning of the summer holidays you know because of the amount of time off, but you know *Tim* learned to ride a bike when he was just before his third birthday and *Rhys* was older than that

R: yeah

Mum: we shouldn't have given him stabilisers because [inaudible] he would use the stabilisers and lean on one and then on the other and he would have been better if we'd have not given them to him ever whereas *Tim* we could find and we'd moved house and they were in the barn somewhere but we couldn't find them so I tried him without and he just got it, I think stabilisers if you're dyspraxic they're probably not….

R: No I did use stabilisers with my son and he did the same and he would ride on one side and then the other, erm and actually I've since learnt that you can get those bikes can't you…

Mum: Balance bikes

R: and apparently they're recommended particularly for children who have dyspraxia because they have to learn that balance first and then they can go from that to riding, I wished Id have known that.

Mum: Yes coordination issues are bizarre aren't they you know cos he plays viola and you know can get a distinction in exams so he's got to have minute sense of where to put a finger to get things exactly right, it's not like doing the piano is it?

Rhys: yeah. I prefer the viola, I have a sense of ….if I get it fairly wrong I can just correct it and just like another second cos I can hear generally when there's something wrong and so I just go ‘oh that was wrong’ and so move a single [inaudible] whereas piano if you get a wrong note then it’s a really distinctly a wrong note and also because you can’t just slide subtly you have to go ‘du dung’ you know.

R: yeah.

Mum: and again singing, never have any tuning problems at all, its spot on you know if he was given a solo he would sing it perfectly he would never get the notes wrong, when you were younger you didn’t have any solo’s at all did you, it’s the boys upper are given solos and then one of them would sort of back out and then you’d have to step in and there would be no nerves whatsoever about that….suddenly started to get slight anxiety recently….

Rhys: Have I? Oh yeah yeah

Mum: You said….and that’s the first time we’ve had any anxiety before a performance

Rhys: I wasn’t particularly scared

Mum: No but you were kind of going ‘oh I’m nervous’ almost like a novelty you know

R: You’d never felt that before?

Rhys: Yeah. So I think I get twitchy when I’m nervous cos like…before the exams at the end of last year I was trying to make myself a milkshake just before them and like I took out the tube of hot chocolate powder and just like crushed it suddenly and spilt half of it over the floor and the entire things was all crumpled and I was like….’what’ and then doing the most decent performance and my hand suddenly twitched when I was turning the page and so all my music went flying over, I was like…..

R: Oh no

Mum: I think the difference is there was never any sense… of you weren't conceited at all, he's never sort of blown up about his own ability to do something or boasting to anybody but I think he had a quite sense of 'I'm perfectly capable of doing this' and that was really useful for him and I mean most of the choristers do have that because they obviously are given the stuff in the morning and they have to sing it in the afternoon, so they know mechanically how to do this and they know they've been selected cos they can do it so there's no false modesty stuff going around for most of the time, I think the girls are a bit more prone to it whereas the boys actually a bit more pragmatic about….that's interesting cos it's the one year [inaudible] cos his friend *Ethan* was 6 foot tall before they finished from a treble…[inaudible] he didn't have to do any after school practice did he?

Rhys: No well he didn't have to do a morning practice

Mum: yeah that's right

Rhys: and was allowed to arrive late to the afterschool

Mum: yeah that was treble stuff you got entirely different rooms [inaudible] it was hilarious

Rhys: yes I'm very proud of myself [laughs]

Mum: *Rhys* is now taller than him for a long time *Ethan* was so much taller than you wasn't he? It was like little and large.

Rhys: Yeah I still remember like getting to afterschool [inaudible] and like I was looking from the playground and saw someone yesterday a bit like *Ethan* and he was really tall and also for some reason his hair was grown like really long, it was like mine was before I cut it, like possibly a bit longer it was more flowing it looked very nice…I'm jealous [laughs]….anyway erm yeah so like I was just like looking at him trying to figure out… 'is that him no that's not him he's never had long hair, he's also like way shorter than that isn't he?' and then like he suddenly turned around and I was like 'ah *Ethan* there you are it is you…hello….yes thought it was you…just been looking at you for the last 5 minutes trying to figure out whether it is you' [laughs]

Mum: we're all absolutely horrendous with faces as well

Rhys: oh yeah I remember like one time when [inaudible] like someone had a haircut and I couldn't remember who he was [laughs] so I just spent five minutes asking him who he was [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Rhys: and he was like 'I'm *Adam* you saw me yesterday' and I was like 'no you're not *Adam*…he looks different to you' and mum eventually goes 'ok you are *Adam* you've just had a haircut'…yeah

Mum: No sense of direction whatsoever is there?

Rhys: No.

R: Is that still an issue sense of direction?

Rhys: erm…

Mum: he's good at map reading he can do it technically can't you?

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: but he would still be amazed that we got somewhere 'ooh where we going…oh were there' whereas *Tim* when he was two knew that 'if you go down that road there so and so lives there' and 'do you remember when we such and such' and we did you know ever visual clue is picked up on whereas *Rhys* and I are a bit more hazy.

R: I'm a bit like that I'm like 'oh are we here already?'

Rhys: When I get a car the first thing I'm getting is a Sat Nav

R: Sat Nav yeah

Rhys: Like virtual just for every journey

R: Yeah. I’ve lived in London all my life and I still have to ask…I went out with a friend who lives in America, she came over last week and we went to have dinner and I had to ask her which was the direction to the tube and she’s from America and I’ve lived in London all my life, I can’t find my way around…I mean I’m good I can just keep walking but I rely on the Sat Nav on my phone too you know

Mum: I have blocks so I can remember the beginning, I can remember the end but there’s a bit in the middle, if I can get there I often find I can….I’ve been doing the route to *Rhys ’s* school for what 3 years?

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: And I went the wrong way on the roundabout last weekend because you two were talking incessantly that required my attention that I was able to give I had to go round the round about all the way to actually get back on the right turning. I found myself thinking I should be able to do this after 2 and a half years.

R: So do you get the bus to school?

Rhys: Yeah there’s like…the school hires a small company to like bring people in

R: Ah ok

Mum: and he’s the only one who comes from here

R: Ah ok

Rhys: And there’s no one else on that route so for about an hour I’m the only person on the bus

R: Nice, no wonder you can sleep

Rhys: I can just sleep and lie flat

Mum: It’s a lovely bus driver as well

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: He wakes him up just before he gets there.

Rhys: yeah and like basically like erm because there’s no one else or just like one or two people on the bus at any time I just like take two of the seats in the back and lie down, I wear two seatbelts, two seat belts

R: Two seat belts yeah

Rhys: two seat belts, its better security

R: Yeah

Rhys: But yeah

Mum: I have had to explain to him its actually illegal and dangerous

Rhys: a technicality

R: [laughs] a technicality

Mum: My family has really strong bones it never breaks, I don’t think he can see what that would be a problem

R: and of course you’ve had the operation on your skull so we don’t need to worry about it [sarcastically]

Mum: well a lots of bone resorbed and the massive weak spots on his skull

R: oh really?

Mum: But they’ve given you so [inaudible] about it, lots of members of the population have very weak spots in their skull but have no knowledge about it. The only impact is you wanted to do longboarding didn’t you?

Rhys: yeah

Mum: And I said that’s absolutely fine but you will have to wear a helmet and the desire disappeared instantaneously

R: really

Rhys: I’m 16, that would be social suicide

R: Social suicide….I was going to say what is the issue with helmets but its social suicide is it?

Rhys: yep

Mum: You wear one for cycling though don't you?

Rhys: Yeah that's cycling that's different

Mum: yeah I know but long boarding is just as dangerous for your skull

R: Yeah and possibly a bit more isn't it cos at least you've got a bit of control of the bike

Mum: yeah you'd hope

R: You would hope, a long board could just slide

Rhys: I've got brilliant control of my bike,

Mum: I know you do

Rhys: I can cycle with no hands

Mum: Which I can't do actually it has to be said

R: Yeah I couldn't do that, so do you cycle quite a lot then?

Rhys: Erm not so much anymore, mainly cos there's like not so much you can do on a bike, or less reason to cos there use to be getting to school on a bike

R: Ah ok

Mum: it was a good 4 miles each way

Rhys: erm but now like obviously my school is a way you can't really take the bike to Sainsburys for….it's not very far and walking's a lot more practically and I'd have to spend a lot of the time on the pavement which is stupid and like for example there's like one like drive bit where like instead of just being a sudden straight corner it's like a long curve so if you want to see who's coming round you'd have to be on the pavement to be like secure whereas if you're on a bike trying to see if you can cross properly you'd have to like go out a bit and then look round and then think 'opp there's a car coming'

R: By that point yeah…

Mum: It did stop didn’t it which was a shame because it was lovely for you before

R: so you…do you get to tired a lot with walking and cycling and climbing?

Rhys: erm I can’t run very well like particularly

R: You can’t…

Rhys: Can’t run very well particularly…I can walk for ages though…like I was going to actually get through, like officially, but apparently like according to the guy that was helping cos I apparently wasn’t chosen for the team because I don’t like to eat all the stuff…

R: cos you don’t like to…?

Rhys: I didn’t like the food

R: Ah ok, so that’s why you didn’t get chosen?

Rhys: You had to eat malt loaf, we had to eat ration packs, there was no menu that actually like had something I actually liked properly

Mum: Really serious food issues

Rhys: yeah, can’t eat fruit either

R: Can’t eat fruit or don’t want to?

Rhys: Just….

Mum: he ate it until he was two and a half and then had a chest infection and then stopped eating it completely and utterly…nothing

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: Marmite and toast and apple juice and that was it from two and a half onwards he’s never eaten fruit

Rhys: I don’t like fruit, the texture

R: Really

Rhys: Yeah anyway that meant so you had a menu form an army ration pack which had loads of weird stuff and wasn’t particularly nice and malt loaf, there was nothing that didn't contain fruit though, either was let's see…a banana flavoured one, a berry flavoured one, and an apple flavoured one, there was no plain one like I think….apparently there's a ginger one which that would have been nice if I could have had that….,but no no no ginger one

R: is that why you couldn't be picked?

Rhys: Yeah, the only things I would have actually eaten were the chocolate bars and stuff, which isn't….for example I could have taken some sort of low quality pastry full of preservatives and that would have been fine but no… no I had to…

R: What was this for?

Rhys: Tentals

Mum: Tentals is organised by the CCF people and what they did was take Military ration packs for it

Rhys: yeah

Mum: so….

Rhys: rather than food I can actually stand

Mum: yeah, to be honest darling in the Army they do swap you know its normal practice for everybody to swap out what they can't bare in their ration packs with somebody else it's not normal practice for people to actually eat what they don't like.

Rhys: I tried but most people choose stuff that I wouldn't like.

Mum: He's got…his approach to doing things is….they were all discussing…one of the girls who is really much smaller than everyone else and they all kept agree that they'd walk at her pace and everyone else kept going way on ahead….

Rhys: And there was like the one who stuck behind and that also counted against me because that counted against me because people were like 'don't be stupid this isn't making us walk faster' and I was like 'when we walk with her she walks a bit faster, overall we'd be moving way faster rather than having to constantly stop and wait for her to catch up'

R: Oh no so because you stayed behind….

Rhys: and because of what they were saying she also she also ended up believing it and so she ended up basically just giving up and lagging behind….and so that was just like horrible, yeah

Mum: he's got that very strong sense which I think all of us have of not leaving anyone behind to you know and we did have a discussion didn't we when you weren't picked and I said "would you make a different decision again if you had to do it again to get yourself picked" you know and I know exactly how I would feel

R: yeah

Mum: I wouldn't feel comfortable if my…

Rhys: If you are going to get picked for something because of your morals then that thing has bad morals and you shouldn't do it.

R: Exactly yeah.

Mum: But I think that's you know I remember doing one of those personality tests and one of the questions being 'would you be prepared to stand up for something if you knew it was unpopular within your group' and I remember the boys turning and laughing at me and saying 'I bet I know what you put for that one', I remember thinking 'why would you not' you know seriously is it normal to lie about what you think because and I don't...you know…I'm very people pleasey and try to be polite and….but I still wouldn't if I felt someone was being unfairly treated I would still stand up for that person rather than leaving them to be crushed.

R: Yeah

Mum: But I think you know….that appears from what I have seen from a lot of people with dyspraxia that does appear to be a standard thing, the need to want to conform completely is missing to the extent you know that they still feel it is important to say what is right.

R: Yes which is a good quality

Mum: Well I think so but then I don’t know whether that’s….and therefore I’m not neurotypical and therefore I don’t understand how it’s supposed to work or whether its….I kind of tend to go along the side of it’s a good thing to have people in society who are…

R: I think if we didn’t have people in society who were like that then society would be a lot worse than it is at the moment

Rhys: Mmmm

R: I certainly think it’s a good thing

Mum: My children have not been brought up to be go-ish at all which means that you know in some independent schools that’s a real….not just in independent schools…in some schools full stop people have been taught to push yourself regardless of what happens to anyone else…but you know it’s the teacher who was sat there who’s the head of studies quite constantly get emails from her about easy he is to teach and how wonderfully….he’ll make a wonderful husband

R: See all this praise that you get [laughs]

Rhys: mmmm

R: Its good.

Mum: A messy husband but it doesn’t matter if you make a mess as long as you’ve made a fantastic meal you know

R: Exactly and as long as you’re nice and kind

Mum: Yean exactly

R: Interesting that you say messy [to mum] do you think you're messy [to *Rhys*]?

Rhys: yeah.

R: ok.

Rhys: Yeah, yep definitely.

R: Is there a…are you happy with your messy?

Rhys: I'd rather not be messy but you know I don't really mind

R: In what way are you messy? Is your bedroom messy? Or…

Rhys: Yeah.

R: ok

Rhys: There's always clothes strewn across the floor….although she'd say it was strewn across the floor…I say

R: yeah what would you say?

Rhys: I say….well the T-shirt I want to wear tomorrow is in that place on the floor, er…my trousers are there…er my hoody I threw over there and I can memorise like where I've put everything on the floor generally

R: Yes, and so is your messy….

Rhys: Organised…

R: Organised chaos?

Rhys: Yes yeah, yeah

R: That's really actually very interesting

Mum: now my books are alphabetised again but there was a time when they weren't and I could still find you any book from the thousands and thousands and there are, I could still know where they are

R: Yeah

Mum: and he's like that as well and when I say he's messy its from a position of order messy, when I live on my own I am fiercely tidy you know when I lived in France for a year as part of my degree I was permanently keeping the chaos and now I didn't realised quite how high my OCD tendencies were but what I can do is isolate an island of perfection within the mess, so I'll be anal about the glasses having to be arranged in a particular way but there will be a sea of chaos around it and I'll have to focus on..

Rhys: so I…on the bits I'm terrible it's like one end of it is always like a quarter to half of it is always stacks of….

Mum: washing…the boys have not taken up to their bedrooms and put away and I get…frustrated about…

Rhys: Not always, not always

Mum: about why should I put it away as well as wash it and segregating

Rhys: Not always

Mum: so there's…

Rhys: there's none of my washing on there right now I don't think

Mum: T-shirts, jeans you know it's easy and I then think you know I've done my bit now take it upstairs

Rhys: [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Rhys: there's a load of piles of washing and random letters and newspapers which have appeared despite the fact that none of us read newspapers

R: yep and do they sit there?

Rhys: yeah they're there..

Mum: It's the Waitrose free system of newspaper s you kind of think you ought to

R: you ought to at some point and will do, yeah that sounds quite similar

Mum: But Tim uses a lot for modelling and things doesn't he

Rhys: oh yeah, also we can use newspapers for fires, we like fire

Mum: that was his absolute godsend at *Wexford* that he went from normal sports to outdoors sports

Rhys: ah yes, I was able to move from hockey and rugby and at least one day on like the serious day when you were doing matches and it was like really intense training I was able to move to outdoor pursuits and it was like literally anywhere from walking in the forest to shelter building, fire starting, even the walking yeah was brilliant, there was all…sooo much more fun than like….yeah sooo much more fun than that, it was still like teams

R: Yeah

Rhys: I tried to be in a team but like the guy then wasn't in it permanently so I ended up trying to build a shelter on my own

R: oh ok

Rhys: But then luckily the biggest team who had absorbed basically everyone in the cool kids like group erm they decided one night we're actually going to sleep in the shelter so they wanted to go and have a party in their house instead which meant that their shelter was built for six people and they actually invite one of my friends to come along instead and so we stole the shelter and just slept in there, it actually would have only had space form 3 people maximum and generally they'll putting 6 people in there, so you know, yeah

Mum: Yeah that was really good because you know you were able to win the cup, you were in year 8 weren't you, your year 8 cup for outdoor pursuits

Rhys: yeah

Mum: Do you not remember that?

Rhys: Yeah, do I still have that or not?

Mum: No we had to return it darling

Rhys: damn it

Mum: I know the teacher for that was fantastic, he was husband of the SENCO for the school

R: Right

Mum: So erm I think that was partly why they brought in such a strong outdoor pursuits thing as they were aware of the issues….who were very fit and active just not in a ball game

R: Yes

Mum: in year 8 thing was organised entirely by their outdoor pursuits teacher so they went camping, didn't you for three or four days

Rhys: Yep and then went for a cycle back

Mum: yeah they cycled all the way back on mountain bike

R: Oh wow.

Rhys: that was very tall hills, it was brilliant, I think I was the only one who was like…I was one of the only people who rode back the entire way, not even taking a break and getting on the bus for a bit. Although when we actually got back and were going to school I was like 'no this is completely the wrong way what are you doing? This is taking three times as long as it would if you would just go this way' and I even went to the person and said "do you want to go this way this way is a lot faster" and she was like "no, no we should go along the road where there is cars"

Mum: we always took the cycle path which is along the river bank and obviously somebody hadn't thought about you could do that so

Rhys: which actually…we had to pay attention to traffic lights and traffic

R: yes

Rhys: and it took definitely three times longer than it should have done and a long way nastier

Mum: they had a swimming instructor who came with the mountain bikes rather than their usual, the school had hired a mass of identical mountain bikes

R: Right

Mum: yeah and then the school provided a couple of riding equipment and the staff, instructor had to lead, cos if it had been your normal teacher then he would into have made that mistake and he would have listened to…

Rhys: yeah, the person who had been cycling to school every day

R: Oh god.

Mum: But no it was just such a relief when he went to *Wexford* and suddenly that was available an additional option. Unfortunately his best friend *Ethan* who was quite good at rugby cos he was tall so he was never available

Rhys: and he liked the team sports

R: yeah

Rhys: we're actually like really different at a lot of stuff but we get along

R: But you get along well

Rhys: like….yeah no he was always in trouble…like here's an example at his last school an achievement he is particularly proud of was having an entire new detention invented just for him

R: oh my god [laughs]

Mum: people say he is constantly in trouble

Rhys: [laughs] no he's really nice, our entire form thought it was brilliant when they heard about it and just so pleased he sounded about it, like his mum's even got used to it now for example one time he was telling her proudly how he'd managed to hide the fact that he'd eaten an entire can of pringles and he goes "well actually this is how I did it, well basically I took the all the pringles out and then took a kitchen towel and put it inside so it feels like there's something inside but there isn't" and she was like "that's actually really clever" and I was stood there like 'you're used to this' and she was yeah fine.

Mum: the most you've…you don't do naughty things, you know at home or at school, he's just good all the time and chatty and you know huggy and how old were you when you wouldn't hug me, you wouldn't come near me for at least a couple of months just before he had his growth spurt, before he was about 12 or 13 and then he realised he was taller than me so his arm over my shoulders and then constantly around town like this and patting me on the head.

Rhys: Yeah

R: Yeah my son did the day he started secondary school I drove him there and as we pulled up to the school gate he said "now, I'm not calling you mummy anymore, I'm calling you mum and you are not allowed to call me Smurf" which is his little stupid little nickname "you can't call me Smurf and you're not allowed to embarrass me in front of my friends" and I said "oh alright" and that was it, I drove away thinking 'oh' and that was it that was the end of it "and I'm not giving you hugs anymore I'm grown up" that lasted a few months and now he still calls me mummy and hugs me

Mum: *Tim* is much less erm he will insist on calling me mum in front of friends whereas you just don't call me anything do you?

Rhys: yeah

Mum: or mummykins and pat pat pat on the head, you don't do much of that as you used to but yeah that did go on for a while cos it was quite dramatic

Rhys: I'm still growing

Mum: I know you are, *Tim* is taller than he was at his age

Rhys: I'm ready banging into the tops of doorways

R: So how tall is your dad…are you gonna be…

Mum: we don't know

Rhys: Don't know

R: Ah we don't know sorry yes

Rhys: so yes in terms of like…

R: So in terms of your side of the family [to mum]

Mum: In terms of my side of the family I am [inaudible] all of my mums side ….all my cousins are tall and glamourous and my sister and I basically dwarf

R: [laughs] I wouldn't say dwarf

Mum: but you know she's actually a double amputee and she did say "I'm going to get them to give me prosthetics so I'm and inch taller than you [laughs] and I can be taller than you for the first time ever"

Rhys: I think we're good at optimism

R: You're all what?

Rhys: Good at optimism

R: Yes I think so

Rhys: definitely

Mum: I've never known anyone who is ungrudged by anything as *Rhys*

Rhys: I still have grudges against a couple of people at school for example they're generally annoying overall and then they do one thing annoying and I'm like that's it, I don't think I can find any reason to like you know…unless you can prove that our alright

Mum: You should tell Casey about this hierarchy system at *Appleford Abbey*

Rhys: oh yeah, when I started there was like this whole ancient hierarchy system where for the years above believed that everyone in the year below should do whatever they want because their older

R: Right

Rhys: so like you had this whole system of sixth form saying “pick up my sunglasses from my room” er…..

R: and did you have to go and get them?

Rhys: “Make me some food”…..yeah…there was the whole….

Mum: they thought he should go and do these things

Rhys: Yeah

R: did you go?

Rhys: sometimes, but whenever I was it was always obviously grudgingly as opposed to some of the people who were just like “yes of course I’ll go and do that right yes…by the way you’re so beautiful and amazing and wonderful and obviously I’m very happy to do this for you” which is basically what the year below are doing to the year above so they can get away with being annoying to us and the year below, so like the year below us are sucking up the year above us so that they can be like really mean to the year below and when our year like because we don’t do any of that, so when our year see them doing that we get really pissed off and so we try and intervene but because they’ve sucked up to the year above us, the year above us think they’re brilliant and that we’re really annoying cos we never liked sucked up to them…

Mum: I think the thing is *Rhys* …

Rhys: So they support the year below us or just don’t believe that the year below us is bullying the year below, so for example like last year one of the year below us was really annoying one of the year below them and we were like “right you stop this" and like eventually like the year below us eventually ended up beating up the year below them and so we decided that….some of use decided that we should go and like return the favour….as it were…..he then went like drying to the sixth form saying that we're bullying him and so the sixth form said "if you do anything to him we will beat you up, we will beat your entire year up" and we were like….

Mum: the headmaster, the one before this one, was basically….cracked down on the entire thing and said in his leaving letter to the school was lovely cos every sentence ends with 'be kind' and entire paragraphs says things like 'be kind' you know 'work hard and be kind' it sounds [inaudible] but actually they just needed him to be …

R: Yeah

Rhys: Partly because of our year like hierarchy has gone down loads.

Mum: *Rhys's* year had that with choristers as well, really severe bullying that had been there for decades…like really bad

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: and his year….

Rhys: Like for example…

Mum: several of the mums…

Rhys: Like basically like there used to be…you had like a senior, when you were…they'd be in charge of you and like off the book and they'd be in charge and tell you if you were doing anything wrong….alright a system and we had it in place as it does mean you can get support but like for example if they were just really mean to us and like basically thought of us as they're bitches erm our year for example we like brought them Easter eggs and stuff, like nice big ones and whatever…

Mum: All the mums got on particularly well that year and we actually all independently say to our sons “you have the ability to end this”

R: yes

Rhys: We’re still actually good friends with them, yes now we’re good friends with them

R: Yeah, that’s really good

Rhys: I ended up because I had two of them, like actually buying both of them an Easter egg, they’re not amazing Green and Blacks one’s but they’re something…

R: Something yeah

Rhys: Something like Cadburys, like one of the Cadbury ones with purple flakes

R: Yeah, that’s an amazing thing that you’ve managed to do

Mum: Because they were all that way inclined, the mums were just saying “you can, you can….”

R: Yeah do something here

Mum: yeah, you don’t have to have sort of perpetuating….

Rhys: and like yeah there’s only a couple of people in our year who believe in hierarchy still we like clamp down on them and so by the time we are in top sixth form we should hopefully have gone pretty much gone with the entire system

R: mmmmm that’s amazing

Rhys: I mean we’ll have to like…

Mum: that is partly because you had the headmaster and who came the way he did, you know there was a problem there and while he was there that was his major thing that he wanted to get rid of.

Rhys: It still come down on [inaudible] for example where the housemaster hears anything about that sort of thing happening he will raise and say “you’ll be put in a Saturday night detention” so on Saturday nights people…so it’s like 2 hours people get back at 10ish and then like have a bit more free time after that but like you go like socialise with another school, go see a movie, er like go out to Nando's but like if you're really bad in lessons you can be put in detention for that entire time, so anyway he's threatened to anyone who carries on with hierarchy to put them in Saturday detention, which is good definitely

R: Yeah, no definitely. It sounds like an amazing school in many ways.

Rhys: oh yeah also, I'm really happy about it, one of the people who's been going really far with hierarchy has been expelled

Mum: excellent

Rhys: Yep…I hated them, absolutely utterly hated them

Mum: that's not something you hear

R: ah not very often you say that?

Rhys: like his brother before him was like really annoying as well like…

Mum: that's usually what you hear…. 'he's really annoying'

Rhys: he had this thing where he'd go around selling pound drinks to people like cans of coke for a pound, I definitely didn't do that at all at any point [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Mum: Made a fortune at his school, *Rhys* had an illicit shop for a while didn't you?

Rhys: Yeah

R: Yeah my kids have done that

Rhys: yeah like at Poundland I'd buy drinks for 30p, 35p and sell them for a pound because everyone there is really rich so they think that's an acceptable price and I was like 'yeah ok sure' like I even hired someone to sell like the stuff while I was away, I'd give them 10% of the total profits like not even…not just the overheads, just like the entire thing including how much it cost to buy it in the first place….so yeah

Mum: School dealt with that very nicely when it was found out….

Rhys: yeah

Mum: he didn't even tell me

R: [laughs]

Rhys: Just like the housemaster came in and said like, not even angrily, just like calmly said "Alright I don't think you should be doing this" bla bla bla "so I'd quite like you to stop it" he thought the guy I had sell stuff for me was my bitch [laughs] and I was like 'what I'm paying him amazingly for this, I'm giving him 10% of the total profits and access' [laughs]

Mum: yeah you should see my spreadsheets [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Rhys: access to the locker where I'm keeping all my stuff, he's probably stolen a lot of stuff from me

R: yeah I was going to say he's probably had a few bits

Rhys: Like I'd notice since I'd hired him there would always be slightly less money than I was expecting so yeah….'I'm paying him loads and definitely giving him free stuff and you think he's my bitch!' Yeah so I had to stop that and a lot of people were annoyed that I had to shut down….I was providing a service.

Mum: we had to have many conversations about it, never under any circumstances do you take alcohol in for anyone who is… you know when you're 16, not happening, when you're 18 not happening, when their 18 not happening….

Rhys: I wouldn't do that

Mum: I know you wouldn't, but we just had to be really….

Rhys: although there was one guy like…no the…yeah that's it the guy who got expelled brother decided like in these last couple of weeks to sell a bottle of vodka

R: oh right

Rhys: to the 4th form for 50 quid and he got expelled 3 weeks before he had to leave for that, so both of them got expelled.

R: Not good.

Rhys: Yeah its two people I'd like to be gone now. That annoying kid that went crying to the sixth form after bullying the year below and this guy in the year above who still believes in hierarchy loads. It's really annoying and one time…oh yeah cos I ate a load of toast like two years ago…like mainly because….at that point she [mum] was on a whole "toast is incredible bad for you, all carbohydrates are incredibly bad for you, you shouldn't eat things red….red is the food of the devil…you should never eat things red….toast is a special treat to be eaten on your birthday" [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Rhys: and so when I found out you could have almost unlimited amounts of toast and chocolate spread at school I was 'oh my god, this is something I can only have on my birthday'

Mum: [laughs]

Rhys: and so I was one of the largest consumers of toast so now I have a reputation of eating toast despite last year having it way less than anyone else and this year having oooh lets see…two slices when I had a choir thing at lunch and was let out of …ten minutes late from lesson before that therefore not having time to go a like proper lunch….two slices this entire term…

Mum: it's a hard life

Rhys: and then someone broke the toaster and therefore blamed me for that…for having two slices…also it was broken because someone put a bun in the toaster

R: Ahh

Rhys: like an entire bun and that jammed in and the thing shorted out and stuff and so everyone blamed me for that despite the fact that I was like 'why would I toast a bun who would do that, we have a microwave if you want to heat a bun you put it in the microwave…it doesn't taste very good….'

Mum: lots of schools the boarding facilities are only available to the overnight boys and the day boys are put in a different house…*Tim* had this and had severe bullying as a result….because his school is very [inaudible] even if you weren't boarding you'd still be in a house with boarders and he was…[inaudible]...with the toaster

Rhys: I have a room…there is…you always have a bed ….like everyone who goes to that school regardless of whether you're there or not has a bed

Mum: that means you've got a space where you can go and work

Rhys: and like a table and yeah

Mum: It's more organised in that sort of way, and it's a very small [inaudible] and again it's made a huge difference

Rhys: yeah anyway

Mum: in terms of confidence and that kind of thing hasn't it

Rhys: Yeah

Mum: going to somewhere that size

Rhys: yeah, so yeah…the other guy saw me and said "ah *Rhys* what are you doing you're gonna break the microwave" and poured the entire hot chocolate down the drain

Mum: and the injustice still stays with you doesn't it darling

Rhys: Yes, I didn't even tell you about this

Mum: you did

Rhys: no did I?

Mum: You did, yes

Rhys: he poured the hot chocolate…

Mum: yes “and it was my hot chocolate, my hot chocolate powder, not even as if it was the schools hot chocolate powder, my hot chocolate powder, he had no right”

Rhys: Yeah! Yeah and I was really annoyed by that mainly because I was really annoyed before that and he’s mean to everyone else….I want him to be gone for the sake of the school not just for the sake of revenge for pouring my hot chocolate down the drain…definitely not no, that’s not the entire reason [inaudible].

R: so is there anything else that you would want to tell me about your dyspraxia?

Rhys: Erm……….don’t think so really, no…..er……

Mum: Something else chocolate related darling?

R: Chocolate is nice

Rhys: Yeah. I’m good at cooking.

R: are you?

Mum: He’s very good actually.

Rhys: I invented a cake.

R: Wow. What kind?

Rhys: Basically you get….my preference is chocolate pavlova but you can do plain regular one…and then top that with chocolate mousse and that’s literally the entire thing

R: oooh that sounds lovely

Mum: It’s marvellous.

Rhys: It is brilliant.

R: So you enjoy cooking?

Rhys: Yes, definitely

Mum: he doesn't just cook cakes though, he's now working on savoury stuff as well aren't you?

Rhys: yeah I can cook curry, er spaghetti and meatballs, er still need to learn how to do a roast properly but that's probably fairly simple….I can make gravy….er

Mum: and indeed 973 different ways of…with chicken

Rhys: oh yeah

Mum: he perfected Pizza at the age of about 8

Rhys: Yep, given enough time I can make amazing Pizza, like amazing one erm, I also experiment loads so yeah

R: Experimenting is good I think

Rhys: I like making my Pizza spicy, like chilli powders, one time I used Nando's mayonnaise actually that worked well. I really like it when it worked well.

Mum: Its very useful having someone who can cook, you know having known to disappear off to collect *Tim* and saying you know can you make such and such while I'm out….

Rhys: I'm like yeah ok

R: yeah it's very good, a very good skill to have

Mum: I just wish that sometimes Id manage to locate myself a sous chef because you're very good at everything but you're less keen on the tidying up factor that comes afterwards

Rhys: yep

Mum: you are quite unaware of just how much mess you have made, very willing you know you can say 'can you go back and….' the words that strike fear into my heart [inaudible]

Rhys: [laughs]

R: [laughs] my partner is complete opposite of me and he’s very tidy and times everything as he goes and cleans everything as he goes, you know he could be cooking dinner and it would look like nothing had been touched and he now has to walk out of the room when I start cooking, he can’t bare…and I actually said to him at one point “you’re never in the kitchen when I’m cooking is that cos you can’t bare it?” and he was like “I can’t I just can’t” [laughs] cos if I make a cake its everywhere, like the flour…and he’s like “it’s amazing but it’s just while you’re cooking its chaos”

Mum: I used to find that at school you know all these people had these reputations for making amazing cakes and what they actually did was iced to perfection and the cakes were horrible you know why would you want to eat something that tasted like that and it was you know the icing was perfect and everyone raved about them….but people like me who go for lemon meringues cos they wanted to something that tasted…their not pretty though

Rhys: Yeah you know the little cakes…cupcakes….like I took them to the cake sale once….I had to cook something at school so I took some of that to a cake sale once…erm didn’t ice them and all because usually we cook on an Aga and I had to cook them at school and I had to use like terrible school ovens and stuff and so they didn’t turn out looking as nice as they usually would but they still tasted absolutely fine though but because they looked terrible they were at the bake sale and basically not one of them were brought by anyone but me…

Mum: Ah but all our meringues always go down well

Rhys: Ah yeah, well meringues

Mum: You know once you’ve tasted once it’s like yes we want the meringues

Rhys: I just do brownies…

Mum: He does do good brownies

Rhys: But yesterday I was like looking for something to eat and I was like 'mmmmm gonna make some brownies' like casually make some brownies

R: Did anyone teach you how to do this or did you just start cooking?

Rhys: She taught me

Mum: you did also have…their French teacher did an entire term on eggs, so he did learn…the only thing is he came home and told me how to do scrambled eggs…wrong

Rhys: Actually she didn't teach us how to….that was someone else who said "when we're at home we put milk in there"

Mum: But prior to that he wasn't very interested him how to cook stuff apart from Pizza

Rhys: Yeah so I can now do omelettes, eggs, meringues, brownies, cakes, pizza, spaghetti and meatballs, curry….I know how to do spaghetti bolognaise as well I did that a while ago and that's one of the first Spaghetti Bolognese I fully enjoyed because it was made with good ingredients and good mince rather than basically every other….even at my friend's house they're not particularly good eaters when it comes to meat quality, they'll try and go free range and nice meat but generally they're not too bothered…

Mum: neither of them will eat a McDonalds or anything

Rhys: oh no *Ethan* will

Mum: no you and *Tim* won't

Rhys: Ah yeah, *Ethan* will eat McDonalds though, I don't see the point of it, it's terrible it's tasteless

R: Oh really, it's plasticy…

Mum: He’s accepting now that things do improve the flavour haven’t you but will still prefer the tomato and onion is liquidised so he can’t actually pick up on the texture

R: Ah ok

Rhys: yep

Mum: So we do have quite serious textual issues still going ok

Rhys: mmmm

Mum: no avocados ever under any circumstances, he could detect banana at a million paces in any baby food, the only vegetable [inaudible] and they screamed solidly for car journeys….I’ve found a few other people with dyspraxia who can’t…you know that fail-safe put the baby in the car and they’ll go to sleep….they never, you know that’s sensory processing disorder as well isn’t it….labels…

R: yes I was going to ask about labels…

Rhys: Yeah

R: I brought my son numerus clothes and he refuses to wear them because it doesn’t feel right and you know and as much as I do understand it but you just think ‘got take that back to the shop now’ so now I don’t do shopping without him because I’m just like ‘just feel whichever one is right’

Mum: we’re exactly like aren’t we?

R: I mean obviously he’s now of an age where he wants to choose what he is wearing anyway but even when he was younger I used to say “I’m not buying you anything…. let’s go because you have to feel….cos one pair of jeans feels right and one pair that looks exactly the same doesn’t feel right”

Mum: waist band issues for years….yeah comfy enough or…

R: elasticated waist bands I had to do

Mum: he also used to remove every stitch of clothing after school didn't you for years…

Rhys: mmmm

Mum: He was 4 when he started school…..4's too much

R: Yeah it's very young

Mum: He couldn't cope with the whole feeling of school clothes for another moment than you had to, the minute you'd get home it was like everything off….and now it's pyjamas isn't it? Instantaneous the minute he gets home from school…

R: Pyjamas on?

Mum: yeah

Rhys: well less now, like generally cos I come home from school in [inaudible] its more the matter of can I be bothered to go all the way up to my room….do I have pyjamas downstairs?

Mum: Townhouses so you have two flights of stairs to his bedroom

R: ah ok

Mum: and obviously he's not very fit and young and active or anything are you darling?

R: [laughs]

Rhys: Yeah, no.

Mum: we have got huge…but then I was…I was massively unsympathetic about erm food texture stuff because his skull was not healing, and there was no explanation as to why his skulls was not healing and the health visitor kept saying I'd need him to taste things 16 times before he would actually accept them so I kept pushing him and it was only when I read that erm… Caged in Chaos I read that and was 'oh no, it's real' and then gradually over the next however long we found out that *Tim* also had dyspraxia and then that I did too and I suddenly thought it's probably why I haven't eaten chicken skins since I was a child…I would be sick at the table if I was made to eat chicken skins,

R: I would yeah

Mum: I can't eat chicken skin now really unless it's absolutely crisp to perfect and only in a small amount…so yeah

Rhys: I like chicken skin

Mum: I know you do, and he wouldn't tell me at all when he was tiny and then gradually his secret [inaudible] sausages

R: Its very common for people with dyspraxia to have issues with food and that and I ….looking back with my son on one point he lived on mashed potato….or what he believed was mashed potato…because he would only eat mashed potato and bread he refused to eat anything else so to get any kind of nutrients in to him I used to blend up cod and cauliflower into mashed potato…

Rhys: Cod?

R: and he basically lived on cod and cauliflower mashed potato mush for…..and he was about 4 or 5

Mum: *Rhys* was the same and from 2 and a half to 4 and a half the peer pressure from school gradually got him to try a few things and he came home eating sausages from school, I think remember celebrating when he ate ice cream because I brought yeo valley so it was like I'd scream "look he's eating all of them" and everyone else is going "its ice cream" and I was "no…."

R: "no you don't get it"

Mum: and you drank apple juice for quite a few days even after you'd stopped eating and the yoghurts he would eat the fruity ones and that gradually dropped by the way side, cos you'd eat blueberries until you were about 6 or 7 under sufferance for those were a texture he could actually handle, until he was two and a half he was a fruit-a-holic he’d walk around Waitrose and before we’d even got to the check-out he’d eaten a punnet of strawberries and I’d be paying for a plastic cart you know it was the easiest way to keep him calm, you know actually in the trolley, cos he wanted to walk, from the moment he could walk he wanted to walk, so it was a way of making sure he stay put in the cage of the trolley….with a punnet of strawberries he’d sit and not run around….

Rhys: Holding out random items

Mum: yes

R: My daughter used to go along in the er….still does it actually….but not in the….like she’d be in the trolley and I’d be doing the shopping like that and she’d be la la la and I’d get to the checkout and things would go through and I’d be like “I didn’t buy that, I didn’t buy that” and there would be about 15 items in my trolley and she’d actually be like this…but I didn’t notice until it had gone through the check out and I was bagging it up and I was like “yes what do we need that for?” and there weren’t even things she particularly wanted she was very young, she was like 18 months you know 2 years chucking random things in.

Rhys: I totally accidently shop lifted some wine gums once, yeah we were on the way out of the shop and I just grabbed a bag of like wine gums and back then I thought that wine gums actually had wine in

R: Ah yes

Rhys: and so like I saw them in the bag and if they were just sweets they wouldn’t raise any questions but I thought they were wine and I was like “mummy why have they got wine gums?”

R: “why are you giving me wine?”

Mum: And I had to go back into M & S and go “I’m really sorry but my very small has taken these”

Rhys: [laughs]

Mum: You were very worried about us going back in “oh we might get into trouble”

Rhys: [laughs]

R: Right well is there anything you wanted to ask me? Or anything you think we missed?

Rhys: No.

R: No, ok, well I’ve taken up quite a lot of your morning, but it has been very nice to meet you both and very nice to meet *Tim*.

Rhys: wow we’ve been speaking for 2 hours!

Appendix L: PhD-3 (I) Isla Interview transcript

(R: = researcher Isla: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place at a library in a location chosen by the participant and their family. Participants **mum and dad were present during the interview, participant seemed very happy with this. Participant was very happy to speak with me and sat next to me on a sofa with her parents on the opposite sofa. Her parents were very keen to chat about the Dictaphone at the beginning, they wondered if it was a good thing for participant to use later in her education).**

Isla: Yeah cos I can't write very fast, cos when I do write fast my writing becomes very unreadable.

R: Right Ok

Isla: And…but if I have time then it's quite neat.

R: Yes. So when they're talking a lot in class when the teachers are talking and you've got to take notes….

Isla: Er we do have to take notes as well she normally writes up erm…in Maths she normally writes up the rule on the board so then we have to write it down with an example, so we can go back and revise that, cos that's quite useful cos then when you're revision you can read everything, yeah.

R: And do they go a bit fast sometimes?

Isla: Yeah

R: Yeah and is it hard to get it written down?

Isla: Yeah.

R: So what year are you in now?

Isla: Year 7.

R: Year 7 ok and how is it starting school?

Isla: Erm…good…yeah.

R: Is it much bigger than your primary school?

Isla: Way bigger! One of the blocks is bigger than my whole primary school.

R: Oh wow. Gosh.

Mum: You've gone from 85 children to 850 haven't you?

Isla: I think there's even a bit more than that.

Mum: That's a huge change isn't it?

Isla: Yeah.

R: And is it far from home?

Isla: It's about an hour and 10 minutes to get there and an hour and 10 mins to get back.

R: That's a long day.

Isla: It was my choice to go there.

R: It was your choice to go there?

Isla: Yeah.

R: What made you want to go to that one?

Isla: Erm, well I didn't want to go to the nearest school cos you [points at mum] work there.

Mum: Is that the reason?

Isla: Well mainly, cos I didn't want everybody to go 'oh your mum told me off' and be like a bit embarrassed and also I didn't like it as much, and then so I didn't put that down because my second choice is *Oakdale* but I think we thought that if I was going to go to a further away school I might as well go to *Woodside* because it has really good facilitates like *St Peters* but also its near my grandma and granddads house so if I have any problems they can come and pick me up.

R: Yeah that's very important isn't it?

Isla: Yeah.

R: Ok, so how do you get there? Do mum and dad drive you?

Isla: Bus.

R: Bus, goodness me, so you must have to get up quite early then?

Isla: Yeah, I've got quite used to it now.

Mum: I haven't! [Everyone laughs] You have to get the half past seven bus…

Isla: Yeah.

R: And is that the first time you've had to get the bus by yourself?

Isla: Yeah.

R: Yeah my children go to a school it's about 20 minutes to drive but it takes them about 50 minutes on the bus and erm but I work in the opposite direction so I can't drive them to school and then get to work so it took me a bit of a while but they love it, I remember the school on the first two weeks I kept phoning up and the schools said 'he's fine, I think you're not' so I was like no maybe not then [laughs]

Mum: It's not just me then?

R: So yes I think sometimes us parents worry a bit too much. So you must be quite tired then when you get to school?

Isla: Er not too bad no.

Mum: You go to bed quite early don't you?

Isla: Yeah

Mum: I’m quite strict on that.

Isla: About 8 o’clock, I have to wake up at half 6.

Mum: You don’t really complain about going to bed at 8 o’clock do you?

Isla: No.

R: No you must be tired by 8 o’clock. So what was your primary school like then? So it was much smaller 85 children

Isla: Yeah around that many and erm it had four classrooms so there wasn’t many people erm the classrooms have about 30 people….

Mum: No it depended some had 20 in each class

Isla: Some had 20 and some had a few more like 21, I think the biggest was 28 wasn’t it? Yeah.

R: Ok and was that close to home?

Isla: Yeah it was, it was just round the corner [laughs]

R: So a big change!

Mum: from half past 8 you could manage then couldn’t you?

Isla: Yeah.

R: Ok and so when did you get diagnosed with dyspraxia?

Isla: What year was I? In year 6 or year 5 [Looks at mum]

Mum: You were in year 5 so it was April 2014

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: so it’s not been that long.

Isla: No.

R: And do you remember before you got diagnosed? Do you remember what things you found difficult?

Isla: Yeah, well I wasn’t, I couldn’t, I wasn’t er…I can’t…I don’t know how to say it….

Mum: Take your time.

Isla: I wasn't able to do like as many things like in PE as my friends were like I couldn't do a cartwheel and no matter how many times they showed me how to do it I still couldn't do it and I used to find copying really hard and my hand used to ache a lot and erm they always used to go way too fast so my handwriting was really unreadable and yeah.

R: Ok and so then you had the diagnosis in what would that be aged 10?

Isla: Yeah

Mum: Just before her 10th birthday.

Isla: Yeah

R: Ok, and how was it diagnosed?

Mum: I paid.

R: You paid for a private assessment?

Mum: Well because there wasn't really…it was mainly just me knowing that things were not quite right and we'd explored lots of other things because we thought it was to do with her sight because the first time I really noticed something was wrong was she could read words before she started school she could read c-a-t cat before she started school and then when she got to school and she was reading the books that had the picture and then you know a few words underneath the page she whizzed through those and then it was suddenly the books….

Isla: Oh yeah I remember….

Mum: and the writing started to be smaller, closer together…

Isla: I got an orange band books and I was there for ages but I couldn't move up because yeah…

Mum: and she, I knew it wasn't because she wasn't bright and it went from whizzing to like whizzing along and then all of a sudden she hit this brick wall and school were just like 'oh everyone develops at different rates' and I felt very much like I was being a pushy mum, I knew that individually she could read those words but when, like If I showed her, If I wrote a word down and showed her she could read it, but when it was on a page with lots of other words she couldn't and I just did loads of reading, loads of research and we ended up at a visual clinic having her assessed and they said that she got some visual processing problems….

Isla: Isn't it Meares Irlen?

Mum: Oh Meares Irlen that's right.

Isla: Yeah so I had to get orange glasses.

R: Yes I was going to say so have you got the coloured…cos sometimes they give the coloured sheets don't they and then you can have that put into glasses, so you've got the orange glasses?

Isla: Well I did but then they closed down didn't they? [looks at mum]

Mum: so then she had the orange glasses like for a year, actually as soon as you had those orange glasses…

Isla: I was fine.

Mum: You were on free reader weren't you?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: within a few weeks.

R: That really helped?

Mum: and I was like it must have been that then, but I knew there was something but then we yeah that clinic closed down didn't it?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: Then we went to boots and they said they didn't believe in it didn't they?

Isla: No.

Mum: so anyway we went back to normal glasses by that time you were still struggling, you were still getting lost weren't you?

Isla: Yeah. If I read down a page then I would find it hard to find my place.

R: Do the words when you're reading…do the words move?

Isla: I don't think I notice that as much anymore cos I really like reading so Im really in to books so I don't really notice anything but words reading them.

Mum: You did say at the time that the words were blurry.

Isla: Yeah.

R; Cos there is a thing that lots of children, lots of people with dyspraxia have and it's very hard to pinpoint and opticians aren't fantastic, they're getting better, but they will quite often diagnosed a mild Meares Irlen with the coloured lenses and actually what it is is they think that when your eyes move they move coordinated like this [moves both index fingers in coordinated way] I can't even do my fingers coordinated but they do move coordinated but sometimes people with dyspraxia have uncoordinated eye muscles and so their eyes might move slightly out of sync with each other and they take a while to come back in and then what happens is when they are reading because their eyes aren't moving as coordinated as they should the words started getting a bit blurry and jumbled and fuzzy.

Isla: Yeah, well my eyes like that so I was missing out words in the middle and like looking at words like in-the-a.

Mum: So then you had vision therapy as well, we used to go up to Cheltenham for vision therapy.

Isla: Yeah I got these bifocal's so this bit's for long distance and this bit's for reading [points to glasses].

R: Oh ok.

Mum: This vision therapy centre she does these exercises then she won't need to have tinted lenses and it has helped hasn't it?

Isla: Yeah it's really helped.

R: What were the exercises you had to do?

Isla: Erm so there were loads of them, there were blocks where…there were different blocks and you had a mat so my mum or my dad had to make a pattern out of the blocks and I had to remember it in my head, visualize it, and they would cover it up and I would have to make it. Then there were these letters that you would put under a tea towel and then I had to feel and then make a word out of them. There were these…what were these lenses that had two lenses up there and two lenses down there that you flip round and then you had to wait until the letters stick, cos I had a letter stick, you had to wait until the letters on the stick become clear.

Mum: Yeah that was a focus one wasn't it?

Isla: Yeah and then there was also one….there was loads, but erm another one was I think you had a patch on one eye didn't you and I think you had a letter chart and them my mum would say read the column A and G and then I'd have to read the letters, random letters, going down, so I'd have to track across.

R: Oh, so were they quite fun doing those?

Isla: Erm, [mum laughs] no [laughs]

R; No, but you had to do them?

Isla: Yeah.

R; But do you think it helped?

Isla: I think it helped yeah.

R: Ok, sometimes these things sound fun but they're not.

Mum: Quite tedious for everybody to be honest but they recon you're as good as you're gonna get now, so you don't…

Isla: Don't need to go there anymore, which is good cos we don't have to go up to Cheltenham every month. Yeah cos we had to go up to Chelteneham every month and it was….there's not much to do there is there, cos you'd have to go there and then we'd have to stay there for the day and hang around.

R: Right, not much fun?

Isla: No.

Mum: so then, I'm still….there was still…every parents day was saying the same thing, was saying don't understand what, how she finds the simple things in Maths really difficult but the difficult things really easy, and they couldn't….you know cos she could get some abstract concept but she struggles with like 3 + 5 or something.

Isla: yeah I still find it hard with just the basic things cos like it still takes me a long, a few more seconds than everybody else's to work out the simple things I don't know why though cos when I actually think of them I'm like ah they're actually really easy and trying to remember say I was adding 7 and 6 I think ah that 7's got a 5 in it and 6 has got a 5 in it so that's 10 and that would be 3 left over so that's 13 so do it like that which was….I don't know what to do.

R: Ok.

Mum: so it was lots of things like that but I was well why can't you just remember that 7 and 6 is 13? It just doesn't….

Isla: I'm trying to, I'm working on that.

Mum: and then her spelling and her handwriting as well were way lower than her ability and at every parents evening I kept saying the same thing and it wasn't getting anyway and I just felt that she wasn't getting anywhere so in the end after a lot of reading I said right well just have an educational psychologist come in and assess her.

Isla: Ah that took forever, she was there for about 2 and a half hours.

R: Ah really? Did she come and see you at home?

Isla: Yeah at home.

R: And what was that like having someone come in…

Isla: Erm it's a bit scary cos she was a bit scary wasn't she?

Mum: I know what you mean, she was quite aloof wasn't she?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: Yes I know what you mean.

R: Did she get you to do lots of tests and things like that?

Isla: Yeah, I was like I don't know what you're doing this for?

R: Did she not explain things?

Isla: Not really, she just said 'oh can you do this for me' and it was a bit like oh….

Mum: I can understand you being stressed, I was fairly stressed sat in the other room.

Isla: Because you weren't allowed in were you?

R: Were you not?

Isla: and there was this big lady asking me to do things and it was quite creepy.

R: Right, that's quite a long time when someone is being a bit aloof and creepy and you can't have your mum in the room. So after that, so they did all theses tests and they were a bit strange and you didn't really like that then?

Isla: No.

R: But then, so did they write up a report and suggest that they thought it was dyspraxia?

Mum: she said that it was the peaks and the troughs were quite…well she said though *Isla's* troughs were still in the average range…erm….

R: Everything else isn't?

Mum: Yeah there was a marked difference. So erm and then since then, she was pulled out, had intervention for handwriting and spelling and you did so well with your handwriting, *Mrs Cook* bless her, so *Angle House* have have discarded you now haven't they?

Isla: Yeah.

R: So your teachers at school were helping you?

Isla: yeah cos isn't she the SENCO *Mrs Wilkins* erm she erm she would do exercises like the loops and…

R: do you do it to music?

Isla: Erm no we just have to do copy over things and write sentences and then we did spellings and my teacher *Mr Brown* would write down the spellings, go through my book and see the spellings that I'd got wrong and then he'd write them down and then I'd learn those ones so I wasn't just learning a list of things.

R: learning the ones you needed to, right okay.

Isla: yeah

R: And how did you feel when you, so when you have the educational psychologist come round and you didn't really like her but then they said that you had dyspraxia so how did you feel about that?

Isla: I was really really upset

R: were you?

Isla: yeah

R: why are you upset?

Isla: Erm I think I thought I was weird and that I couldn't do things.

R: do you still feel like that now?

Isla: no I've got used to it now

R: okay that's good.

Isla: I kind of understand that that's the way it is so I just have to live with it.

R: yeah and lots of… Do you know Harry Potter?

Isla: yeah

R: well the actor who plays Harry Potter, he's got dyspraxia.

Isla: has he? [Sounded excited] I didn’t know that.

R: he has, and there's Florence and the machine the band

Isla: yes

R: I don't know what songs they sing…

Isla: they were at Glastonbury yes.

R: so the lead singer Florence with the red hair she's also got dyspraxia.

Isla: really?

R: there's a number of famous people that have dyspraxia, which I was think is quite nice because you can see that actually they've managed, you know there isn’t anything wrong and they've gone on and fulfilled their dream of whatever is…

Isla: yeah

R: so I can send you later, I’ve got a list of people that have dyspraxia that I can send you, some of them you’ll know and some of them, I have to go ‘who’s that?’ some historic people, but I can send you like to have a look at because sometimes it’s nice to see other people’s isn't it?

Isla: yes please.

Mum: I think we almost felt that you were like handicapped somehow and that you felt, there is a horrible stereotype isn’t there being special needs?

R: yes unfortunately

Mum: yeah and that's a think she felt… not that there's anything wrong with that but you wouldn't wish on yourself would you? And I think she felt that she was being put in that category. But you don't feel like that anymore do you?

Isla: no I kind of think I don't really care what other people think any more.

R: that's good. so what's helped you to think change from feeling one way to changing to feeling like you don't care what people think any more?

Isla: I don't know, erm probably being helpful things and then realising that it's making a difference, erm yeah.

R: so when your teachers were helping with handwriting and it really made a difference and then you could get it, to think that really helped?

Isla: yeah it really did.

R: that's really good. So now that you can and secondary school do think your teachers there understand?

Isla: no.

R: no oh dear. Is it not been a good…

Isla: some people know or they don't know but they just still do things, erm but some teachers really don't know.

R: so do you think that they don’t know what it is?

Isla: yeah

R: or what to do about it?

Isla: because didn't the SENCO say, didn't she say that every teacher that I have is supposed to know and there's a folder saying what you can do?

Mom: but that only works if if the teacher looks at the folder doesn’t it?

Isla: yeah and I don't think…

R: some of them have?

Isla: no.

R: Right. What kind of things makes you think they don't understand? what are they doing?

Isla: Well, one of the teachers is really good she erm when I had the meeting with the SENCO, cos he had that meeting last week wasn't it? And one of the teacher said straightaway 'oh you need to sit at the front of the class don't you?' And I said yes and so she said so I could set the front of the class but then my science teacher, I either don't think she was told or… I don't know what has happened but the classroom, the board's there [points] and I sit there [points] so I really can't see the board, and then so I really don't know what's going on because I can't see what's going on. Yeah I have said but she says I 'Oh I can see from here so you should be able to'.

R: that's helpful isn't it? [Laughs] I think some teachers, some teachers like you say, either do know a lot about it or they read the folder or they try and find out as much as they can about it, and some teachers it might be that they read the folder or maybe they've read it and they don't really understand, but yet so I think there's a lot more that we can do to try and help teachers to have a better understanding.

Isla: yeah.

R: erm, yeah it's a shame, it's very difficult isn't it when you can't see the board?

Isla: yeah cos I'm trying to listen but it's hard not to tune out if you can't see what's going on.

R: Right okay. And other teachers nice to you?

Isla: yeah but I don't think they really understand.

Mum: the thing is a primary school it's like a big family primary school and everybody knew everybody and it's never be like that really is it?

R: no, the same is that you do…I mean any primary school, some are bigger than others, but it is very much a family all of the teachers know all of the kids not just their own and the parents they all know you know… And then you go to secondary school go through the whole secondary school with hundreds of children you'll never meet and they won't know who you are…

Mum: and even if you're in the class every week with the same children they still won't know who you are.

R: no, and I think that's a real shame and it's the sheer size of secondary school and a number of other things but it is big culture difference when you've been used to what is like a big family kind of thing, yeah it is hard. Is the SENCO nice?

Isla: yes, but I don't really see the SENCO I normally see….the SENCO because where the SENCO place is is called inclusion, the main SENCO… I normally see *Miss Firth*? *Miss Firth* who does my… I normally see her more often.

R: okay so that they normally give you support outside of the class, so do you go to inclusion?

Isla: yeah I go to inclusion and do touch typing cos I have an alpha smart.

R: oh that's one of those it's not a laptop but it's like a keyboard?

Isla: yeah

R: does it record everything for you?

Isla: yeah it has a small screen which has about five lines of texts they have about… The screens about that big for the writing and then you have to use up and down arrows to see it.

Mum: she gets by with that one because when I spoke to the SENCO they said they didn't have enough funding for a laptop, it's a nightmare, and I spoke to my dad because he's a chair of governors and he said there's no money, so if I can't appeal to my father to pay for a laptop his own granddaughter then there's no hope so we going to buy her one because I think trying to edit work on an alpha smart when you've got dyspraxia is [inaudible]

R: I have seen the alpha smart and they look very good, but I do wonder like you about… writing a lot… I mean I think they'd be very good… Are they good for taking notes and lots of short bit's?

Isla: yeah and they're also really useful cos their not like a laptop which is at a right angle, their more… so you can type and look at your fingers and look at the what you're typing at the same time because it's at the same slight slope.

R: can you print it later?

Isla: yeah, you have to send it to a computer through a lead and then it comes out in a word document and then they print out for you.

R: okay that's quite handy.

Isla: yeah but the only problem is, it doesn't have… It has a spelling thing where you type in a word but I don't really know how to use it and it doesn't spell check your work like a laptop does so I don't really know what words I've got wrong, because I can't really tell whether I've spelt a word right or not.

R: okay. So do think a laptop would be better for you then?

Isla: yeah because they have a wiggly red line telling you this word is wrong and then because I'm quite good at reading I can say 'ah well that's what it's supposed to mean'.

R: Yeah, so that'd be really handy.

Isla: Yeah.

R: okay. And do they let you have the laptop in each class or is there some restrictions, do you have to leave it somewhere and pick it up?

Mum: yeah she'd have to leave it in the inclusion unit and then she'd have to you go and get it when she needed it, but that would be good because then she wouldn't have to carry around.

Isla: yeah and then I take it home to do my homework wouldn't I?

Mum: I think it be better continuation rather than having to get stuff onto the computer you can just…

R: and then if you can take it home and then back into school that would be really good. Okay so that sounds like a very positive thing…

Isla: yeah

R: and it saves you having to hand write lots of stuff

Isla: yeah because if I write lots of stuff my hand really aches

R: Right okay

Isla: and cos I've got hyper-mobile joints, so that really hurts because my fingers do like that [shows me how her fingers bend back] and stuff so, and there really hurts and there really hurts.

R: have you got hyper mobile joints anywhere else?

Isla: my hands, my elbows and shoulders yeah.

R: so how does it feel carrying lots of… Because I imagine a secondary school you got to carry a lot of books and things.

Isla: yeah we don't have lockers, but we don't normally have to carry books, if we've got homework then we take a book home, but we don't normally get erm more than one piece of homework.

R: Right okay.

Isla: hopefully [laughs]

R: that might change.

Isla: yeah. But it's still quite heavy so I have a satchel but I'm getting a new one for Christmas it's a backpack I thought it would be better because it will spread the weight evenly.

R: yeah and that would be good.

Isla: yeah.

R: and what about things like PE at school?

Isla: I don't like PE. I really hate PE.

R: do you?

Isla: Yeah.

R: What is it you don't like about PE?

Isla: erm I don’t… I do like sports but not the sports that we do in school, I like ballet because I do ballet, I like karate and I like yoga mainly, and I like swimming and cycling but I don't like netball, I don't like hockey, I don't like the stuff that you do in school. I don't mind gymnastics because I can do a forward roll, because the gymnastics that we are doing was more like shapes which was fun because I do ballet so that's a bit like ballet.

R: so you do ballet outside of school?

Isla: yeah.

R: how long have you been doing that?

Isla: Since I was 4 wasn’t it?

Mum: 4 or 5.

Isla: 4 or 5, so I’ve been doing it for ages, I took my grade 3 exam last Monday, wasn’t it? Yeah.

R: Oh really? and how did you do in that?

Isla: Really good.

R: So you really like ballet then?

Isla: Yeah.

R: So what other things do you do?

Isla: Erm, I do karate, which is really useful cos I can defend myself.

R: It's a good skill to have.

Isla: And I….you really like cycling don't you? [looks at dad]

Dad: we go cycling.

Isla: Yeah.

R: Ok.

Dad: And swimming.

Isla: We normally cycle, there's this place called *Clarkwell*, it's a holiday park near us, and we cycle to there then we go for a swim then we cycle back.

R: Brilliant, ok. And how was learning to ride a bike? Do you remember learning to ride a bike?

Isla: Slightly, I remember you pushing me along *Bramble Warren* [looks at dad] and then I was like cycling for a bit then wobbling and stopping.

R: and did she learn to ride a bike pretty easily? [directed at mum and dad]

Mum & Dad: Yeah.

Mum: Cos when we think of the things she tried so hard at but she can't do, but actually cycling, she did, I think cos *dad* liked cycling so much, it's something she's grown up with and we did it a lot, erm, so yeah you know she could ride a bike before a lot of her friends could.

Isla: Yeah

Mum: I think you were 5 when you were riding a bike without stabilisers.

Dad: Looking back we used to go cycling quite a distance, looking back I can't believe I got her to cycle that far, but you know she managed it.

R: Brilliant, you know because learning to ride a bike is sometimes one of the really hard things that people with dyspraxia really struggle with so that's really good that you managed to pick that up really quickly.

Isla: Yeah, from very young I was on the back of your bike [looks at dad] in the chair.

R: I was going to ask that, cos I wonder if that's erm may of helped with the balancing, if you're on the back of the chair on the back, may have helped you when you were learning to ride a bike because you would have been used to that.

Isla: I think I nearly fell asleep.

R: Yes, I remember being on….my mum used to have one of those seats on the back of the bike and I can still remember being on the back of that, I used to read a book while she was riding [laughs]. That may have helped then, growing up being on the back of the bike.

Isla: Yeah.

R: so you do lots of activities.

Isla: Yeah, but, I like things that we don't do at school, I really don't…

Mum: Non-competitive.

Isla: Yeah.

R: the things they do at school tend to be team games as well and lots of people running around and lots of competition

Isla: Yeah, cos I find running really hard, cos…erm…I don't know why, cos I can't run very far cos I just feel really ill if I run far.

R: Right, what is it that you feel ill?

Isla: I feel light headed, but I don't know why, yeah and in primary school I year 5 and year 6 we did a decathlon, I came last and I'm very proud of that.

R: what did you have to do in the decathlon?

Isla: erm we had to do hammer throwing, but luckily it was only a rubber thing, you could do discus…

Mum: it’s a weird….

Isla: you had to do a weird throw it around and soon it off your finger, I was like what do I do, I just threw it in the end and was like [laughs] and then we had to do javelin, I threw it about one meter.

Mum: at primary school *Mr Brown* used to laugh with you didn't he and he was really lovely with her so she was never….

R: I was going to say, so if *Mr Brown* laughed with you, was that quite nice?

Isla: Yeah and he would give me extra goes trying to get me to learn how to do things and we had to do a long distance run which was two laps round a field, I ended up walking most of it, I didn't come last though but I came last in the sprint cos I really can’t sprint, I can’t go from being still to going really fast. Cos if I work up to it I can run reasonably fast but if I just start running I can’t run very fast.

R: Right ok. So the ones at school, the stuff at school, what happens when you have PE then? You don't really like taking, you don't really like the stuff they do?

Isla: No we’re doing netball which is horrible erm cos people think I’m quite good at netball but I still put an effort in even if I don't like it but I’m ok at it but I still really don't like it and we have to oh we have to do health related exercise at the moment and the other day we were in the gym and I have to lift two 3 kilo weights doing lifts, and then my shoulders were absolutely killing me afterwards.

R: That must be quite sore.

Isla: I’ve never lifted weights before.

R: I was going to say, I think my shoulders would hurt, that’s quite a lot of weight to be lifting.

Mum: [inaudible]

Isla: yeah and we had to do kettle bells and hold them out here [indicates how they had to hold them]

R: oh my goodness, and their quite heavy as well aren't they?

Isla: yeah and my teacher was holding it down there cos I really couldn't hold it and then he just went like that [showed me how he lifted it up] and then I was like oh thanks a lot cos then I really couldn't move my arms.

Mum: Unfortunately PE teachers are a strange breed aren't they? They just don't get people that aren't fit and strong do they?

Isla: they say….the PE teachers say you should go to two PE clubs a week but I don't go to any cos I don't really like any of the PE teachers I could go to a dance club but I really don’t like the teacher who does it.

Mum: you like people who get you don't you, people who are soft and gentle, you don't like them being harsh and being shouted at.

Isla: no.

R: and is that what the PE teachers are like?

Isla: yeah, that’s why I quit, I used to do swimming lessons but I quit cos my teacher would just yell at you all of the time, I don't want to be yelled at all of the time.

Mum: it took you quite a long time to swim, I think you found *Mary* your swimming teacher ok she was soft and gentle and didn’t put any pressure on you and you could go at your own speed and even though she was….you stuck on the same thing for months and months and months but she got you through it cos that’s how you work isn't it?

Isla: yeah I have to……..I'm not very good if people force me to do things.

R: so if someone is trying to teacher you things, maybe if your PE teacher at school is trying to help you to play netball but they were letting you go at your own pace and they were encouraging you do your thing you would join a club maybe?

Isla: mmmmmm

R: Maybe netball club or, what was the one you said you wanted to join…dancing, so if the teacher was nicer…

Isla: probably yeah if she was nicer I'd probably in.

R: what kinds of things were make her nicer, what would they need to…

Isla: not shout all the time.

R: Not shout ok yeah.

Isla: and if they're not like look out for the non-sporty people cos they just absolutely love the really sporty people and then they really don't get people if they're not sporty.

R: Yeah, so do you think they need to focus a bit more on the non-sporty?

Isla: yeah.

R: it seems like that in a lot of schools that the, if you're particularly sporty and get chosen for the team and the teachers really like you and there's a whole rapport and if you're not you're kind of, as much as you might want to, there does seem as…

Mum: they're like in their own club really aren't they?

R: yeah.

Isla: yeah.

Mum: it's easy to teach the people that are a lot better isn't it? It shows you're a good teacher if you're…[inaudible]

Isla: yeah cos erm I always used to get picked, in primary school when we used to play dodge ball, I don't mind dodge ball cos I quite like jumping around and erm but I always used to get picked last for everything cos other people knew that I just wasn't very sporty.

R: and was it the children that were picking?

Isla: yeah.

R: so how did that feel when you got picked last?

Isla: I just feel uncaring really at first I was just like thanks a lot but then I really don't care anymore.

Mum: you had the same teacher that had the same personality…..[inaudible] those sort of children you just avoid don't you, the ones that just don't get you you just avoid them now don't you?

Isla: yeah.

R: so have you got a nice group of friends now that you've moved?

Isla: Yeah.

R: so your secondary schools quite a long way from your primary school.

Isla: yeah so no one from my primary school went to my secondary school.

R: Wow so you've gone along way, a big journey in the morning and all by yourself, how was that?

Isla: Its fine cos I've made lots of new friends.

R: Good.

Isla: and to be honest my friends grew up a bit too quickly in primary school so I was playing with the year 5's so yeah and the year 5's wouldn't have moved up anyway.

R: What do you mean they grew up too quickly?

Isla: they were just being really stupid and acting like they were really too big for primary school when they really weren't cos there was still a whole term left of being in primary school.

R: Yeah, so you used to play with the year 5's.

Isla: Yeah.

R: Cos they felt more like how you wanted to be?

Isla: Yeah.

R: so when you went to secondary school then were you quite happy about going to school without the others?

Isla: I was quite sad cos I still liked my friends when they weren't too grown up but and I really liked the teachers but I was kind of happy to because I wanted a bit of a change.

R: and so you said you made lots of new friends, was it quite easy to make friends when you got there?

Isla: Yeah yeah cos on the induction days I made some friends and then some….cos we have a teaching group there's some people in my teaching group are really nice.

R: Right that good. And do you think the friends that you've made do they know you've got dyspraxia or have you told them?

Isla: erm I've told my closest friend but she doesn't really mind cos she still likes me the way I am which is really nice cos….

R: That's good.

Mum: I mean you had some lovely friends at primary school……even before you were diagnosed people like *Evie* helped you with the clothes a lot and things like that so you know about you have had …..that's what I mean you like children who have a little empathy, you'd go ashen, they didn't used to go oh *Isla* hurry up, you have been lucky enough to have lovely fiends like that [inaudible]

Isla: Yeah but then *Clare* was hanging out with a few people which were growing up too quickly so I didn't really want to play with her anymore cos they weren't, cos they were being a bit silly and every day they were being silly and I don't really want to be silly cos it isn't very fun.

R: What was the things that they were doing that were silly that you didn't find very fun?

Isla: they were just giggling at everything, giggly at every slightest comment, so yeah.

R: isn't much fun?

Isla: No.

R: No, ok. And what's your favourite lesson now, cos now that you're at secondary school you've got all these lessons that you wouldn't have had.

Isla: erm I quite like technology cos in technology we made wooden pens, that was really fun

R: Do you get to use all the equipment for that?

Isla: Erm yeah we get to use I think they were called coping saws and yeah that was really fun and I also like art, cos I like drawing things.

R: And what would you say were your not so favourite subjects?

Isla: Er, PE [laughs] erm, I don't I don't really have any non-favourite subjects I like all of them, I don't like erm Maths and English as much, they're not as fun, cos I don't think my Maths teacher gets erm, she always goes way too fast, cos she goes through a set of questions to do at the beginning of a lesson and then I've only done half of them but I want to do all of them because the harder questions are at the end and I want to be challenged.

R: yeah ok and do they give you any extra time to do them?

Isla: No, she doesn't really let you take your book home unless it’s for homework.

R: Ok, do you get any extra support with erm, so in inclusions do they give you any extra support arm maybe do those more challenging things that you haven't had time to do?

Isla: No.

R: Would you like that if they could?

Isla: yeah or if my, cos erm, I’m quite good at Maths but erm I'm really bad under time pressure so when we had our assessment erm some people moved up and I think I could have moved up but because I, I, I could have done all the things if it was not under time pressure, but cos I was erm, a grade off from moving up cos I got erm a something point 5 and you’d have to get a something point 8.

R: Oh gosh so not far.

Isla: yeah.

R: So do you think it was the time pressure and not that you didn't know it?

Isla: Yeah, cos I’m really panicky, I'm like, I really hate being under time pressure, I’m really not very good, I can’t think even when I try to think I really can’t think.

R: ok, so it gets you really stressed?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: Is that the dyspraxia or a personality thing?

R: no that’s a dyspraxia thing, and very often erm people with dyspraxia will be exactly like you said, they can do what it is, and they want a challenge, but if you put them under time pressure they get this complete overwhelming panic, anxiety, can’t do it can’t do it and then suddenly time has slipped away. And so what a lot of people with dyspraxia will be getting certain grade throughout all their class work and their teachers are saying they're doing really well they're gonna move up and then they sit the exam and they say where they are because they haven't been able to get pen to paper in the exam. Erm one thing and I don't know if your SENCO has talked about this but one thing a lot of people with dyspraxia can get is 25% extra time.

Isla: Yeah I had that with my SAT’s.

Mum: [inaudible]

R: It might be worth asking for the 25% in the class assessment because she’d be entitled to it in all, so if you had it in your SAT’s they should give it to you when you do GCSE’s and all the formal exams so what might be handy for you is to have that extra time while you’re doing all your other tests because it’ll erm be the same when you do GCSE’s but erm, time pressure is a real issue

Mum: it’s getting worse isn't it now?

Dad: I suffer from [inaudible] and couple of months ago [inaudible] and you've got 20 minutes, you've got 5 minutes…

R: yeah it just completely blocks everything doesn't it? Unfortunately in this country we do a lot of assessments by exams with time pressure and they keep changing it and erm, GCSE’s, at one point they were allowing a percentage of your GCSE mark to be coursework which is very good for people like you and other people who have got dyspraxia because they can spend time and really show what they can really do erm, yeah they keep changing it, apparently they've gone back to more exams, you never know by the time you get to GCSE’s they might have changed it back again.

Isla: Cos I did quite well in my SAT’s cos I had extra time, and yeah cos we did booster stuff they year 5’s, cos I was in the year 5 class, we used to do things with this TA teacher called *Mrs Goody* and we would go with *Mr Brown* to an ICT suite and we did booster stuff so we did old SAT's paper which was really good and we did loads of mental Maths which I finally cracked.

R: Brilliant.

Isla: cos I got level 5's in everything for my SAT's which is good.

R: Excellent.

Isla: I did take two level 6 stuff, I got, I took level 6 erm English which is spelling, punctuation and grammar, and level 6 reading.

R: Fantastic. So do you think the extra, the going over the old papers, and practicing what it would be like to do a test, do you think that really helped?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: Practicing….[inaudible]

R: yeah, I mean one thing that, time pressure really is, it's a difficult one to crack because unfortunately that how they do exams, but one thing that you could do is practice doing time related things in a more relaxed way, so, one thing I do with my son, he finds time pressure really difficult as well, and so sometimes I'll say ok I want you to write me a piece on the computer about something random, and I give him something fun that he wants to write, and then I say ok you've got 20 minutes let's see how much you can write, and I go out the room, there's no clock ticking, there's no-one pacing up and down like an exam but it's really useful for him as he gets used to thinking ok I've got 20 minutes and he will just write something in a relaxed environment, and I don't know how that's going to work in exams but it's quite a useful way of building up, erm and then we say you've got half an hour, you've got 10 mins and just practicing going it in times.

Isla: yeah cos you say to me [looking at mum] you've got to do your homework in 20 minutes don't you?

Mum: Yeah, otherwise you'd take all day doing it that’s what I find, you'll have loads of homework er, shell spend the whole day just doing it, I need to contain it, it doesn't need to take all day doing it.

R: and how does that feel when mum says you've got 20 minutes

Isla: I panic at first and then I realise I’ve got 20 minutes that’s, I knew that she wouldn't be saying it if I wasn't able to do it, so I’ve just got to get on with it.

R: So if mum didn't say you’d got 20 minutes, and mum says you would take all day, why do you think you take much longer?

Isla: er, I don't really know why I take that long to do it.

R: Cos you can do it when mums says you've got 20 minutes, you still do it don't you?

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: I find she gets lost in the process, she so many areas [inaudible] how’s she's got to do something that she [inaudible]

R: Yeah so sometimes it might help to shorten that but in a relaxed way, tests and that aren't relaxed but if you can do time related things in a fun way….

Mum: [inaudible] I think it hereditary, I can go downstairs put the dishwasher on, put the washing out, go back upstairs and they've just got their underwear on [laughs]

R: Don't worry I’ve got three kids I know exactly what you mean

Mum: It’s like having another one. I don't understand how, it’s almost like time has stood still upstairs.

Isla: I normally can’t decide what to wear [laughs]

R: Yeah there’s all these decisions aren't there, you've got to decide what to wear

Isla: Yeah

R: and then you've got to find it

Isla: Yeah, it’s getting better cos er, we had an extension so I’ve got a bigger room now so I can have a wardrobe and a chest of drawers whereas before my clothes were just living under my bed so it’s easier to find cos I’ve memorised the draws I have draws for everything so tops, socks, trousers, hair stuff, and things like that.

R: So everything is organised and you know where it is?

Isla: Yeah and then in my wardrobe I try to keep it in sections so I have trousers, dresses, tops, skirts and things like that.

R: and that makes that easier?

Isla: Yeah

Mum: she still struggling when she can’t see something straight away.

Isla: Yeah

Mum: I don't understand [inaudible] you need to be able to see things.

R: Mmmm, also I think for a lot of people they have an order, it might not make any sense to anyone else but…..my son being a boy is not as organised as you I'm afraid I would love it if he has sections in his wardrobe, currently his order is there’s a pill of things here and another over there, his wardrobe I’ve given up on hangers because he has a hanging rail and a section for T-shirts and then there’s this big pile. The funny thing is for him, like you, he says to me ‘but I know where everything is’ and I can’t understand that but to him there’s order in what seems to be chaos and if I tidy up this room and hanging things up he would go in to a tail spin, he wouldn't be able to find anything, so yeah I think…..it makes sense to him [laughs] but yes that very much like you because you know, you need to know where everything is, that makes sense.

Isla: Yeah

Mum: Yeah but at some point you have to settle down with someone else and their not like that [laughs]

R: Although my partner, I have to say, I keep saying to my partner I think I might be dyspraxic and he says ‘you think?’ but you know he’s really organised, but I laugh at the chaos my sons, but I’m actually pretty similar, I have lots of piles of papers, and if my partner tidies those away I’m completely you know….

Isla: You have piles of stuff don't you [looks at dad] well when you're doing things you have everything by you

Mum: I’m the organised one of the family

Isla: I know but you like arrange everything so you know where it goes [laughs].

R: So erm, you haven't got any brothers or sisters have you?

Isla: no.

R: No ok

Isla: I quite like not having any brothers and sisters [laughs]

R: Why do you like that? You get mum and dad to yourself?

Isla: Yeah but also I don’t, I quite like being by myself when I, cos sometimes I just want to be by myself, and if I had a brother and sister I wouldn't be able to be by myself.

R: Yeah, do you like it quite quiet?

Isla: Yeah.

R: It does get a bit noisy when there’s more than one.

Isla: [Laughs]

R: So you were saying that you did ballet and swimming and things like that outside of school, erm, what other things do you like, do you have friends coming over after school?

Isla: Erm, no we don't really, I went the other day we have a chat cafe which is like a youth club for 11-17 year olds, so my two friends from primary school there, and then me and my friend at school are trying to work out a way that she can come over after school one day.

R: So does she live nearer to your school?

Isla: Yeah she lives in the town where it is.

R: Right ok. So that'd be nice if she came over as well.

Isla: Yeah

Mum: It’s just organising it [inaudible] with the parents and I’m relying on *Isla* to sort that out.

R: Yeah it’s completely different, my son started secondary school in September on the other day he said I’m going to *Luke’s* house tonight and I said who’s *Luke*, and I said hang on a minute, I don't know *Luke*, I don't know his parents, I don't know the house, and suddenly it’s so much more….and he thinks I’m annoying because I will insist on speaking to the parents of the child and having an address and phone number and things like that but yes, you do rely very much on the children, it’s not like when they're at primary school.

Mum: Anyone could come over at anytime.

Isla: you'd really like my friends [to mum]

Mum: yes.

R: So you'd quite like to have them over?

Isla: Yeah

Mum: you’re meeting *Sara* and having a sleep over.

Isla: Yeah

R: So is *Sara* from Primary school?

Isla: erm, no she's from an active birth club when we were in our mums tummy, we still meet up all the mums, is there four mums, five mums? [Looks at mum] erm, we still meet up and we've kind of grown up together, so me and *Sara*, erm, *Sara* is like me cos she’s quite organised but she's quite quiet and we really like making things and really like arts and craft, and then erm [noise] and so erm we really like playing together.

R: Yeah so you like the same kinds of things, doing arts and crafts and drawings and stuff like that. Cos all the things you've told me sounds like you like that kind of stuff cos you were saying your favourite subject at school was the art and the technology ones which are all very creative aren't they and dancing is very creative, I imagine it’s quite creative….

Isla: Yeah, oh yeah I forgot to tell you I also play the violin

R: Oh ok.

Isla: and I used to play the guitar in primary school I used to have lessons

R: Oh wow, so how long have you been playing the violin for?

Isla: since I was 5.

R: Wow, goodness me.

Isla: I took my grade 3 last August was it [looks at mum]

Mum: last summer

Isla: Yeah

R: That’s very impressive.

Isla: I’m on grade 4 now.

R: Wow and so do you do that in school or is that outside?

Isla: Out of schools yeah, it’s fun.

R: And do you find that, cos, the violin and the guitar erm, I always think they're not quite…, in my mind something like the piano is quite logical I think, because you know you've got the middle C and then they go up in order, but something like the guitar and the violin, I don't play those, I used to play the Piano, Clarinet and Saxophone, but I haven't played string instruments and I’ve always wondered how easy they are because they don't seem logical to me.

Mum: no the timing is slightly….there’s a lot going on, there’s…[inaudible]

R: But you really like it?

Isla: Yeah.

R: and do you find it easy to learn?

Isla: Erm, did I? [Looks at mum] I can’t really remember.

Mum: I think cos you started so young, cos she was, I don't know why but at 4 or 5 she said I want to learn to play the violin I want to learn to play the violin, you went too summer school and you loved it and then you went to classes, but because you started so young….[inaudible] it was really

Isla: Yeah, and then they…

Mum: the names of the strings had little furry teddy bears

Isla: and also….

Mum: to get Charlie out you have to play a C

Isla: Yeah, and you get Dan out you have to play a D [laughs] to get Alice out you have to play an A and you have to get Ed out you have to pay an E [laughs]

Mum: there was lots of rhythm games. I think she's just grown up with it.

R: yeah it’s always easier I think the younger, with learning languages they say if you teacher the child from very young

Isla: Yeah cos I can’t remember if I found reading music hard cos you kind of start off with just the note names and then they used to have each note as well as having a erm they had a symbol, so it was like circle or a square or a diamond or a star.

Mum: It's a really good way of learning isn't it

Isla: Yeah

Mum: you practiced a lot didn't you

R: and do find that, that something that you can do yourself isn't it? Again it's not competitive it's not like the music deeply competitive, but if you are in an orchestra even though it's not competitive got other people that are, so playing a musical instrument on your own…

Isla: yeah, but I also do it in a group called *Young Strings*, which erm, there's only a few people in the group but we play songs together

R: okay so that's like a mini orchestra, yeah that's quite nice

Isla: yeah and that's where I learned to play the violin, and then I had like private lessons, one-to-one is

mum: you had group lessons didn't you?

Isla: yeah

Mum: private lessons

Isla: yeah…cos before we had touched any musical instruments we had to do rhythm and things

R: yes So learn a bit of the theory before you do…

Isla: yeah, and then you start off plucking and then I remember starting with the bow

R: I remember my son trying to learn the viola which is just slightly bigger and he had it for about two weeks and I think trying to teach the same kind of thing but they wouldn't let him actually, the let him have the instrument but the first two lessons consist of a pencil which they had to pretend was a bow and he said 'well I'm not doing that I want to play the viola' and when he first use the bow and really couldn't make a decent noise with it that was it, but he also learned the guitar which he really surprised me how he picked up, he did that for a little while. Do they have any music lessons at school?

Isla: yeah we have music lessons class music lessons

R: do you like those?

Isla: yeah we're playing brass instruments at the moment

R: oh right

Isla: and the other day I was playing a mini euphonium and I was like [pretends to blow hard] and I could make a sound out of it, but it wasn't the right pitch that the teacher wanted.

R: yeah they're quite hard to make the right pitch aren't they?

Isla: yeah it was a bit too high, cos I used to play the clarinet but I also wanted to play the flute so I started learning the flute but then it made me go light-headed because when you blew it made me go a bit lightheaded.

Mum: you just couldn't get your breathing right could you?

Isla: no

R: yeah there's a lot of technique to the breathing to those kinds of instruments. so you are saying that you feel kind of okay now with having dyspraxia

Isla: yeah

R: and do you think it has any major impact on you at all now?

Isla: Erm, I think it still does cos, erm, I still notice that I do have it because I haven't got used to it completely because you, I'm still aware… That I have it, but yeah

R: but you feel a bit more okay with it?

Isla: yeah

Mum: [inaudible] it doesn't go away does it

Isla: am well I don’t know I just feel, I just know that I can I have it

R: do you do things sometimes and in that makes you remember that…

Isla: yeah

R: I don't know….that, my son dropped a cheesecake the other day, he tried to cut the cheesecake and it just spiraled in the air and dropped the cheesecake and that’s when he turns to me sometimes and says ‘well I’m dyspraxic’ and you know… so is it things like that when you do something….

Isla: yeah exactly

R: and then you remember….

Isla: yeah

R: oh that's because…. right

Isla: I was trying to explain that but I didn't know how to explain it [laughs]

R: yeah, no, that’s okay, it's hard sometimes to explain, isn't it.

Mum: like when you just suddenly stopped in front of me this morning and nearly tripped me over

Isla: yeah

R: is it times like that?

Isla: yeah

R: yeah. And do you feel, when times like that happen, do you feel okay about it? Or…

Isla: yeah cos I just know that oh it's my dyspraxia

R: but that's okay?

Isla: yeah

R: and if there was anything that you could tell people at school that would really really help, is this something that you would want teachers to know?

Isla: Erm, not to go to fast

R: not go too fast

Isla: because I really can't do anything if it's too fast

R: Right. So if they've gone too fast with information they've put on the board, but is it the same as they talk too fast?

Isla: yeah

R: Right okay. So they need to slow down a little bit

Isla: yeah

R: what about if they give you lots of instructions? Because I know, not just teachers but parents, everybody, I quite often forget myself and save my kids I wanted to go there and do this and this and this and this and this and this because I'm in a hurry and I think teachers sometimes do that, if they give a long list is that hard to follow what you've been asked to do?

Isla: Yeah cos I kind of remember, I don't remember and….cos I normally forget, I can normally remember one or two things at the beginning and one or two things at the end but I can’t remember the things in the middle….

R: The things in the middle, right.

Isla: the things in the middle.

R: and does that normally happen quite a lot when you’re at school?

Isla: yeah.

R: Have any of the teachers been able to help, do anything that helps with that?

Isla: No.

R: Is there anything you think might help?

Isla: Writing it down.

R: Writing it down.

Isla: yeah, or…..or….or….erm…..even if other people don't need to write it down just write it down on a piece of paper for me.

R: Piece of paper for you, yeah, that would be very handy wouldn’t it?

Isla: and then I could tick it off when I’ve done it cos….

R: so like a little list?

Isla: Yeah.

R: Ok, cos I think sometimes some teachers have got a lot they need to get people to do but it might be that they could write a list at the beginning of the class and give that to you….

Isla: yeah.

R: and do you feel, with some of these things that you've said might be helpful, do you feel that if you told your teachers at school, if you sort of said ‘it would really help me if you could give me a list of those things a piece of paper so I could tick them off’ do you think they would listen to you?

Isla: It depends on the teacher, some teachers probably would but some teachers probably wouldn't have time too.

R: Right ok. Yeah.

Mum: [inaudible] do you think you could start to keep a list?

Isla: Maybe.

R: or maybe, what was your SENCO’s name….no there was a teacher you said you don't see the SENCO much you see this other teacher…..

Isla: I think it’s….

Mum: the lady that [inaudible] not *Mrs Hopkins*?

Isla: No.

R: I can’t remember the name that you said.

Isla: I think it’s *Mrs Firth*, I’m not sure though?

R: Is she approachable?

Isla: Yeah.

R: so you could talk to her about things?

Isla: yeah and I could talk, cos the SENCO said that I could talk to her.

R: cos sometimes I think it’s helpful if you've got somebody you can go to and say look I’ve got this idea, I really think this might help me,

Isla: yeah

R: and like you said some teachers might be able to it and others might not.

Isla: yeah

Mum: I think if you're saying something specific rather than vague and general [inaudible] talking to people that could be specific

Isla: yeah

R: it’s hard to know sometimes what would help isn't it?

Isla: yeah

R: there’s some really good ideas that you've had, so your big thing is if we could tell teachers anything your thing would be to go slower?

Isla: yeah

R: what about if you could tell other children anything about dyspraxia?

Isla: don't worry about what people think about you

R: yeah

Isla: cos it doesn't matter

R: I like that.

Mum: what did she say?

R: So she would tell other children with dyspraxia not to worry about what other people think about you because it doesn't matter. I think that’s really important. And what about in the future, so you've just started secondary school, what would you like….have you got an aspirations for the future, anything, any dreams about what you would like to do?

Isla: yeah fashion designer.

R: to be a fashion designer?

Isla: yeah

R: Ok. that’s again very creative isn't it?

Isla: yeah cos I have a book at home that has a person in there like drawing clothes on them.

R: That sounds fantastic.

Isla: Yeah.

R: I’ll remember when I get home to get one of these wiki things for you, maybe you can put your drawings on there for your fashion design or…

Isla: I've got hundreds [laughs]

R: yeah it could be your place where you put your creative work and maybe some of the videos of you when your performing with your instruments, it might be a nice way to celebrate all the things you really enjoy and are really good at. Yeah I’ll send you one through and if you don't want to use don't use it, but it might be a good thing to take into school as well to say look at the things I can do.

Isla: yeah.

R: it might be quite nice.

Isla: Yep.

R: so is there anything else you'd like to tell me about dyspraxia or anything we haven't talked about?

Isla: erm, no I don't think so no.

Mum: didn't you say you wanted to raise some money to raise awareness?

Isla: yeah

R: Ok

Isla: yeah cos I don't think enough people know about it

R: no they don’t no that’s true

Isla: and it’s really annoying cos loads of people get loads of help but people with dyspraxia don't cos they don't know about it

R: yeah, is that, you said loads of people get loads of help, is that for other things you mean?

Isla: yeah.

R: Yeah I think you're right there isn't enough, people don't know enough do they?

Isla: no.

R: arm about dyspraxia, it certainly would be good to try and….do your school do charity days where, I know at my kids school they do, they had one the other day where it was wear non-school and bring in a pound and they donate to charity, do they do things like that?

Isla: yeah were doing one at the weekend, no not at the weekend, on the last day of term were doing wear your Christmas jumper to school, so you have to bring in a pound and I think it’s going to the red cross…..and also in children in need we have to dress up as film stars, I dressed up as a minion [laughs]

R: A minion, I like it.

Isla: cos I had yellow t-shirt and dungaree’s

R: Brilliant, cos yeah there are ways that you could, you could do, maybe some fundraising or

Isla: Yeah

R: or maybe you could do a leaflet or a picture that erm maybe that you could give to teachers

Isla: yeah

R: to raise awareness that might be a really good way of, I think you're right, I think there's a lot of things that need to be done to raise awareness because there's a lot of other erm, with things like dyslexia and erm and autism there's a lot more that we know about and people know about it

Isla: yeah

R: but there isn't so much with dyspraxia

Isla: that's why I wanted to do this

R: yes, well I really appreciate you doing this and I hope you've found it useful as well

Isla: yeah

R: but I think it will be very useful for other children to be able to hear some other people, and realise that actually they aren't alone

Mum: no that's right

R: so what I'm going to do when I've written up, I have to do a very boring [laughs] study kind of piece of work, but as well as that to do some more fun things, so one thing I'd like to do is do a little booklet that has some information from children to children, so I can sort of say you know I've spoken to…and your name wouldn't be in there, unless you want your name in there, but we'll change names and things like that but it'll just say that I've spoken to children and some children have said this and this and this and it can be a booklet that other children can have maybe when they first find out they've got dyspraxia and they can say 'oh yeah I feel like that' so I'd like to do a booklet and there other things that I'd like to do to raise awareness as well, because I think it's very important.

Isla: Yeah.

Mum: yeah [inaudible] information sheet….I mean they're really [inaudible] but it's kind of like where do I start? I've got to kind of roll her up like a sausage…..

Isla: I don't want to do that though [laughs]

Mum: put a weighted thing on her, then we've got to do some exercises then do some handwriting ones, it's just like where do we start

Isla: I don't want to be rolled up in a rug…..I'm claustrophobic, I don't like small spaces [laughs]

R: that's doesn't sound much fun, I think that there's so much and so much that you can do and arm I was actually giving a lecture yesterday to trainee teachers on dyspraxia, they've asked me to come in every year, which is really good, they've asked me to come in for the last three years and give a 2 hour lecture on dyspraxia, and they're really engaged and so I was doing this yesterday and I was telling them that what we do know about dyspraxia is that it doesn't, it's not something that you know, it's not like a cold that will go away

Isla: no

R: it's something that you're always going to have but that people do come to accept it like you have, that's just my dyspraxia, like my son has when he drops his cheesecake on the floor

Isla: [laughs]

R: and there are two things that either people learn strategies so those will be the rolling them up in the carpet, you know trying to learn ways of maybe helping, and a lot the time they just accept, this is you know this is….my writing might be slightly but actually everything on computer now anyway, so people just accept, so I think that with all the information that they give you sometimes it's a case of looking at it and going ok do I want to do that or do I just accept, you know, so if you don't want to be rolled up in a carpet on the floor, I would quite understand.

Mum: I think that we don't want to feel that we're failing our child, so you want to try all of them and it's bonkers because there's not enough hours in the day to be a child let alone doing all these things. when you go for erm, you go to [inaudible] and then most people are like oh your rubbish because you haven't done all the things, we took her to gymnastics and trampolining and

Isla: I don't have enough time to do that, I have Monday and Tuesday to do my homework, Wednesday I have violin, Thursday I have ballet and Friday I have Guides, I go to Guides, and then Saturday I'm free, Sunday in the afternoon/evening I have karate

R: You've got a busy week

Isla: and I can't go to trampolining and gymnastics as well cos I have to do my homework at some time

R: yes. I think trampoline and gymnastics are you know I can see why they'd recommend them and they'd be very good however I think the things that you are doing can be equally as good, the ballet, the karate, swimming is fantastic for erm people with dyspraxia, it really is, riding a bike, you know all of those things that are er…..so yeah I certainly wouldn't be….I certainly wouldn't feel bad if you haven't ticked everything off their list. I think it's useful to have a list and then I think kind of you do have to pick the bit's that suit you as a family and that also you can fit it

Mum: you can't do everything

R: yeah

Mum: I think I've gone pasted it now cos I was quite stressed about it, I needed to make sure I do it otherwise she's not going to have the best chance in life and I've failed as a mother

R: yeah the guilt on us as parents is quite immense. I remember when my son, my son really struggled to ride a bike, it took 5 years of every day of every summer, and I do remember saying to him at one point you know you don't need to ride a bike, you know it's not a life skill that you know, so this is one of those ones where you could choose to just accept that you can't ride a bike, there are other things like learning to cross the road that you need to learn but this isn't one of them, but he chose that you know

Mum: he wanted to

R: yeah his friends and his brother did, we did as a family so he wanted to do it, so he pushed through it and we found strategy and but that's what I mean sometimes I think it's you know sometimes you have to look at things and go do I really need to do this?

Mum: and it should be something that is possible, she tried and tried to do a cartwheel and she just can't and she's almost reaching her peek point now where it's going to get harder from now one cos you're going to get longer

Isla: yes, my friend managed to teach me on a trampoline how to do a jumping forward roll, you have to jump forwards and then put your hands down to do a forward roll and I've managed to do that

R: so do your friends help you to learn certain things like that?

Isla: yeah cos my friend *Amy*, yeah.

R: Cartwheels are very hard

Isla: and you have to go sideways

R: You do and upside down

Isla: they make them look very easy

R: They do some people do

Dad: you can do a true in the swimming pool, I can’t do it

Isla: yeah I’ve tried to teach you many times [laughs]

Dad: it’s just not going to happen is it? [laughs]

Isla: you’re too big [laughs]

R: yeah ok, so is there anything else either of you felt is important that we haven't talked about?

Mum: What about social things and making friends Isla? Do you think dyspraxia has an impact on that?

Isla: No, my personality.

Mum: do you think some people like, people who are equipped to do things like *Chloe*, they find they trick you sometimes?

Isla: yeah, but then, yeah they do but I kind of accept that they’re not so patient so I try and do things quicker, and then like normally the work outs they kind of realise that they have to be more patient.

Mum: right, so because you did go through a spell a couple of years ago when you were really struggling

Isla: yeah

Mum: you think you've come out the other side of it?

Isla: yeah

R: so what were you struggling with people?

Isla: well they were just too quick weren't they or they were

Mum: people getting impatient with you

R: getting impatient with you doing what?

Isla: I can’t remember what it was now what was it {looks at mum}

Mum: it was just waiting for you to get ready, pack your bag, waiting for you in PE, you know or waiting for you to catch on to what they wanted you to do and what they were saying

Isla: Yeah, oh yeah I remember now

Mum: you know she’s so quick isn't she even Hannah and Alice

Isla: but yeah they're patient and they get people more

Mum: yes but people like that you were getting upset about it weren't you

Isla: yeah

R: so that’s quite difficult when they weren't being…

Isla: yeah

R: did you have anyone in the group that was understanding?

Isla: *Molly*, my friend *Molly* cos she's really good at swimming but she's still really patient cos erm yeah she's just really patient and I think *Amy* who ever already spoke about she was really patient too and some of my year, most of my year 5 friends are patient too

R: so it’s just a couple of them, so it’s *Chloe* that wasn’t….

Isla: She can be really nice but then she can be a bit mean cos erm yeah she doesn't like waiting very much

R: No. OK. And did that make things harder if she was being mean to you whilst, because she was being impatient and you were trying to get yourself ready, did that make it harder to get ready?

Isla: Yeah.

R: And do you think she understands a bit more now?

Isla: yeah. I managed to psych myself up to telling everybody

R: Ok

Isla: Not in front of loads of people but telling some people

R: OK and how did that go?

Isla: it was fine they were just like ‘oh fine, cool’

R: Excellent, and do you think they understood more after you told them?

Isla: Yeah

R: and a bit more patient?

Isla: yeah

R: that’s a really good thing that you did

Isla: Yeah

R: Psyched yourself up so you were ready to tell people

Isla: Yeah

R: what made you decide to do that?

Isla: I kind of decided that it would be better too otherwise they wouldn't really understand because before I was like I really didn't want to tell them because thought they were going to treat me differently but they really didn't

R: Right

Mum: [Inaudible]

R: and how long did it take you to make the decision that you wanted to tell people?

Isla: when I started year 6 wasn't it? [Looks at mum]

Mum: [inaudible]

Isla: yeah it was half way through year 6

R: and so you just wanted people to understand?

Isla: yeah.

R: and so have they been mostly positive about it then?

Isla: yeah sometimes they've forgotten but sometimes they've remembered

R: I think it’s very important that you were the one that decided

Isla: yeah

R: yeah cos then it’s the time that’s right for you to tell people

Isla: Yeah

R: and you said you've told a few people at secondary school?

Isla: yeah, well one person really and I’ve told some of the teachers that I just need it cos I find it, so basically with an alpha smart I’ve told some pole that I need it cos when I write my fingers really hurt, so I haven't told them that I've got dyspraxia but I've told them part of it

R: part of it yeah, so were they ok with it then?

Isla: yeah

R: so were they asking you why you had the alpha smart?

Isla: yeah. This boy, he's very horrible, he was like why do you have the alpha smart and I really didn't want to tell him cos he’s really horrible and I thought he'd make fun of me and so I was just like I just do and it was finally in French which I said ‘it’s none of your business’ and then my teacher was, said ‘yeah that right, you shouldn't be asking cos it’s none of your business’

R: that’s good, good that the teacher supported you cos it isn't any of their business is it?

Isla: no

R: and it’s up to you if you want to tell people

Isla: yeah

R: yeah that really good. So are friendships mostly good now?

Isla: yeah

Mum: [Inaudible] the friendships you were in they were [inaudible] and I think for her to go out and find some [inaudible] to go out and make friends on her own terms rather than people who I know the parents [inaudible] suit her where she's at now

Isla: they're a bit nicer now that we don't see each other everyday

R: That tends to happen quite a bit particularly the last end of year 6 it all gets a bit too much and erm yeah I think sometimes that separation but then still see each other but then it’s usually quite a bit nicer

Isla: yeah

Mum: she does seem [inaudible] because there’s a tendency to think everyone’s [inaudible] it’s hard to separate what’s just life, the last couple of years her social group…

R: Quite difficult yeah

Isla: cos they only told us in year 6 and there are only 8 girls

Mum: not many to choose from really, they’re kind of thrust together really

R: yes my daughters school there’s 60 children in each year and I still think that’s really small, but yeah if you've got a class of 12 there’s not much choice

Isla: yeah

R: That must be quite difficult

Isla: yeah

R: so it must be quite nice in a way

Isla: yeah

R: even though the schools much bigger

Isla: it has 200 people in…

R: you can choose the people that you want to be in

Isla: I still don't know everybody in year 7

R: no I think at secondary school you never quite do, there were people that were at my secondary school that were in my year that I still don't know….

Isla: you're like I've never seen you before

R: yeah it’s erm, but yes, so you could pick and choose your friends a bit more

Isla: Yeah

R: You seem very positive now about dyspraxia

Isla: yeah

R: yeah?

Isla: I wasn't when I was diagnosed [laughs]

R: no

Mum: I then I wanted to go down the wrong [inaudible] and now that she's worked through it she's really positive [inaudible] it’s not the same

R: I think a lot of people erm, there is the issue of a label, I think that a lot of people, particularly for children, I think the name that they can say ‘that’s why’ like you've said you still recognise it now but you can go ‘but that because I’m dyspraxic' or ‘that’s my dyspraxia’, and sometimes I think that’s easier than not knowing why. and actually with dyspraxia very often it’s not that you can’t do something, it’s that you can’t do it the way it’s being taught to you

Isla: Yeah

R: and when you know that because of your dyspraxia you can look at the ways, like we were saying, you can just go that not that important I don't need to learn it

Isla: Yeah

R: But sometimes you’ll go ‘ok I really want to’ so how do I make sure I can do that and it might be different like you said not having a teacher shout at you would help, breaking instruction lists down into smaller you know one or two things

Isla: yeah

R: or a list you can tick

Isla: yeah

R: so once you know what it is I think sometimes it becomes easier then because you can do something

Isla: yeah because erm I realised that erm, if they've known something earlier in primary school I would have found things much easier cos yeah cos I remember learning how to do a number line , I really couldn't get a grip on that because I didn't like number lines, there’s too much going on then you have to do this [shows bouncing]

R: I know

Isla: Just adding column method cos till then you just have to add and add

R: my son was very much the same he couldn’t do number lines, he couldn't do Maths the way they taught it so I used to get the teacher to give me, I’d ask them well what is the end result and they'd say well they have to add that and that and so I’d say ok give me the sheet and we would go home and I would teach him the way we were taught, the way with the columns and he just instantly said ‘oh well that obvious’ but they were trying to teach him in a conceptual way that just made no sense

Mum: no I know

R: and then it adds stress and anxiety

Mum: and it adds so many layers as well and Isla would get so lost in worry about this number line that shed forget she was adding 5 and 6

R: I know, they do make things a bit more complicated they don't need to, my daughters doing number lines at the moment and I just sit there and go ‘why’

Isla: yeah cos I just didn't really get it cos and I don't think it’s their fault that they're teaching it cos they have to

R: yes they do

Isla: but I’d rather go straight onto learning something which was easier because it’s actually easier the column methods actually easier than a number line

Mum: it’s something to do with I think it’s something to do with getting the brain to notice to work out the difference and I think it’s more to do with taking away than adding

Isla: Yeah cos it really confused me cos it’s like oh to add you have to take away on number line, well that doesn't make sense, I got really confused

Dad: [inaudible] got to go

Isla: We’ve been talking for a long time

R: an hour and 45 minutes, nice to meet you thank you [as dad leaves]

Isla: Bye [to dad]

R: we've just noticed we've been talking for an hour and 45 minutes so I think I've taken up enough of your time, but it’s been really nice talking to you but what I will do is send you through the details of this wiki and you can have a look and see if it’s something you might want to do, and then if you do it and you think ‘oh I’d like Casey to see that’ you can just phone me or email me and I’ll have a look, and if there’s anything else that you think afterwards that you think ‘oh I wished id told her that or shown her this’, just give me a call because we can skype if you wanted to talk again, so do stay in touch. What I usually do is type up the interviews and I take out any names of anything

Isla: yeah

R: but if you'd like a copy, sometimes it’s nice to have it stashed away and then years later you can go ‘oh I remember talking to that lady’ so you could read it so once I've written it up I can always send you a copy

Isla: Yeah, I don't mind my name being in there

R: Yeah I’ll put your name in yours, so I can send you that and anything I do like booklets I’ll send you those through too but that'll be a couple of years down the line by the time I've finished writing everything, PhD’s take a long time

Isla: yeah

R: But I will keep you in touch with everything as well, ok?

Isla: yeah, thank you

R: it’s been lovely to meet you

Isla: yeah you too

R: and I'm really pleased for you that everything going really well and your happier now, it’s been lovely thank you very much

Isla: that’s ok

Appendix M: PhD-4 (A) Alice Interview transcript.

(R: = researcher Alice: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place at P4's home. Only the participant was present during the interview, but her mother was at home, occasionally coming in and out and at times contributing)

R: I sent you the information sheets, didn't I?

Mum: You did yeah.

R: Do you want a hard copy of those?

Mum: Why not? It'll be interesting. Actually, did you send me information sheets? I'm not sure, I got an email unless there was an attachment that I missed, I just remember emails with organisation stuff on it but

R: Oh, maybe I didn't? That's really bad, well I'll just give it to you now. Basically, just tells you about why I'm doing it which is what I've just told you, so this is a consent form for you [gives consent form to Alice] so you get to read through the little statements, tick the boxes…or not, and then sign it if you want to, I'll give you a pen. There's a thing on there about Wiki's, I don't know if you've heard about them, erm there is a possibility that erm, it's a department at our university that has developed these Wiki's and erm they've said that I can give my participants access to their own Wiki, so if you'd like one of those. There's your information sheet that you get to keep, and here's your consent form and information sheet.

Alice: [reading information sheet and consent form] What are the Wiki's, drawings and photographs?

R: Er, so for some people I’ve been saying if they want to do drawings before we meet or during the interview, I’ve got pens and paper in here so if you feel creative or if you want to draw something then you know just grab the bag and start drawing. And the Wiki’s is an online erm, it’s not like Facebook where it’s open access, but it’s an online portal where you can upload, where you can create your own sort of profile and then you can show it to people

Alice: My data, will it be kept or will it be deleted?

R: Your data will be….

Alice: On the PhD thing

R: On the PhD thing, so I will delete that after we’ve er

Alice: Yeah, you’ll delete the recording and then…

R: and then anything that I type up from our interview all your name and any identifying features will be changed so if anyone else reads it they wouldn’t know it was you that was talking

Alice: Ok

R: And that’s all that would be used in my PhD

Alice: Ok.

R: and anything with your name on will be destroyed after the PhD is done, all of this gets locked away so……these consent forms are just so….

[Mum comes into room]

Alice: Mum shall I write Alice or Alice-Mae?

Mum: Whatever you want

Alice: What’s my name [laughs], is it formal enough to write?

R: Oh, it can be whatever…..this is just a form so you know…the university has these procedures in place so you know I haven’t forced you to talk to me you’ve signed something to say you’re happy

Alice: Oh I don’t have a signature, do I just…..

Mum: Just create one

Alice: How does that look? [giggles]

R: Perfect

Mum: Will it be published?

R: Erm my, well, my PhD papers may be published from it, but again everything…it’ll all be anonymous so….a couple of participants have asked if they can have copies of the transcripts so what I will do is type up the interview essentially but then change names and identifying features so a couple of people have asked if they can have a copy as they think it’ll be nice when their child is even older to look back and just go ‘oh that’s how I felt at the time’

Alice: That’s a good idea

R: So I’m happy to send you

Mum: Please

R: and I can send you a copy before I change the names and identifying features so you can have a copy because that’s your own data

Mum: Yeah that’d be good to have wont it Alice

R: So erm if you want that then I can, it takes a while to transcribe so it won’t be next week but as soon as I’ve transcribed it I can arrange to drop you a copy.

[Signing consent forms]

Alice: I only know the day because I’m at school, if it’s the weekend or the holidays I’m completely lost.

R: I know, I couldn’t remember what day it was in the Christmas holidays, it was quite nice though in a way.

Mum: My friend took her child to school today when it was an inset day, it was an absolute shocker

Alice: really was she in her uniform?

Mum: yep

[laughs]

[Mum signs consent forms and then leaves]

Mum: ok I’ll leave you to it

R: Ok I’ll put these away

Alice: Has the recording started yet?

R: yes it is recording us as we speak

Alice: Hi

R: So

Alice: Hello [giggles]

R: Hello [laughs] so how old are you by the way?

Alice: I’m thirteen, I’m gonna be fourteen in April though so

R: Ah ok, so what year are you, year 9?

Alice: Year 9

R: Yep ah ok, so do you remember how old you were when you were diagnosed with dyspraxia?

Alice: I was in year 3 so I was about 7 or 8?

Mum: I think it was year 5 when we went to see the….

Alice: Oh I thought…. didn’t someone say?

Mum: Yeah a teacher in year 3

Alice: In year 3 my teacher said they thought I might have dyspraxia which we hadn’t actually heard of and erm then in year 5 I actually went and got diagnosed so were talking about 10

R: yeah year 5's about 10 yeah, ok, and do you remember before you were diagnosed, you said in year 3 your teacher said she thought you had dyspraxia, do you remember what you were finding difficult at that time?

Alice: It was things like eating with my knife and fork, cutting things, I used to find really hard like sticking things in, just everything to do with like hands and art and creative things like making stuff, and just used to get really frustrated because I didn't really understand

R: Ok, and was it that you were frustrated that you didn't understand what was going on or….?

Alice: Yeah I just thought I was really clumsy or like yeah, I think it's also I think it's embarrassing cos like it's primary school….like basic skills things like cutting, so I think that was the thing for me that everyone else at that age, it just looked like I was just behind

R: Right ok, and did the teachers give you….cos that's quite good that the teachers identified it

Alice: Yeah

R: So did she give you any support?

Alice: erm well then we went, we said oh well I might have it, we didn't really get that much support we just got a pencil grip [laughs]

R: A pencil grip ok

Alice: erm from school yeah but that was about it, mum can you remember?

Mum: we were quite lucky that locally there was some occupational therapy and so the timing when Alice was all being investigated, do you remember you went to those groups at Woodland Children's Centre?

Alice: Ah yeah so I went in year 4, so the year after I would go out in the day and I'd do things like trying to make things so motor skills so like bending, hair bobbles and stuff.

R: oh is that where they put the hair bobbles on the fingers and get you to do this [imitates putting a hair bobble over all fingers and then moving fingers]

Alice: yeah

R: Ah ok I know that one. So you get to go out of school a bit for that?

Alice: Yeah but it was generally around lunchtime so I didn't actually

R: Didn't miss much at school

Alice: No

R: And then you had the assessment when you were in year 5?

Alice: Yeah

R: And was that at Woodland Children's Centre as well?

Alice: No that was in Clarkwell Street, yeah, and you thought it wouldn't make a difference though and that's a key thing actually, that our teacher just made us do loads of origami which is folding paper and making things out of it and I just find things so difficult and she was just like 'oh my what are you doing' and I just couldn't do it so, yeah in year 5 though….also that teacher's quite bad, I don't think she really saw it as that important, she just thought 'oh she's just got a pencil grip' whatever so she didn't pass the information on to my year 5 teacher who just thought I was really bad at cutting and everything and I got so upset because one lesson he got cross at me for like "who did this" cos we all had to cut these words out and he was "oh who did this" and stuff and I remember I was really upset, he was actually nice, he was really apologetic and stuff afterwards but he thought I was just like, he thought I was doing it deliberately

R: right ok, so he didn't really understand?

Alice: Yeah

R: Ok and do you think…when you had the assessment done how did you find that? Were you happy to have it?

Alice: I was happy to have it done because I think it's also a reason and stuff, like if anyone says something it's like 'oh no I'm dyspraxic' and also the thing is like a lot of people haven't heard of it so often people would ask me 'oh why can't you cut properly' or whatever so it's sort of something to say oh yeah I've got this, I'm really glad that that teacher in year 3 diagnosed me because I don't think any of my other teachers actually would have cos all of them seem to be a bit like, what's that…like the cutting they don't seem to really understand even though they had what it was really

R: Right ok, yeah so that's good that she picked that up early

Alice: Yeah

R: And how did you feel after you were diagnosed?

Alice: I felt a lot better, I didn't feel like the dyspraxia had changed but like I said it was sort of a reason and it made it less embarrassing and like…..yeah just like difficult because I had a reason it wasn't that I was just really bad at cutting was how I felt about it.

R: Yeah, and do you think the teachers understood a bit more after you had a diagnosis?

Alice: erm I'm not sure they had, they knew that much, I think they just saw the dyspraxia on a sheet and thought oh what's that? But they sort of didn't know, so they were just like 'oh well that's that' so I could just say 'I've got that' obviously it's on my file so they're like 'Ok I don't really know what that is but I'll just let you off'

R: Right ok. And how about friends while you were at primary school?

Alice: Erm it was fine, I don't think they really knew what it was either but I think they just sort of like, it wasn't really a problem at all at primary school, people were just thought 'oh you know she's just not very good at cutting and stuff' they were like 'oh can't you cut yet' and I was like 'no I've got dyspraxia illness' [laughs] whatever, it does sound quite formal so

R: and did they kind of accept that?

Alice: Yeah, that's that. That was fine actually.

R: That's good. And what about things like P.E.?

Alice: I'm actually alright at P.E., one of my things is though I always change lanes, I can never, I'm ok at running and stuff but like I can never stay….I find it hard to run in the same lane

R: Right ok

Alice: and also when I'm walking on the street I always walk in front of people [laughs] zig zag and stuff so I think it's really annoying and like frustrating but like…oh yeah obviously like throwing and everything I found really difficult, like ball games, so especially things like tennis and cricket, I just used to totally dread…like oh god protect me bat I can't like do anything.

R: Is that because it was a smaller ball?

Alice: I think so yeah it's like it's harder you've got to be more accurate haven't you?

R: yeah

Alice: But yeah I think running, mum what do you think? Running and foot things are ok it's just the zig zagging, ball games are just like really difficult.

Mum: Yeah think it was those team things were hard weren't they? You were brilliant at, you were a good swimmer, runner and cycling so the independent things you were fine

Alice: yeah

Mum: but I think all the special awareness

Alice: Yeah that's it

Mum: and running about with netball and things like that

Alice: yeah, like I wouldn't really….I'd get confused on what place I'm meant to be in

R: that's quite common from what I've heard from a lot of people is that they actually quite like sort of physical education but they like the things they can do by themselves it actually is this sort of running, you know the balls there, I've got to be there, that persons running towards me here

Alice: Yeah

R: Yeah that's quite a common thing yeah

Alice: Yeah

Mum: And the sort of pressure of timing things

Alice: yeah cos I think sometimes the P.E. teacher wouldn't really…….sometimes it's a bit….also like I think I found more in secondary is kind of embarrassing to just explain, you know it seemed like, oh I've said this a lot now, like in primary school and stuff it was fine but now I've got to secondary like 'why can't you through a ball?' and I was just like erm 'I've got dyspraxia?' but they just seemed to….it just….I don't think it really makes a difference if you don't really know what it is

R: yeah it's hard to understand if you don't know

Alice: yeah. In like….I found it quite hard like erm in CDT especially which is like woodwork and things like that erm….like in textiles I put a needle through my finger….I can't sew, I told my teacher that I couldn't do the 'I can do' task which was like this sewing thing and was….like I find it so difficult and they were like

"Well you need to know how to set up the sewing machine it's basic knowledge" I'm like "I can't I can't sew" and like recently with my apron we had to sew aprons and stuff, I can't do it, literally I can't, I was actually hiding from my teacher so I went out of school, I tried really hard, I got all this tie dye stuff so that I could tie dye it instead of like sewing stuff to it and I was actually really happy with it, it looked really nice I wanted to give it to my little cousin, and erm I came in and I was quite…you know I was like….I wasn't expecting praise or anything but I just came in to "oh you need to sew something on to that it looks unfinished" and like….

R: Oh no

Alice: she hadn't even looked like properly looked at it, she could have said oh I don't know at least well done for trying and the whole point was I'd gone out of the way so I wouldn't have to sew it and stuff and she just……she's got a lot of classes but I don't think she really remembers [giggles] many things she just…I think it just pops out of her head that I find it difficult, I think she just thinks of me as a like a bad girl or I don't know if she thinks I'm a bit lazy not trying to like do it, but I put a lot of effort into it and that and in the end I just told her Id already shown my cousin and she needs it for Christmas and so I'd need to take it out before I can like finish off sewing it and I got it off early, maybe don't include that in the report in case she reads it [laughs]

R: [laughs] no she won't know it's you anyway. Yeah so that's quite hard isn't it, when you've worked really hard and been creative

Alice: Yeah I do sometimes try to think outside the box and stuff, like drawings alright and stuff, I think it's cos I've always been really into like drawing but I do find the sort of sticking things and cutting things out really hard, in CDT we have a hegner saw, which is like a drill, where you've got to drill wood out in a shape, and I broke the machine twice [laughs] and my teacher just said, I was like “Miss I just can’t do it, I find it really hard” erm and I was kind of like….I was like “do you know I’m dyspraxic and stuff? It’s really hard for me to sort of do this stuff” and she was like “it’s not that you just need to be more confident” [laughs] and it’s like….I told my mum and she was like “well I give her a definition, because you wouldn’t tell a dyslexic person to read more confidently”

R: No exactly, yeah

Alice: But yeah although their annoying cos I think kind of strike it off as like a little thing that it doesn’t really affect you that much and stuff erm so they just don’t you think….like dyslexia it’s something that affects your whole like vocabulary and everything so that seems a really big struggle whereas you just think ‘oh it’s just a bit of hand skill that’s probably not even that bad’ you know, but it is actually really difficult and you wouldn’t think of it as that hard but it is, and not…the thing is that I think that she just didn’t really….she just sort of looked quite puzzled when I said it, I think she just didn’t really know what it was personally or like she might of heard of it once or twice but like she just didn’t actually know what it was she just looked quite confused.

R: Yeah, I think there is a lot of erm…sometimes if teachers have heard of it they don’t know an awful lot about it anyway and I think there’s a lot of misconceptions cos quite a lot people go ‘oh that’s the one that’s erm you know they’re a bit clumsy’ you know and you go ‘well actually it’s quite a lot more to it than just the clumsiness’ and erm yeah I think it’s quite difficult when they don’t really have an understanding. That must be quite hard though when you know like you say when you’ve been really creative with the apron and they didn’t even recognise and you know when you are trying to explain that you know I can’t do this, I’m not trying to….

Alice: Yeah it’s sort of like…it feels a bit like a dead end that your stuck, cos you tried to do what you can to the best of your ability but it’s like….I’m using this reference a lot but in dyslexia you wouldn’t get them to read the same book or something like….I think they’ve got to understand that I’m trying my best and I can only do my best, but like I think it should be more like well-known because it’s not fair if you don’t…if you can’t do something you just can’t do it, it’s not like I’m not trying or I’m just a bit clumsy or lazy or whatever.

R: Do you have any teachers that you find are more understanding? Or more supportive even if they don’t understand?

Alice: erm…….[laughs]…..I don’t really….I think in primary school like I said my year 3 teacher was quite good like and I got a pencil grip and stuff, that was the most [laughs]

R: mmmm ok

Mum: I don’t want to interrupt well I’m just remembering erm with your music in first year of secondary school, the minute he heard it took a year so the summer term that we went at the end of the year, I don’t about this but I found quite a lot of times the information doesn’t seem to go through for year to year, so the amount of parents evenings that I’ve had to re-explain and re-explain and re-explain and it was your…..what were you doing?

Alice: The guitar

Mum: the guitar

Alice: I couldn’t do the guitar properly

Mum: and he immediately said well drums, you know so actually he was quite happy to make that change, as soon as he knew

Alice: he was like ‘oh ok’

Mum: there does seem to be a communication problem in schools passing the information on

Alice: And I think you would have….like I said I think it’s just cos it’s not seen as a very big thing…or I don’t know the teachers seem to think it’s like for one year or something [giggles] but a lot of times it hasn’t been passed on

Mum: yeah….the system mightn’t it….it’s just not making it’s way through the school

Alice: Yeah

Mum: But as soon as he found out that was…..

Alice: yeah

Mum: that was the guitar was the problem he was really happy to make that change

R: But there’s not many teachers that you feel…

Alice: Not really….I just don’t think that that many teachers know what it is, like I said with the….with the communication they don’t really seem to know about it or heard of it or anything. Is that right?

Mum: yeah, no, I mean it’s what is you...

R: yes it’s your perspective of it yeah

Mum: it’s what you…so much about your experience of it, I think if you’ve got through six years of school and you think that you’ve barely had any supportive teachers that’s really telling

Alice: Also I was thinking about in English my writing's really inconsistent, like my handwriting is always changing and my teacher is trying to get me to be more consistent and stuff but you can’t like….I can’t….this doesn’t matter but like I can’t have my handwriting change because of like the way it is and that’s sometimes the way it is and that's sometimes been like a target for me and stuff and like that's not really fair

R: Yeah, and have they offered anything like using a laptop or anything in school?

Alice: No. I'm not that great with computers either, I find I.T. really hard, but erm yeah it hasn't I don't think there has been that much support to be honest and also I find it, I'm not sure if it counts but like in exams I find I get…I find it sometimes hard to write as quick as….they don't really…there's no sort of exception….or like you've got just like one minute or like something like that

R: So you don't get any extra time in exams?

Alice: No.

R: Ok.

Mum: I think I need to look into that

R: Yeah, you're entitled, for GCSE's you're entitled to erm….they can in year 9 they can do a test and it's on the speed of handwriting erm and if you write a certain number you're entitled to 25% extra time and the school have to write to the exam board and say you know we've tested and this is the speed and they can grant you 25% extra time

Alice: what if someone just faked being slow?

R: I think they have….

Mum: That's a good point

R: Yeah it is a good point…I think you've got a diagnosis as well and there is a lot more to it and I make it sound a lot more simplistic and the exam board do want evidence so the teachers will do this sort of test to test the speed but they will have also been able to see your handwriting throughout the year so they'd be able to say you know handwriting is inconsistent or whatever

Alice: and also if I am trying to write quickly my handwriting is just goes absolutely all over

Mum: illegible

Alice: Illegible, like you can’t read it if I’m writing…

R: and during exams you’ve got….

Alice: You need to have legible handwriting

Mum: thank you for reminding me, I’ll get in touch with school about that

R: Yeah get on to that about that cos they…you should be entitled to that and you know 25% is…

Alice: If I was to write at a legible speed it would be a lot slower…….I’m fairly creative so I’ve got a lot of thoughts so if I’m trying to write what I mean and stuff I’m not going to get it all down like in an hour or whatever and readable.

R: Yeah there is…despite teachers not having as much knowledge there is support that quite often you have to kind of…

Alice: really fight for it

R: fight for it or ask you know you have to say

Alice: yeah I think if you find that your dyslexic and stuff they’re kind of…they’re more willing to…‘oh do you want help’

Mum: it’s vaguer to quantify for teachers isn’t it I mean with dyslexia it’s very clear issues around reading and writing and interpreting information, dyspraxia seems to me to have a much wider potential range of issues for children so there’s an awful lot that can be going on, I mean I suspect it affects confidence and all sorts of things which can’t be quantified in the same way

R: it does yeah, exactly

Alice: our French teacher when we….we have to do this student thing where all the…for a day where you’re basically working in the office it’s so awful, it’s filling papers and after you do it for like a day when year 8 so I was like you know doing…er putting papers in…er sending notes to classrooms and one of the things you have to do what the teachers say and so emptying, recycling, all of the teachers are obsessed to cut things out for their French class and I said “Miss I’m so…I’m awful at cutting, like I really can’t do this” and she was like “oh it doesn’t matter” I was like “Miss I’m really bad” she was like “It doesn’t matter, just get on with it”, so I did it, it was awful, later it was so awful cos I had to go back into the class to collect the recycling and she as like “mmmm thanks for cutting those out for me” and everyone was laughing

R: Oh no

Alice: I felt like oh well I have told you that I can’t cut, you can’t just say that

R: Yeah that’s not nice to say in front of the class either is it? Cos they do then….kids can be cruel, erm without even really meaning to I guess half the time, can’t they?

Mum: Sure, yeah

Alice: yeah and I was trying to avoid going anyway cos they were two years….like current year 11’s

R: yes, that’s even harder isn’t it? Oh dear, it is difficult

Alice: I think that’s also like….especially with other students if something like that happens, they just haven’t heard like obviously they don’t know…she’s not going to say Alice is dyspraxic and…[laughs] and they’ve just heard look why is my eye cut out or whatever…….

R: yeah they haven’t got the explanation behind it. So do you find with the with the writing you said it’s inconsistent and your wrist hurts as well..

Alice: illegible yeah I think what I’m saying…I can write quickly but you can’t read what I’m writing

R: Ok

Alice: If I'm to write legible I need to write at a slow pace and you can't any of my thoughts like what I need to write it's not that I don't have…can't write it…it's just the fact that yeah I just need it to be able to be read.

R: Do you find, not necessarily in school, but you know when you're at home maybe or…do you find you've got any strategies to… cos if you've got all these thoughts that you want to get down, what helps you to get those thoughts down?

Alice: Planning I guess

R: Planning it, ok

Alice: But what I mean is when it's just really down to the time it's concentrating otherwise…it's probably another part of dyspraxia but I find it so hard…I find it really hard to concentrate on work and stuff so it's quite hard especially if I can't write that quickly

R: and do you find that the ideas you've got then go out of your head because you haven't been able to get the down quick enough?

Alice: Well yeah sometimes that'll happen occasionally unless we've got it next to us in a planning sheet or something were not gonna have that in our GCSE's

R: no, but are you aloud to in erm…I know I was allowed to, I can't remember….it's a long time since I did GCSE unfortunately but we were allowed to have sort of a page where you were allowed to sort of mind dump you know, you know put all your ideas then put a line through it and then you'd start your erm…it's actually a very common thing for dyspraxia to erm a) to find it very difficult to concentrate and b) to have all these ideas but not to get them down quick enough

Alice: cos I was thinking it could be part of that but I wasn't sure

R: yeah it is very common thing

Alice: ok

R: So yeah so if that helps

Alice: yeah cos I didn't want to say cos you know what you're talking about but yeah I find it really hard to concentrate because of my dyspraxia

R: yeah no no it definitely is one of the sort of traits, and organising….

Mum: organising your thoughts

R: and organising your thoughts as well

Alice: Yeah

R: and then if you couple that we really finding it difficult to write at speed then your thoughts have gone out cos you're concentrating so it is…

Alice: yeah that's thing organisation and spatial awareness, I can't…..on my desk I do things in a weird order cos I can't think to organise them right or put them in the right space and stuff so I have a like really clutter room cos I find it hard to organise things and put them in the right places or I'm like doing something like whilst holding a cup which I could just put down there, I know it sounds weird but like just doing things in the wrong order and not having it thought out that well and sort of hard from a practical…

R: yeah, you say your room is cluttered but does it makes sense to you? Do you know where things are?

Alice: Yeah it's like my messy know where things are, cos it's like the other day when I was sat on my own bed it was not made.

R: as I said my son's got dyspraxia and I call it his organised chaos

Mum: yeah

R: cos I walk into his room and it's completely….but actually he knows where everything is, erm and he is very much the same he can't organise it, it actually sends him into a tail spin, he can't think of how to do it and arrrgh but it's organised chaos I like to call it [laughs]

Mum: yeah that's one thing you're really good at trying to keep on top of it especially more recently actually you have regular clear-outs and yeah but I think you like seeing it when it's all sorted out don't you? cos it makes you feel a bit calmer possibly.

Alice: Yeah I feel, yeah I feel when I've got a messy room I get really frustrated and agitated, it's like oh god, even if I kind of know where things are I kind of prefer for things to be just in a set place so I know where it is, erm so I do feel better once everything's like tidier [laughs]

R: But it's just getting it that way is it?

Alice: It's just getting it tidier is the problem

R: Yeah. And is that the same as at school with the organisation thing? Cos obviously at secondary school you've got lots of different….

Alice: Classes

R: I mean I don't know what your schools like but they're quite similar usually aren't they and you have to move from classroom to classroom and you've got different teachers and different books

Alice: and lugging a coat around not [inaudible] which bit of my bag and like holding it [laughs] bag lady, loads of things like got to carry around with us.

Mum: Do you find it hard organising your stuff for lessons and things?

Alice: Yeah

Mum: You're very sorted with your bag and everything aren't you?

Alice: Yeah, I get that done the night before, cos I've got it I try to stay on top of it

R: Yeah

Alice: and stuff cos I know that I kind of thought in year 7 it was hardest, but erm I try to stay on top of it but it is still like even if you have everything in the right place it can still be hard to organise [laughs] so I try to like get it as good as like well done as I can.

R: That’s a lot to remember isn’t it during the school day?

Mum: Yeah it’s a lot of pressure

R: Yeah

Alice: Yeah and I’m not sure if everyone else has it kind of like a added….cos also like the whole, like I say the writing we do every lesson pretty much like having to have, not having legible writing is quite hard. Like when I’m writing slowly like I said it’s fine it’s just otherwise the teachers going to move on to the next point and then I’ve missed it, but it does help if I doodle sometimes, which is sort of ironic

R: How does doodling help?

Alice: I don’t know, I think it just releases stress

R: Ok

Alice: I just…I like…I just really….I really enjoyed drawing and just like doing squiggles and just seeing what it’ll become and making little funny faces and stuff like that….not so great [inaudible , laughs]

R: [laughs] what do your teachers think of your doodles?

Alice: I just scribble over them so it’s just like a lot of big splodges or yeah

R: But it’s a way of relieving stress you said

Alice: Yeah and I just find it quite therapeutic

R: Yeah that makes sense

Mum: One thing I noticed and I am gonna leave you to it, but just one thing I noticed about your school is last year was your English teacher commenting on legibility of your writing and when I keep saying “yeah well she’s got dyspraxia it’s not easy” and she’s like “yeah but if she could just work on that” and it’s like do you know what it’s actually quite difficult

Alice: It’s a bit annoying

Mum: I do think teachers know what it is, of course they do I’m sure it’s all part of their learning

Alice: But they don’t really know what it is

Mum: There’s not a real understanding of how

Alice: It affects us

Mum: it’s not just about someone being messy or not trying hard and I think for me, if that was me I’d find it quite difficult

Alice: You have the thing

Mum: It wasn’t diagnosed but I’m sure, we’ve got very similar traits

R: A lot of parents of the children that I’ve been talking to have said that since their children have been diagnosed they kind of sit there and go “oh actually I think maybe that’s what I had” and the trouble is it’s still not well known but from when we were at school it was even less well known so quite often a lot of people of your mums age and my age

Alice: She’s seemed quite [inaudible] the sewing machine [laughs]

R: Ah ok, but it would have been labelled clumsy children or but there wouldn’t have been a diagnosis because at the time it was even less

Mum: Recognised

R: yeah even less well known and certainly not something that was recognised and so I think a lot of people sit there and go “oh ok actually I do that”

Mum: Makes perfect sense, a lot of links there, and I think I see Alice doing it as well….working to accommodate some for instance the apron being a brilliant example going "you know what I can't do that so I'm going to do this tie dye" and

Alice: And then it's not good enough

Mum: and then for the teacher to not appreciate that

R: Not to appreciate that I think that's quite….

Mum: Quite difficult really isn't it for your confidence I think more than and I think that's where you know schools could do more to support children

R: Yes I think if there's erm, I think I general, I think erm a lot of teachers even if you haven't got dyspraxia, if children have thought out of the box and though actually I find things difficult but look I can do this….that's actually a good skill to have to be creative and to be able to think of strategies around because life is never, you know, quite as straight forward as we would like it to be and sometimes you do have to sort of think around….so I think your….I mean I think that sounds amazing to sort of think "ok I can't do this, what can I do?" because I think a lot of children would have thought 'Well I can't do this' and then just sat there and at least you haven't sat there you've kind of….

Mum: yes tell a few more stories like and that and what happened in that lesson

Alice: I hid under the table

R: Oh ok, when was that?

Alice: it was kind of half funny half scary, my friend was like telling me when she's coming and I was like ninja crawling from one place in the classroom to the other [laughs]

R: this was the teacher with the tie dye apron?

Alice: yeah, she tried to make me sew stuff and I can't sew and I find it awful, I can't even set up the sewing machine let alone do anything on it.

R: So you were trying to hide from her under the table?

Alice: Yeah and everyone was like “ahh” like

R: How long did that last? How long did you manage to hide from her?

Alice: I hide under there for the lesson, she wasn’t that interested

R: Ok.

Alice: luckily, she doesn’t really check on me or anything like that. I think also cos I’m bad at it like it doesn’t really help my CDT and textile teachers sort of taken against me, I think they just think I don’t really try hard and am just a bit clumsy you know I don’t get their subject or whatever and I think if anything it’s the other way round, like they haven’t really….they don’t really understand dyspraxia and they like they don’t…you know…know how it affects me and erm they think that I’m like just being lazy and don’t really care, I think that’s a lot different, they think oh you know it’s just some little finger thing it doesn’t really affect that much

R: yeah, that is hard. What are your favourite subject at school?

Alice: I really enjoy English actually even if I find it hard to get everything down that’s probably my strongest subject I think in terms of levels and everything

R: ok

Alice: erm I actually enjoy P.E. like as I said the independent sports and stuff and I think even though at first I really hated it and the things like the exercise and stuff have kind of helped a bit, over the years it does get a bit easier, of like when you come back to something like netball or cricket, well not really helped but you know what I mean like doing it, it’s sort of gets a bit easier and a bit less embarrassing, erm so in that time I do think that has helped and I do enjoy the independent sports. I like drama cos it’s just a bit of a break from all the hard subjects and I really enjoy acting and it’s just sort of moving, it’s moving around you know it’s not you know all technical, well it is technical body theatre but it’s not like I fell your [inaudible]it’s one of those cos people are like “oh CDT, textiles their breaks” I’m like no their hell I’d much rather being doing something else I do think drama is a real break

R: Yeah and it’s also very creative drama, it can be can’t it?

Alice: Yeah, your coming up with plays and stuff, I really….that would probably be like my dream job, like combining the two would be for writing plays or directing cos I love drama, like we’re performing at the Soho theatre later this year, actually for a drama project and erm English cos I enjoy writing and stuff so their probably like my favourite subjects erm one thing actually cos options are happening at the moment, I’m really debating Art because I find the things like about personality and like the actual like technicality of the art, you know like Grayson Perry, I love that whole topic I find some of the things really interesting but when it comes to the just the drawing like an apple [laughs] which is like in the exam things I find harder like you know cutting out so that’s a real debate for me at the moment cos you know I enjoy but I don’t know….also it’s a lot of work and I think if I’m getting lots of things and it turns out to be really hard you know, I don’t know so I think that’s a debate for me cos I enjoy some of Art I almost wish it was like a split course but I don’t know if I want to do all of it like when it comes down to the sort of pressure you know to do a big painting and get everything quite right and stuff somethings I do really like

R: How many options do you get to choose?

Alice: we get 4, I know what I’m picking so far

R: What are you taking?

Alice: I’m taking French, History and Drama erm and I could take Art and I haven’t really thought about it but possibly business studies cos I’m also interested in marketing I think that’s really cool, advertising and stuff like that

R: So you don’t make your choices for a while now do you?

Alice: We actually do we’re making it this term

R: oh ok

Alice: erm they’ve given like an options evening I don’t think there’s that much space to choose and stuff a lot of the things like Business studies we haven’t had a taster of that before so if I was…if I’d done it before I’d be like “yeah you know that’s really what I wanna go for” or “oh no that’s really dull and boring which I’m kind of thinking it would be which is why I wouldn’t take it if it’s looking at graphs sorry if you’ve done business studies

R: [laughs] No not at all. Yeah so it’s hard without having a taster in it yeah

Alice: yeah and I think especially for some of the things I don’t know if there’s going to be lots of writing so I’m not sure if that could technically affect my dyspraxia, not really but you know what I mean

R: mmmmm yeah it’s something you’re considering yeah

Alice: Also this is one thing I was going to add in but you know when erm a lot of teachers just say your name and stuff and they get a ball in the classroom and throw it to each person

R: oh yes

Alice: and I just totally freak out cos it’s so nervous being put on the spot everyone’s watching you and it’s like [claps hands] and it’s like I can’t catch the ball erm I think sometimes I’m just lucky otherwise it’s like one of our teachers was like “well I share and office with a P.E. teacher so if you don’t catch this I’ll get her to factor it in to her lesson”. Pressure.

R: Oh no

Alice: just like she was like “you should all be able to catch and throw by now” and I’m just like ‘no oh my god oh my god’ yeah so I hate those sort of things which are general things that people use to introduce themselves and also I think with the writing I need more time cos…well this wouldn't really affect me but if I was applying for a job as well I think it should be more recognised cos then if it's messy if it's like messy or illegible they kind of know….

R: they can know why, yeah

Alice: Yeah, but that's probably why I just wanted to add the things in about the ball throwing quickly

R: Yes that's very difficult isn't it, they do a lot of….they're called ice breakers aren't they?

Alice: yeah

R: yeah I used to hate all those kinds of things cos they put you on the spot don't they?

Alice: yeah or a teacher would just come in and…yeah…or I don't know like P.E. ok "so let's get one person to come up to the front and tackle this person" and I'm like 'oh my god I can't go up there please don't choose me' and I'm like ducking behind someone. But yeah that's quite hard and also on the spot you can't just say "no I don't want to do it I've got…" I guess I could say but it just sounds really like I'm trying to get away with it and stuff and also I do worry that it sounds quite smug especially if a teacher hasn't heard of it they're probably thinking 'oh that's quite …' I feel almost embarrassed to say it, it's just sounds a bit that's a bit sort of you know smug and I haven't heard of it and is it really that big

R: yeah

Alice: of a deal

R: Yeah that's the trouble isn't it because it's not that well known….they probably do just think it's not that big of a deal cos otherwise it would be well known and unfortunately……

Alice: Sorry I've got a bit of a cold so I'm really flat tongued so I hope I'm pronouncing everything ok?

R: Oh yeah no that's fine, so erm what about things like homework do you find that….

Alice: I find it hard to concentrate and sit down for things like revision it's really hard to just sit there and do hard core revising, like I say I like to think outside the box, but I find it quite hard for exams which is also why it would be good to get some minutes if I'm finding it harder to revise, I just think it's a bit more effort that other people go through and I'm the sort of person I like to put in as much as work as I can into my work so that it looks, I like it to be to a really good standard, some people might just do a little squiggle and not really care about it but I do put lots of effort into things especially things like Art that I find hard I like to put sort of effort into. In fact I'll show you this things cos I actually got better at cutting but it took a while, I actually cut out what's meant to be paper Rocky [leaves the room for a minute and then comes back] for lots of people that would be….

R: Oh wow look at that

Alice: but for me it took so many goes at getting everything right and it's quite frustrating so things like that….to the teacher might not seem much effort but to me…

R: yes

Alice: to me it feels like a lot of effort and it feels a lot harder than it looks and I almost feel like the teacher doesn't understand how much effort has sometimes gone into some of the things and like they don't you know really like know that I've really tried and just you know done my best. Other people yeah it might just take 10 minutes

R: yes, yeah, so would you like it if they did recognise the effort that you put into this?

Alice: Well I'm not saying like sort of massive praise but I'm just saying I think teachers, even if they don't say anything, just not be like…..with my textiles teacher when they sometimes just say 'oh not that good' or whatever, it just feels a bit "ahhh I've put some much work into that"

R: Yeah

Alice: and it's a bit hard to say that's not very good

R: no it would be good if they could…yeah

Alice: or even just 'Oh well done you tried' or you know what I mean, I know that sounds really cheesy and childish but it's sometimes nice to be recognised that you've…..even if it hasn't gone well, that you've put effort into something

R: yes and do you think if they'd recognised that…and just….

Alice: I think I'd be more motivated

R: Yes

Alice: like to do more, and I think lots of people….cos it's quite easy to be just like ohh mentally block it off 'I've got dyspraxia that's why, it doesn't matter I'm just not going to put any effort into this' and they can just have it especially if the teacher don't really understand so it could fall into a dangerous circle where you're just falling back and back cos you're thinking 'oh they don't understand'

R: Yeah

Alice: so it doesn't really make a difference

R: So I'm not going to try

Alice: if I'm not gonna try, whereas I think if even like saying little things like "oh well done you tried" and stuff, then oh you know they're actually recognising, I'm gonna try even harder this time and sort of you can actually try and sort of…well not overcome it but like really improve by practicing and stuff but it's really hard, I think if you, if you really don't get something or you can do it, you can't do it, it's not like you're not trying hard enough

R: Yes

Alice: and for me I feel especially I do put a lot of work in to try and do….I did lots of motor skills to try and I do put lots of time in to things but sometimes it just feels a bit hard and stuff

R: Yeah, are there any things that you've done that you've like, you know you were saying erm, how do I phrase this, like with riding a bike I know a lot of people with dyspraxia find that very very difficult and…..it's quite often….there are some things in life that you have to find a way of doing aren't there because you just have to do, but sometimes there are things you don't have to do..

Alice: I find…I actually find a bike ok, I think the things I find hard is ringing my bell, I find it hard to multi task, so I can hold on to the handles and do the wheels but I can't do the brakes and the bell that easily

R: right, ok

Alice: So that's kind of worse, but no I do enjoy cycling I don't find it as hard as I find a lot of other things which is good, I just if I'm coming up to something I need to step up the seat and really think about doing it

R: and are there some things that you find hard that you just think I'm just not going to do that

Alice: Textiles, especially cos my teacher is so negative about everything that I do, she just says literally about everything 'oh not that good is it' arggghhhh oh my god, they have to do this thing called a plain weave I can't even talk about it, where you have to….you get these four….you have to cut up strips of paper for a start, like say five there and you've got to weave another five strips of paper in and out…..I couldn’t do it and she was like “oh you need to start again you need to do this at home” it took me like literally the whole day to do it on one Saturday and I found it so hard I got really upset over it cos I just couldn’t do it and I come back and she didn’t even mark it I don’t think and I was just like ‘oh my god what a waste’ of like time.

R: yeah and to not even mark it

Alice: I’m not going to need that in a job, I’m not going to go in to it….I think GCSE’s are quite daunting but some of the things I can’t wait to get rid of when we start

R: what are the ones you can’t wait to get rid of?

Alice: CDT, textiles, erm sometimes like…not really food tech…a bit I find it quite hard

R: What things about food tech do you find hard?

Alice: just like getting…washing up all the pots, pans and then putting everything….like I said with spatial awareness if you’re putting things away you’re like ‘oh my god where does that go’ running round the classroom and stuff trying to get finished in time, so the organisation and ‘oh I need to turn my oven’ on or I can’t step back cos there’s someone walking past me with a wok instead of the spatial awareness cos it’s like everyone’s got an oven around the room and you’ve just got to be aware of that and what everyone else is doing and keep an eye on the timing and I find it hard to concentrate with lots of things going on I think. And also like I said I find the washing up a bit hard sometimes.

R: mmmmm, you said you find it hard with a lot of things going on….do you find it hard if you’re given a lot of instructions at once?

Alice: Yes! I find it…and my brain will try and focus on all of them and as a result I just won’t take anything in and then I’m like ‘yep so what are we doing then?’ to the person next to me [laughs]. Yeah that's all great, just try to look concentrate and my mouths just open and like….what's happening, I've just been bombarded with information, so I guess that's the main….if teachers like listen more carefully, you weren't listening or whatever, sometimes it's just a matter of other people talking so you can't hear sometimes it's just that you just can't take it in and I think sometimes when I get like bored as well I just get really fidgety , I rock on my chair a lot and I find it really hard to take any information and I find it really hard to work and I just kind of zone out and I can't concentrate on anything, that's probably not really part of dyspraxia…but I just find..

R: no it is

Alice: it is? [laughs] see I don't really know I just find…I totally zone out so I think it'd be good if the teachers knew that as well, and I think that's more of a…well not a behavioural but sort of a reason that I find it hard and I think probably…they might think….even if they did know they'd probably think 'oh you know the clumsy thing' it doesn't mean that I find it necessarily….they wouldn't know from that that I find it hard to…

R: no I think that's trouble is a lot of people if they have heard of dyspraxia is they think it's to do with being clumsy which it is but it's also lots of other things and I think in the…you know when you're in school you've got so much going on that all of these things…

Alice: yeah my feet are so abused I've stubbed them on so many things [inaudible] I'm not gifted with the way of the foot [laughs]

R: the way of the foot [laughs] well I'm sure you're gifted in other areas, do you have any interesting hobbies outside of school or do you take part in any clubs?

Alice: I actually do running outside of school

R: ah ok where do you do that?

Alice: At the park

R: Ah ok

Alice: there's a club called youth run

R: yes I know of that one actually yes

Alice: Erm and I run for them and I do find it quite hard and stuff like I said staying in the lanes, and also but when I'm running I find it hard to concentrate on other things like sometimes my feet are a bit heavy and stuff and like I just find it hard to concentrate, cos it seems quite effortless running, but when you get to a higher standard you've got to do everything in the correct way, making sure you're knees you've got a wide enough gate, erm that you're light footed, sort of bouncing up, that you're breathing in the right….and I find it quite hard like I said to concentrate on a variety of things as well as like stay in the same lane, so I can sometimes find that a bit difficult……out of one of the things I'm doing wrong

R: yeah it's a lot to coordinate isn't it, think about, I've got to breathe like this and my feet have to got to do that and my arms have got to do that

Alice: It's kind of off putting, but yeah

R: yeah but you enjoy running?

Alice: I do yeah and I think it's a good hobby

R: Yes yeah, my daughter did a cross country thing with youth run.

Alice: Oh did she? How old is she?

R: she's only 8, but the school….the primary schools did this cross country event

Alice: Oh yeah they do that, I did that up to year 7

R: Yeah and erm she actually surprising, she's so tiny

Alice: Yes I find in running, either the really small people or really tall people and then someone who's 5 foot is sprinting…..I don't know apparently it's like gravity or like other people are more focused on growing which takes up energy and I'm like 'how do they run so fast'. But also I find I've got longer legs that I don't necessarily use like the…how….I'm not sure if that's cos I find it hard to concentrate on it but I've probably got like the same gate as someone whose smaller using their absolute maximum and I'm just going like…..[laughs] but yeah

R: and have you got any other hobbies that you….?

Alice: Er, not really…I used to do French cos I needed to catch up erm cos I started a year later erm but yeah that was it really

R: Right ok. And have you got any brothers or sisters?

Alice: I've got a brother Michael…upstairs

R: ok and is he younger?

Alice: He's 9 no he's 10 now actually

R: Right ok. And how do you find having a brother?

Alice: Yeah it's fine, erm, I think he probably thinks dyspraxia is a bit of a clumsy thing too

R: oh really

Alice: but yeah it's fine yeah we get along

R: Yeah, just normal?

Alice: yeah just normal brother and sister thing yeah. And do you see you friends outside of school?

Alice: yeah

R: and they seem quite supportive from what you've said.

Alice: Yeah it's fine yeah I think everyone's fine with it, I think erm…..although they are like….sometimes I think they wonder 'oh why are you always walking in front of me' and I just go to the side and like 'sorry'….I'm just drifting sometimes but I think yeah if I hadn't told people though they said "oh yeah unless you hadn't told me I probably wouldn't have known I probably would have just thought you were a bit clumsy" actually I think someone said that to me today cos we were talking about it

R: and do you feel fine talking to people about it?

Alice: I feel ok, I've got a lot better…in primary school…in secondary it was just was kind of the constant explaining I almost couldn't be bothered anymore and also it's a bit embarrassing, just like sort of….like I said it seems like an excuse to try and get away with loads of things

R: Right ok yeah

Alice: especially if teachers don't really take it seriously that's quite…[laughs]

R: yes that makes it harder doesn't it if they're not taking seriously then it can feel….

Alice: yeah, a bit like you're trying to get away with something

R: mmmmm and what are your aspirations? What do you want to do once you've done your GCSE's?

Alice: I'm not sure

R: no. It's quite hard I think at this age to think of what you want to do

Alice: Yeah I do find it quite hard. I like the idea of publishing….my parents do that

R: oh ok

Alice: my mum [inaudible] but my dad does publishing

R: your mum does what sorry?

Alice: a course now for counselling

R: oh ok

Alice: and stuff cognitive behavioural therapy…..she's not talked to me about it cos it's all confidential

R: yes

Alice: that's all I know

R: and do you think you'll go on to study further after you…

Alice: I want to go to university

R: right

Alice: I might do…..I thought I could possibly do a joint degree you know so like erm English and drama and sort try and incorporate them into each other, I'm not sure how that would work, I could….I was thinking…I'm not sure but like also possibly doing a PhD like English drama and yeah

R: mmmm yeah that would be good I think you could incorporate those two really well actually

Alice: Yeah. and also acting is about the dialogue as well a lot….about interpreting acting from things like Shakespeare and stuff

R: mmmm yeah so they'd fit really well

Alice: Yeah and its two things that I enjoy so I think it'd be quite good to take, but yeah I enjoy P.E. but I definitely wouldn't take it for GCSE because 1….sorry I've just thought about this

R: yeah

Alice: 60% of it is just writing

R: right

Alice: it's only half a GCSE so half…so more than half of the half GCSE is just writing and then there's loads of different things that you have to do for the activities that doesn't really count that much and you already do P.E. anyway so why take extra is my sort of thing…but I think a lot of people do it under false pretentions slightly cos they think it’s gonna be really fun and stuff and actually it’s lots of science

R: yes

Alice: they don’t really know what they’re in for and it doesn’t…its chasing rabbits…and also they erm they think ‘oh yeah we’ll just be like dancing around’ but it’s quite hard you’ve got to choose lots of activities to do and yeah

R: yeah you have to pick four don’t you or something?

Alice: yeah

R: four sports that you’re gonna study

Alice: and some…like one on your own, one judging other people….I couldn’t judge other people I’d feel so bad if they did anything wrong I wouldn’t be able to say

R: yeah

Alice: well obviously I’d want to help them especially if it was their final exam they couldn’t do anything about ….I’m not gonna say ‘oh that was rubbish’

R: yes, yeah and do you think having dyspraxia’s made you any different to how you might have been personality-wise? Do you think you’re maybe more understanding?

Alice: I think I’m more understanding maybe slightly more invert…how do you say invert….?

R: Introvert?

Alice: yeah introvert to myself cos I was definitely quite outgoing and stuff and I do know it did knock me a bit like in primary school and secondary it’s so embarrassing so I didn’t almost say about it a bit so it kind of made me feel less confident, erm…I was just sort of quite nervous when it came to areas that my dyspraxia sort of er stopped me from you know reaching my probably full potential erm so I just didn't really… and also I didn't really say cos it wasn't really recognised, I just wouldn't talk about it that much so that made me more a bit to myself I think, in secondary school.

R: yeah, that's erm…and do you think…cos you were saying it's made you go a bit into yourself and you've found it embarrassing and you've said quite a lot that it's embarrassing….do you think the way people react when you do tell them…or react when..

Alice: I think sometimes it's just a bit erm it's more the teachers not understanding and getting me to do things that I'm saying 'no I can't do that I can't do that' and their like 'just do it' and I'm like 'no I can't' [laughs] in a way…erm I find that quite hard because if you're saying I can't do something and someone's not listening to you…it's just…there's nothing more you can do about it and it's really hard if they don't fully understand

R: yeah, what could they do erm…so if part of your course was that you had to do whatever the task was….what could they do to help you? If you sort of said you now for example with your erm textiles one….I mean I actually love your idea of the tie dye I think that absolutely sounds fantastic but say you had to for the exam sew on, how could they help?

Alice: I think they could help me set up the machine probably like getting things set out really simply explain it to me give me help like go over if I'm finding it hard, cos often if I find I'm struggling and no one's really like noticing

R: right

Alice: almost that the teacher doesn't want to notice cos they don't wanna be like… 'one second I've just got to go over here' running away cos they don't want to help cos I've got myself into real pickle and I'm sort of stuck like 'oh my god what have I done' so almost maybe like noticing it more and yeah just sort of I guess going over it more simply cos I think sometimes when they just bombard you with …'you've got to thread this through this and pull this up and get the bobbin in the bobbin holder' I don't know

R: yeah it's quite a lot of information to take in

Alice: yeah and I don't really take it in

R: yeah and how about performing and things in front of people?

Alice: I'm ok with performing actually I think that's been good for helping build my confidence

R: What about performing that isn't drama I don't know so maybe in music or public speaking or…

Alice: Public speaking kind of…..obviously a bit nervous beforehand but it's not like a big thing for me to do speeches in front of the class and stuff, erm I think….its…er I would say for me in music something I'm unconfident in and I know that my dyspraxia …cos I just get really nervous cos I've got to go on the piano and it's like if I don't wanna to sing in the group there's not really anything else I can do, erm and I'm just really aware of the piano…the wrong place I'm gonna mess up the whole song and I think especially when it's in groups it's not one…if you're on the spot light it's like erm you don't wanna just look really bad but if you're in a group you don't wanna mess it up for everyone else it's just so obvious if you've messed up. Especially mine I did the simple one I just had three keys and I kept on forgetting where they were and everything on the keyboard I wish they could just write letters on it so that I could just see where it was…..I couldn't learn off by heart, I don't wanna be a pianist

R: yeah no that would be helpful, it's sometimes having those strategies that erm

Alice: Yeah I can't write I'm not allowed to write on the keyboard

R: No. and have you developed any strategies at home?

Alice: Erm well I guess at home it's more quieter so I just take more time to do things I set aside time, I try , this year another resolution is to be more organised and stuff, I just try to organise things, it doesn't always work but like to make things as organised as they can be. My room gets really messy but I am getting better at looking after it not neglecting it all the time. It's just like spatial awareness and stuff, just trying to think really hardly before I do things, so ok 'if I put this cup there and pick this up then' you know what I mean just getting the right order of things, so I think it's the process of thinking 'right what do I need to do here?' organising myself and getting it done like slowly, I might take a bit of time but I'm trying to sort of do that, I think like I said when I'm at home I've got a lot more time, at school I think it's definitely the time that's hard for me and fi you're doing revision and you've got lots of instructions and you've got to fit in to a lesson and stuff. Also there's lots of sticking in books.

R: Yes

Alice: I get frustrated…I get all glue in my hair or whatever [laughs]

R: yeah they've gone in for that a lot these past few years haven't they sticking everything in books.

Alice: it's just…kits so annoying as well because we don't even…it's like you could just write that in the board and I could write it in my book, I don't need to stick it, it's a waste of paper and it makes my book look really horrible, this jagged scrap in there, it would look way better if I could write in in my unlegible handwriting. Yeah and it takes less time so I'd probably be able to get more down like more neatly.

R: Than trying to glue it in?

Alice: yeah.

R: and are your family very supportive?

Alice: yeah my mum like I said sympathises and stuff and yeah my family is like supportive about it.

R: So do you find…cos you said at home you're a bit more relaxed cos you take your time and at school it's a lot of pressure, do you find that you're tired by the end of the school day?

Alice: Yeah I get really tired and stuff.

R: there's a lot to think about isn't there?

Alice: Yeah. A lot to take in then also things I find hard is maths I find really hard and I've got to revise for that test and to have my own time it just seems like there's a lot of extra stuff I need to do there's a lot of pressure you know going into GCSE and also with dyspraxia on top of it with people not understanding as well it's just really hard cos it's just a sort of invisible weight

R: yeah

Alice: that I'm like carrying around with me and no one sort of ..no one can see it but it's there and it's really burdening me and making everything a lot harder and like my mum said it's really wide spread and so it does…it affects lots of things

R: Yeah it does. If anybody could do one thing if there was one things that you wanted to sort of tell people what would it be to sort of try and alleviate some of that weight?

Alice: I think…to understand really…in the end it kind of comes down to that because if you don't understand you can't empathise with someone and you can't try and help them. So I can't be helped with my dyspraxia until people understand what I'm going through and have actually taken time like teachers to look into properly so until it's more well-known and people understand what's happening I can't…nothings gonna change for me…I'm still gonna find it really difficult, I might not get minutes on exams and stuff, it's just not that heard about, not that known about even if some people have heard the name of it 'oh I think I've heard of that, I'm not really sure what it is', I can't do anything until people are sure what it is, so I would say understanding really.

R: yeah I think that's a good point, I think if there was more understanding then er at least like you say, it might not change the fact that you find these things difficult but at least…

Alice: People would know, it would be like 'oh she's just clumsy' they'd be like, people would actually know how it's affecting me and possibly be able to help with strategies and stuff or just giving me a bit of extra time like I said would be so helpful

R: Yes

Alice: cos I think that's really key thing to me, once I can…with dyspraxia cos I find everything like you know organisation, spatial awareness, concentration, er doing things the right way…if I had more time so it was less rushed I could do a much better job

R: Yeah

Alice: erm so definitely time for like helping out as well.

R: and is there a good…I know you said they don't seem to be that supportive, but is there a certain teacher that's in charge of the support you could be given that you could talk to?

Alice: I'm not really sure if they've got one, I think it's just the teacher of that subject really. Possibly we have a thing called student services but that's just for letters and things that you hand in, nothing that I'm really aware of that you can go for advice I think it's like your parents have to contact in, it's not that easy to access…

P: support

Alice: yeah to access support, I think like you said there should be a [inaudible] for people with dyslexia and dyspraxia so they can go there and people actually know what dyspraxia is and you can get help from people, I think there's no point having help if people don't know what some of the things are but I think it would be great to have a section where you can come and get help and like 'oh so what do you want?' and be like 'oh I need a bit more time', 'ok we'll look into this for you'

R: Yeah

Alice: so it's just a bit less pressure especially around GCSE time

R: and also it'd be one person you'd have to explain to not everybody

Alice: Every single teacher. And like information always gets lots I think it's probably like cos it's not that important do you know what I mean? Just don't…I don't know if they deliberately do that but a lot of times it hasn't been passed on and you know things like dyslexia are considered bigger issues seem to be passed on from teacher to teacher, like I just don't think it really gets there or I don't know like the teacher doesn't understand or doesn't say anything about it, but yeah.

R: do you know anyone else at your school that's got dyspraxia?

Alice: I don't actually. Is it quite common?

R: it's quite common, erm, there's different studies but roughly about 6% of the population, between 6 and 10% of the population, so really there could be a child in every class but obviously it never works out like that does it, but erm of course a lot of children haven't been diagnosed with it and stuff like that, so but yeah I wondered whether…

Alice: they might not know.

R: yeah they might not know, or erm I mean if there isn't anywhere within the school…you might not sort of it's not something you'd go round saying 'I've got dyspraxia have you got dyspraxia' so you know

Alice: yeah hello any other dyspraxia [laughs]

R: But yeah I wondered weather, do you know anyone outside of school that's got dyspraxia?

Alice: No.

R: Would it be helpful do you think?

Alice: I think it's good, like I said when I went to that support group that felt like oh I'm not alone all these other people are going through it and stuff. I think if they were going to do groups at school it would be good to find people who had the same thing so people could relate to each other and I think once you're talking about things like that then they can maybe come up with ideas to help in schools and stuff but I definitely think it needs to be more recognised.

R: yeah. And how was it having time off over Christmas?

Alice: yeah that was really good, I do enjoy time off I can sort of relax and destress from school and like more time to do things as I pointed out many times, get things done slowly and relax.

R: So you find school quite stressful really?

Alice: yeah I do and I guess it's quite nerve racking with GCSE's coming up, it all seems to be going so quickly, I was just in year 5.

R: yeah it does go very quickly

Alice: yeah you start year 3 and then it's like year 4 yeah I'm in upper school now, year 6 soon, year 6, year 7, year 9, year 11 it sort of jumps years really quickly.

R: yeah and how do you think you're doing at school do you think grade-wise you're doing as…

Alice: I think I’m doing ok, things like Maths I really struggle, and things like textiles, I feel like it really does affect my concentration I think that’s a really big thing, at first I thought…this is gonna sound really dramatic….but I thought I could possibly have something like ADHD where I just feel….but I think I’m fairly motivated to do things that’s not one of the things, but I do really find it hard to concentrate to take information in, I just get a bit all overwhelmed and zone out and find it hard to learn really, which isn’t great at school.

R: Well it makes it harder doesn’t it?

Alice: Yeah it does make it definitely more difficult.

R: Well, I have kept you quite long enough….an hour and fifteen minutes, I would love to keep chatting, it’s been really interesting talking to you actually and we can meet up again and talk if you’ve got more things, but if you think of anything in between times and think ‘oh I should have told her that’

Alice: I’ll get my mum to email you

R: yeah send me an email and actually I don’t live very far so you know we can meet up and have a chat again. Is there anything else you thought of or want to add?

Alice: Not necessarily that I can think of, erm…maybe in year 4 I felt the teachers were sort of quite grumpy to…sort of people…they just don’t understand the information isn’t passed on, they’re like ‘why aren’t you trying, why aren’t you concentrating’ and I think it’s a big learning barrier as well because I find it really hard to concentrate and no one really thinks of that as one of the things, that’s just a bit clumsy, but concentrating is actually really hard for me, especially like revising and stuff so I think I’d like that to be more recognised.

R: yes and it doesn’t help when they don’t recognise it because that makes you feel…

Alice: Oh god it's not important, you know, but it is if I can't learn.

R: yes. When you're learning at home and you say you've got more time, do you find….cos I'm just wondering whether taking regular breaks would be better?

Alice: yeah I do that I do take regular breaks, cos I find it hard to do everything in one go I get really tired and it's really, I find it hard to revise especially if you've got, it always happens to me we end up having all our tests on the same week….nothing for ages then homework, tests and big projects due all on the same week so I have to take loads of breaks and then start again, but it's quite hard when you're just doing work you kind of want to do other things as well. You kind of do want to have a life outside school, especially in winter it's like so dark in the morning and you get out and it's light at school and then it's dark again, it's like there's no day apart from school. Its hell.

R: Yeah that makes it very difficult.

Alice: Anyway that's it really.

R: Ok well thank you for talking to me cos I think it really is important like you say there does need to be more understanding and I think one of the things I hope to do at the end of the PhD is to put together a little booklet for teachers and just say this is what dyspraxia is and this is what children…

Alice: send some to my school

R: Yes. I go and do talks to various teachers and things like that so slowly…

Alice: Especially CDT teachers and textiles

R: Yeah there are certain teachers that it even more so…

Alice: Effects more, especially I think they're all caught up in their own little world of sewing and people can just sort of sew, it's just something you do, learn how to do it and it’s like I can’t do it, it’s not me being lazy you know they just need to understand that. Possibly even like in Maths and Science I find it hard to concentrate, cos it’s very hard core subjects as well so I think it’s great that you’re going to talk to teachers about it.

R: Well science is one isn’t it, it can be really interesting but there’s really different concepts that you’ve not really heard of before so there’s a lot to kind of take it.

Alice: Yeah [inaudible]

R: yeah well I will send you a copy once I’ve typed it up, it takes a long time, but at the end of the PhD I’d like to make booklet so I’ll send you a copy

Alice: Yeah, good luck.

R: yeah thank you. Thank you for talking to me as well.

Mum: [Mum enters the room] Hi ya, how are you doing?

R: Good, I was just saying we’ve been talking for hours

Mum: Yeah it’s great

R: I think we’ve talked about quite a lot haven’t we?

Alice: Yeah.

R: I’ve said if there’s anything you want to add then you can email me or phone me

Mum: did you enjoy it? [asks Alice]

Alice: Yeah.

R: It’s really helpful.

Mum: It’s amazing hearing Alice voice her feelings as well actually for me.

R: mmmm and I think a lot of the time for parents, a lot of the parents, it’s actually to hear from their child cos quite often you’ve got your own feelings as a parent and I think sort of you know getting, it’d be quite good…I was saying to

Alice at the end of the PhD I'll make a booklet that I'll send round to schools with a bit of this is what dyspraxia actually is and this is what children saying cos I think it's really important that….. something that could be sent out

Mum: Something concrete, so amazing that doesn't exist isn't it.

R: I know

Mum: I think it's really interesting in schools, I'm sure there's masses in their training but there is there then it's gone, and I'm sure there's so much pressure on teachers and different SEN's that there's a lot to manage to deal with but it seems to me that some of those that might appear less serious on the outset have a lot of internal….you know it's very difficult for the children I think to manage.

R: You were saying there were certain subjects you felt that it would be even more important to tell the teachers subjects like CDT and textiles that actually the ones where it's really…

Mum: second nature

R: yeah to say this doesn't always come naturally to people and you know strategies that could help and yeah

Mum: I suppose there's issues with you know some kids that won't be well behaved in the lesson and so the kids who are struggling with it and then maybe teachers seen that as a behavioural issues rather than you know…

R: Yes rather than trying to understand it

Alice: yeah I think that's it, I do think sometimes they can think you're being a bit lazy when actually I'm trying really hard

R: yes I don't think they appreciate the….

Alice: Yeah

R: the effort

Mum: the effort yeah, she works so hard on her homework, I’m mean really it’s brilliant some of the stuff that you’ve produced.

Alice: I did that massive map didn’t I?

Mum: Can I show?

Alice: What?

Mum: Your map?

Alice: Yeah, you’ve got it.

Mum: I’ve got it, I know exactly where it is, can I show it?

Alice: Yeah

Mum: [gets up to leave room] Tell her about your Art project, sorry you were going to go

R: no that’s fine

Alice: No we had to do erm for Art project we had to do, like I said the Greyson Perry thing, we had about identity we had to do a map and stuff and I spent loads of time on it

Mum: [Mum re-enters the room] you explain it [mum brings the map in and shows me]

Alice: there’s all different things, so that’s about feelings and things like that really

R: I love that it’s great. So is this about your feelings and what you do?

Alice: Yeah and it’s like feelings, emotions [inaudible] the past, the present, history, identify, confusion

R: this is your dog? [points to part of the map]

Alice: Yeah

R: My dog does that [laughs]. That’s fantastic.

Mum: But you took so much time over that and you put your heart and soul into it and you can see the work and I think some people just dash something off and just hand it in.

Alice: That's neat writing too cos Id taken a long time on it.

R: That's brilliant

Mum: boasting parent but yeah

R: No you should definitely be boasting parent with that. You've done amazingly well

Alice: I'm just proud cos I found it really hard.

Mum: So much effort goes into the writing and drawing and creating the homework and she's very diligent and I think it's amazing really.

R: yeah and that just needs to be recognised more I think because like you say for some kids they can just

Mum: Dash off an essay or whatever

R: yeah

Mum: writing it under their desk half of them aren't they, you know I'm sure lots of people are, were at my school you know, everyone just quickly getting it done.

Alice: Yeah I definitely think you need to define between people who are trying and people who are just not doing it

R: yes and you certainly need to recognise that effort in trying it helps the confidence to try again next time doesn't it?

Mum: definitely

Alice: Also what I was going to say was a teacher I had was from South Africa, so I'm not sure it was necessarily taught in the UK or if it was more in other countries that it was recognised

Mum: yes the reason she was spotting stuff was that her brother was dyslexic and erm but he hadn't been diagnosed until he was 17 and she said it was really problematic at his school so she was much more aware of issues than a lot of other teachers and she had experience of it so she could recognise it.

R: and that was the year 3 teacher?

Mum: yeah it was great.

R: Yeah, that's good. Well thank you so much for speaking with me today, it's been really helpful.

Appendix N: PhD-5 (Iz) Zara Interview transcript

(R: = researcher Zara: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Participant was interviewed via skype at the participants request. She had her mum with her during the interview at her request)

R:.… so thank you for Skyping with me. I'm actually sat in a room – it's very private. I'm all locked into this room, so everything you say is confidential. But you might be able to see the University outside the window, behind me (laughs) … so hmm. But anybody walking past they can't hear this – big windows here. So yeah, so you're Zara, I take it,

Zara: Yes, hi

R: Hi

Zara: Hi

R: So you just got in from school?

Zara: Yeah.

R: OK. Well thank you for agreeing to talk to me. Mmm, especially when you've just got in. Did you get the consent forms through and everything?

Zara: I have done, yes.

R: OK

Mum: Fine, I've read through them. Obviously I haven't signed them. I mean I can download them and scan them.

R: Yeah, that would be great if you can at some point. But mmm, I mean obviously you can just, for now, verbally, tell me that you are happy to take part. Shall I tell you a bit about the research?

Zara: OK, yeah.

R: Yeah. So, I'm talking to children who have Dyspraxia to find out what their experiences are, mmm particularly within schools as school can be quite a tough place mmm for kids with Dyspraxia (tough place for any kid really) but particularly for kids with Dyspraxia. And a lot of the research that there is, sort of focusses on professionals' points of view … mmm .. and doesn't really think about, or doesn't look at children's perspectives of it; and doesn't really focus on how it sort of impacts in the school environment and education. So I'm sort of looking to hear from children from what their point of view is, and particularly how it is in schools for them. So yeah, so I've been doing some interviews with other children at secondary school level age … mmmm really informal – just more like a discussion really so you get a chance to tell me what it's like and things like that. But if at any point you don't want to answer any questions or you want to stop, or you've had enough then you can just say so, and that's fine. And then the only other thing really is so that I can remember what you've said afterwards, rather than just taking loads of notes while we're talking, I use this little device here [lifts up device] – which is just a Dictaphone – so it records us talking, but only I hear that. And it's just so that after doing this talking I can remember what you've said when I'm you know, doing the research, and everything. And then that gets destroyed so I'm the only one who hears it. And anything that I write up, your name will be changed; any identifying features, like if you say the name of the school or you say your mum's name or anything, anything like that will be changed. So yeah, I sort of make up a name for you so that nobody can identify it was you so that everything that you say is confidential, mmmm yeah. So have you got any questions about the research?

Mum: Is it a research project or are you doing a PhD or?

R: It's a PhD. Yeah, so I'll be talking to about 10 children and doing interviews with them and then analysing all that data, seeing what the similarities are between all of you and what the differences are and what the key points are, of the things that are important to you. So it might be things that are difficult at school but also things that are really good about having Dyspraxia, for example. So, yeah!

Zara: OK (laughing)

R: OK so if you could sign, there's a consent form for both you – one for your mum and one for you. If you could sign those - that's just to say I haven't forced you to talk to me, or anything like that – that you've understood, you know, what the research is about, and everything. But if you could send those back that would just be really good, because I have to have a copy for everybody. But yeah, I'm assuming that you're happy to continue talking to me. So as long as you're happy to continue talking and know that you can stop at any point, that's fine. So, you're 14 now?

Zara: Yeah, I'm 14.

R:14, and do you remember how old you were when you were diagnosed with Dyspraxia.

Zara: 5? 5 yeah.

R: Ok, so that's quite a long time ago. Do you remember what it was like before you were diagnosed?

Zara: Not really, but I think I was feeling quite frustrated I guess,

R: Right.

Zara: We had this reading [exercise] where we had to read in Reception Class – increasing where we had words and we had to write them out. And I could read them but I couldn't write them out and for me that was really frustrating cos I knew exactly what they meant and how they were spelt.

R: Right – and it was the actual physical writing that was the difficult bit?

Zara: yeah.

R: Do you remember having the assessments at all?

Zara: Not really no …

R: Mmm it was quite a young age to remember back to

Zara: Yeah.

R: mmm ... how about afterwards, do you think it made a difference? I mean you can't remember being diagnosed but do you think in those years afterwards where you can remember back to, do you think it made a difference where you've had a diagnosis?

Zara: Yes, it gave me something to understand, but I don't really think … in some of the school, cosit was only a tiny Primary School, they didn't really exactly know what to do.

R: Right.

Zara: I had one really, really good teacher in Year 1 and 2, then after that I had … yeah, just no-one really knew what to do.

R: What made them really good, the teachers in Year 1 and Year 2?

Zara: mmmm the teacher … mmmm .. she was the only one who picked up on it … mmmm ... and I think she pretty much figured everything out – she used to help me write stuff or give me a teaching assistant to help me, give me more time to do stuff.

R: Right

Zara: But I don't really, to be honest I don't ...

Mum: I think….she was an older lady who retired – she seemed to be understanding of the condition and she appreciated that because ... one of the things we didn't understand that when Zara was in Reception Class, she's still a little bit prone to emotional outbursts, when she was in Reception Class she cried virtually every day.

R: Right

Mum: she wasn't unhappy, but she was obviously frustrated – we didn't know why at that stage, erm but when we moved into Year 1 & 2 and she had this teacher, cos it was a…erm…what do you call it, a mixed year class, it seemed that…and some of the things that we didn't understand; like Zara's always been a phenomenal reader, but she couldn't produce some words and some of the things that she used to get frustrated about playing games and getting dressed at that stage.

Zara: Yeah

Mum: … she really struggled to do buttons, things like that.

Zara: Mmmm [in agreement]

Mum: Became … I think they became more tuned in to it. But as she went up the School

Zara: They got a new headmaster

Mum: … got a new headmaster and the teachers, well particularly the one in Year 5 and Year 6 were very unsympathetic, and I think the thing was, to them Zara was going to get her …

Zara: SATS

Mum: .. Level 4 SATS, so their sort of thing was she's going to be OK, she's going to tick the boxes for us, she's going to get her SATS.

Zara: So we don't need to bother [sarcasm].

Mum: So we don’t need to bother

Zara: a bit crushing

Mum: and we don’t really know what to do with her!

Zara: tell that to a nine year old girl and that was a bit crushing [laughs]

R: Yes that is, yeah … was it just, because you said you had difficulty with the handwriting things, was it just that, that you found difficult cos you talked quite a bit about being frustrated, were there other things that you found difficult?

Zara: PE was always a bit of a nightmare. I couldn’t really … I’m really not coordinated and also I’m quite short as well [laughter] so the combination yeah [laughs] so you’re not exactly going to do brilliantly, because I remember there was just a lot – well there seemed to be just, well I couldn’t really catch the ball or anything, and I couldn’t…. I’d trip over running and stuff

Mum: Arts & Crafts

Zara: Arts & Crafts……I liked arts and crafts I just wasn’t very good at it, scissors, cutting out shapes –

Mum: Scissors you had a real

Zara: yeah scissors I took about three years to actually figure out how to use them [laughter] but they were….yeah, they were horrendous….scissors

R: Right!

Zara: And they used to all go wonky and not really sit right.

R: Yeah, but you said you liked Arts & Crafts….so what was it, the physical part of it – doing the scissors was obviously quite difficult? But….

Mum: the work that she produced would be that immature for her age, it would be very basic.

Zara: Yeah but I quite liked doing it

Mum: But you like doing that

R: and so in your head were you creating something did it come out how you expected it to or was that part of the frustration? In your head it would be different but…..

Zara: Yep yep

R: Right, yeah that must be quite frustrating and with the PE thing you've got the whole issue of getting undressed and dressed as well as actually playing the sports whatever that might be?

Zara: Yeah

R: Yeah, so where the teachers the PE teachers, were they understanding or did they not ...

Mum: Well they used to have…..at primary school they used to have the same teacher for everybody

R: Right

Mum: But experiences at secondary school have been quite a lot different, haven't they?

Zara: Yeah secondary school, before I get to year 9 nobody would really care they how good you were at PE

Mum: No but I think the teachers were better

Zara: better

Mum: Our experience of her secondary school is miles better than the primary school in terms of ...

Zara: Well my last sort of 4 years primary school aren't they? Yeah

R: And do you have a statement of education for your dyspraxia or anything like that?

Mum: No. Shes not statemented it's a…….

R: individual education plan or or something like that?

Mum: Yeah

R: IEP?

Mum: Erm, so she’s not statemented or anything but she’s got extra time for exams

Zara: extra time and a netbook

Mum: and use of a netbook

Zara: Yeah

R: Right ok, so how is having a netbook? Is that one that they have at school or are you allowed to bring your one in?

Zara: erm I was allowed to bring my one in but it's just a bit difficult, so I just started using one at school and that's a lot easier because … because in Year 7 they taught me to touch type.

R: Ok

Zara: They thought that that would be good for me and that actually really works because I couldn't think and get my words down a lot sort of normal – whereas writing I have lots of ideas but couldn't quite get them down and for me that was really quite frustrating

R: mmm

Mum: Read it

Zara: [laughs] yeah I can read it

R: But it's easier now you’ve learned to touch type and you have the netbook?

Zara: Yeah

R: Brilliant! And do other people at school use the net books or is it just sort of one or two of you?

Zara: Erm, people usually use netbooks in Labs and stuff but because I'm in one of the top sets I don't really … I'm really … when I first started using it, I used to get quite a lot of questions, but now people don't really care [laughter] particularly [laughing].

Mum: Well they either know you don’t they?

Zara: They either know me or just don't question it.

R: Yeah and how was that when they did question it? Were you fussed by that?

Zara: It was ok to start with, when….. but when you have lots of people asking it got a bit annoying but I found out I wasn’t really bothered because……

Mum: Well a lot of people thought that dyspraxia was the same as Dyslexia

Zara: Dyslexia yeah and they were like oh, so can't you read and stuff and I was like ‘no I can read I just can't type’ and for them that was sort of ... I guess they didn’t really know I guess, people don’t know.

R: No. And …. and was that your friends that didn't know or was that the teachers as well that would muddle it up?

Zara: I think teachers knew…erm….I suppose I’ve had teachers that were more effective about it than others but erm friends I guess, I just told them because there was a couple of us who went from primary school to secondary school together and we all stayed quite close. And then there were sort of more people I got to know and they’re my quite close friends now erm I just told them, they didn't question it but I just told them when I felt

R: Yeah and are they quite supportive, your friends?

Zara: Yeah they kind if understand it’s frustrating for me but they don’t….yeah they understand its frustrating and they're always nice to me and stuff and they kind of help me when I have a bit of an emotional outburst and stuff.

R: that's quite nice to have a good support network at school yeah. And was that the same when you were in primary school, did you feel that your friends kind of supported you or understood it?

Zara: I think when you're sort of 7, 8, 9 you don't really …. know exactly and I didn't really know what it was, I know I had this thing I guess….. I don't really understand it until I was about 9 or 10 so I don't think they really understood it at primary school but they….then we figured it…then kind of found out in year 6 didn't they cos I had to go to a different room to do my SATs and …..

Mum: yeah I think they were a bit more worldly wise, your peers

Zara: Yeah I think they were a bit more understanding

Mum: I think one of the things going to secondary school that's really, really good, is the learning support department at your school is really really excellent

Zara: Yeah they are they're really good

Mum: whereas her primary school they were like 'oh we don't know what to do' as soon as we knew [inaudible] before she started the lady from the head of special learning support asked me to go and have a chat to her and they got all the papers about Zara and they were very sort of proactive and they did quite a lot of tests when you first started, they got you to touch type but they've also got a system where each subject has a register and there's sort of a page behind it for any children in that class who have got any special needs and then it will flag up what sort of Dyspraxia Zara's got, what helps she needs, what might happen to her, I kind of think that's….I think most of your teachers have been quite….. [Skype cuts out for a bit here] so our experience of secondary school has been a lot more positive than primary.

R: And how was the transition? You said that you went up into secondary school with a couple of friends but how was that transition going from primary to secondary?

Zara: I don't think it really phased me, because I can get quite nervous but for me I wasn't really that worried, 8 people in our year ended up going to the school out of 15 and 2 others ended up in my class and then one of my best friends was sort of in the next class…down I think or up… so I still had a few friends….but I guess I can talk to people and stuff, one of the things, one of the first thing I thought was I'm going to … join lots of clubs so I signed up to like four clubs in the first week and then I met loads of other people with similar interests…..so even though they're in different years and stuff, there's a group of people in writing club, history and people who go to the library. And then I got to know more people like one of my best friends was someone I don't didn't really like at first cos I thought….my best friend I thought she was a know-it-all to start [laughing] and I didn't really like her, but then in February we basically got dumped together in a drama project and I thought ‘oh God’ and then actually we turned out to be really similar [laughs]

R: Right. So you made it really….it was really easy for you to make friends then?

Zara: Yeah!

R: It didn't phase you?

Zara: No.

R: That's really good, that's really good. So what would you say your favourite subjects are at secondary school?

Zara: Erm, English, History and Drama are probably my favourite three. But I like all of them I think, aside from PE ... there's not one I think I hate this every week.

Mum: You’re not keen on science.

Zara: yeah, I'm not keen on science, but I don't hate it….but English, History and Drama are probably my favourites yeah.

R: Ok and erm it seems like a silly question, but you say you know you don't particularly like PE, what is it about PE that you don't particularly like? I mean, I can imagine what it might be, but what is it that you don't like about PE?

Zara: Right, I'm not particularly sporty, I don’t…I'm not really coordinated….I just … I just don't like it as well, I find it a bit boring just running after something [laughs] I mean, there is achievement in the end, but I just, I don’t, I just don't enjoy it I guess.

R: Yeah, ok

Zara: I just think it’s a bit pointless.

R: and do you do anything erm you know like swimming or running or is there anything that you do outside of school sports-wise?

Zara: No

Mum: Well you do…well Zara’s really big into Guides,

Zara: Yeah Girl Guiding

Mum: You do things with them, don’t you? .

Zara: Yeah

Mum: You’ve done all sorts of things….

Zara: We’ve done extreme sports and all stuff

Mum: like extreme trampolining and erm…

Zara: rock climbing and stuff like that, yeah I quite like that

Mum: Sailing

Zara: yeah with the Guides. But yeah apart from that I probably wouldn’t do that much sport out of school.

R: Yeah, but you quite like ... I'm terrified of heights…..but you quite like the rock climbing?
Zara: Yeah, I love it personally, everyone thinks I'm a bit weird but I do really…
Mum: you did a bungee jump
Zara: yeah I did a bungee jump recently
R: oh wow!
Mum: Which terrified me, the thought of it, I didn’t know
Zara: Yeah, my mum didn't know I was doing it until I came back a week later from camp and I was like “guess what? I did a bungee jump!” [laughter].
R: It’s probably best you’re mum didn’t know at the time otherwise she’d be stressing out [laughs]. Yeah I did a bungee jump once and you had to go up in a crane and it was in this car park and we went up in the crane and I just clung to the sides of the crane and they were going ‘right just jump’ and I was going ‘no, no , I’m not doing it’ and they were trying to push me off and I wouldn’t let go so they had to bring me back down in the crane [laughs] so yeah I would have been no good at that. So you really enjoy Guides, have you got any other hobbies outside of school?
Zara: Erm… I like Creative writing, I really do I… think I'm quite an imaginative person so I write stories a lot of the time…erm… I write very long stories and I come up with this little world in my head and then imagine it all - it's like it's real, I guess [giggles] for me it's a lot more of an escape..
R: So the creative writing thing is a form of escape?
Zara: Yeah, for me it is.
R: Right and do you do that on a… do you have a laptop at home as well that you do….?

Zara: I have my own laptop in my room and I am writing a story …it's over the school account but I'm connected to it over the Cloud, our school Cloud, so we type it and erm….so yes I type it and then I go back and edit it at school or do some more typing when I'm going to writing club on a Wednesday. Like I said so it's my escape - for me it's seems a lot nicer in the world I create. It's a lot less annoying things……[sighs]

R: Right, and do you write stories about yourself? Are you the character in your stories or …?

Zara: I take elements of myself … but I don't basically base it a lot 100% on myself quite a lot of it, the story I'm writing at the moment... the girl is kind of like me; she's a bit of an outsider but she's….I think she's a lot sort of braver and stronger and a bit….[laughs] yeah.

R: yeah

Zara: I mean yeah, I don't…. I take elements of myself but I don't…I don't base everything in the story on one character, like I'll take elements of one person and put them in different places or one thing and put them in different places.

R: mmm but it's quite a nice way isn't it of creating…. like you said it's a lot nicer in your stories than it is, erm you know, maybe outside of the stories and it … yeah it must be quite nice to sort of create that….that sort of space in your story, which is how, maybe, how you'd like it to be?

Zara: Yeah

R: it's quite nice when you read books and stuff to sort of immerse yourself in a different environment.

Zara: Yeah.

R: And do you…. so you do that over your online account with school

Zara: yeah

R: and do some more in your writing club but is that part of your school work or is that just for enjoyment?

Zara: Oh no that’s just what I want to do in my spare time. Because … I…we did this story writing project in Year 7 … at school and [mutters] well I started writing club in year 7 and then I….we had this story writing project in year 7 in English and then I really liked it so I just continued writing in my own time….

R: Right, right

Zara: as well as doing it in writing club

Mum: And I think you won a competition …

Zara: yeah I did have a…..won a competition as well and that was nice ..

R: Oh wow!

Mum: 250 words or something?

Zara: A hundred,

Mum: A hundred, sorry…

R: Brilliant! And what year was that in?

Zara: It was the end of Year 7/ Year 8 yeah – I wrote it at the end of Year 7 and then I found out I won in the beginning of Year 8.

R: oh wow! That must be really nice.

Zara: yeah.

R: do you find sometimes….cos you’ve talked about feeling frustrated, do you find that at those times when you are really frustrated that you write more, or you feel like you want to write more?

Zara: If I’m annoyed or angry or something I’ll just write stuff in a notebook and I’ll go back to it, and then I’ll type it back up, more evidence of it of when I’m feeling good, or annoyed or angry.

R: that’s a really good strategy …

Zara: yeah, or … or I'll just think of stuff in my head, and keep it there until…. like if I have a bit of a brainwave.

R: mmmm - and do you erm you know when you're in lessons, you've said that you enjoy most lessons, other than PE, do you find that you have issues with concentrating in lessons…erm.. I mean you've got the touch typing now so, handwriting is less of an issue, but do you find that you have any other issues in lessons?

Zara: no

Mum: Yeah more practical

Zara: Practical things like in Food Tech and Science, can be a bit hard for me because I can't really …like if it's science and I can't really focus on doing lots of different things at the same time and quite a lot of the equipment's fiddly and stuff, but asides from that, I don't really think I struggle in lessons particularly.

Mum: no it's anything that involves, mmm, drawing, so things that involve drawing, so things that draw graphs or erm if sometimes…. it's not so much now but, sort of particularly year 7 and 8 in Humanities you used to get these big sheets, and you used to have to fill in things in boxes, and they'd have arrows and things and you'd really struggle to….sometimes to….. because you would either not be able to not be able to put…

Zara & mum [together]: …all the information in the box

Mum: or it was quite hard for you to make you look neat enough to…. make you … saying what this flow chart would do.

R: mmm

Mum: but it's a bit of maths isn't it? Where, they have this horrible thing in maths, don't you, where you have to do … rotate…shapes

Zara: transformations so you can shapes to rotate them and flip them and move
them along graphs by certain vertices …

R: right.

Zara: yeah, those are the bits that I don't like, I think.

Mum: I think cookery …you

Zara: yeah cookery

Mum: Cookery or food tech…..you enjoy it…..

Zara: [laughs] yeah, it doesn't look exactly like it's supposed to, but I do enjoy it -
and it tastes nice!

ALL: [laugh]

Zara: [laughs again] … even if it doesn't look brilliant!

R: [laughing] … so ehhh, have you got any strategies with the erm … cos
they do give out in schools a lot those sheets, I know the ones you're talking
about where they you know they'll have the topic and then there's lots of boxes
and the boxes never seem big enough.

Zara:– yeah they're all about that big, aren't they? They're like 'fill about six lines
in the box' that you can only fit about two in!

R: Yeah, exactly. And of course because they're printed sheets it's harder
to sort of do that on a Word Processor, you know on a laptop. Have you found
any ways of dealing with that, or do you just …?

Zara: I just … we don't really get an hour in the Upper School, but in Lower -
when I was in Year 7 or 8, I just used to do headlines, like bullet…. bold headlines
and then link everything going under it, instead of… typing it… and then I still
don't like graphs and sheets particularly as much though.

R: yeah

Zara: I find it easier to have it written there.

R: Yeah, Yeah that makes sense. And do you think with things like that do you think your teachers….did they listen if you sort of said 'look I find that really hard?' Or if you found a different way of approaching a piece of work like that where you'd put the bullet points and put everything underneath and link it? Do you think that they … were they understanding about that and kind of accepted that as a way of working?

Zara: yeah they just, I think, they kind of accepted that it was the way I wanted to do it.

Mum: yeah the maths one

Zara: yeah the maths one…. maths has been a bit up and down.

Mum: I didn't think that some of the comments that Zara got were particularly helpful. Yeah, you seem to get a lot of stuff that.. 'this is messy' or 'untidy' or … like this. It wasn't for the want of being like that, it was just you used to get those and .. that was a bit … Oh! That was a bit upsetting for you, wasn't it?

Zara: [laughs] yes well 'I'm trying though!'

R: Yes, and did you ever say to them, you know, 'I am trying'?

Zara: Erm well it was mostly written wasn't it just sort of in….

Mum: Well I did used to…. I didn't see the maths teacher specifically, but I did bring it up when I used to….cos I have a sort of termly or every one and a half terms meeting with learning support staff at school and so it was one of things they used to bring up and they did speak to teachers and we did get you a bigger size maths book.

Zara: big maths book, bigger squares… so it's easier for me.

R: right, that's good. So generally they've been quite supportive, the learning support team?

Zara: yeah

Mum: the learning support team's good

Zara: the learning support been brilliant, yeah.

Mum: cos the other is Zara would get emotional

Zara: emotional yeah, and they used to take me to see the emotional support person

Mum: Which I think is a manifestation of frustration …

Zara: Stress

Mum: And which, as far as exams go, you'd get extremely stressed [inaudible] and ah, sometimes you used to get upset in class and you can't sort of stop being upset.

Zara: No.

Mum: [sort of nervous laugh]

Zara: So, I'd see them and I'd sort of calm down, breathe …

Mum: [sort of nervous laughs]

R: And what do they, when you go to see them when you were stressed and upset, what is it that they do, that helps you to calm down and breathe?

Zara: erm, I don't really know [nervous laugh]

R: you don't have to know [reassuring]

Mum: I think they're very sympathetic, aren't they? I think they get to … breathe to take you mind of it and to try and put that to one side.

R: oh have I made you upset?

Zara: No it's fine [crying]

R: Oh I'm sorry!

Mum: It's alright no, she gets like this, it's alright, I'll get you some tissues anyway …

[little break where Zara composes herself and her mum gets tissues]

Zara: So…yeah I'm fine.

R: You ok?

Zara: Yeah.

R: It's fine to be upset, don't worry about me, I just don't want to make you upset…so if you want to change the topic or anything then you know please do….erm….yeah is there anything you wanted to tell me about how you're feeling or did you want to change to something else? Maybe tell me something good about….

Zara: I don't…..

R: You don't know….that's fine [reassuring]

Mum: Well I'm always tremendously proud of Zara cos I think whatever she does, and whatever she achieves, I always think she has to work that bit harder than everybody else for it and erm she's very very conscientious at working, aren't you? Works extremely hard…despite the fact that you do get upset in things like exams, you've done really well haven't you, she's already got her German GCSE, haven't you?

R: oh wow! Gosh, that's impressive. So at your school do you take….erm…I know at my son's school they do erm an ICT GCSE in Year 9, so did you do your German one in Year 9?

Zara: I did my German one in Year 9 and I did my ICT one, ah, last week.

R: ok!

Zara: And I'm also sitting Science 1 (the first Science GCSE) this year and one half of R.E. this year.

R: wow! And how many GCSEs are you taking? When you choose your options, what options did you choose?

Zara: Er….History, Drama, er….Food Tech and R.E.

R: Ok

Mum: At her school they used to have to do a Tech subject and her sister is two years younger and doesn't have to do that now.

R: Right

Mum: But they were a legacy of an old Technology College so they used to have to do a tech subject.

Zara: Then it became an academy, didn't we? And it changed it …

Mum: Changed to the Government's draft school…..whatever. You don't have to – you were the last year that well – the penultimate year to do a Tech subject, weren't you.

Zara: Yeah and the penultimate year to sit all the languages GCSE's early as well.

R: yeah, that's quite early to sit a GCSE in a language, isn't it?

Zara: Yeah, I didn't like doing it [laughs] at all!

Mum: Well there was the orals….

Zara: Orals were …

Mum: The orals were the bit you found really difficult.

Zara: Writing I didn't like as well. I used to have to ... I had to write that one out….they said you can't use a netbook you're going to have to write yourself.

R: Right, why did they say that?

Zara: Because they can't … because if they changed the language to German, it will go on autocorrect, but if you leave it in English it will learn to basically underline in red every single word and then correct it and it just took forever to go back and change and you then correct it again…so they were like….

Mum: And there were problems with capital letters in the middle of sentences as well…weird fonts would turn up.

R: yeah, oh god that is hard. Are you going to be able to use the netbook in the exams – in the other exams?

Zara: yeah, I've done my ICT one…. I just sat two Chemistry mocks and I used my netbook in all of them.

R: Brilliant, that's really important isn't it because if that's your way of working and that's how you can get…like you said…get your ideas down on paper, it's much easier with the netbook. It's really important that you have that during the exams. Yeah. I guess with the erm technology, trying to change the languages on these computers yeah must have been a bit of an issue, but it's a shame they couldn't sort that out.

Zara: No, well it was sort of the first German exams I sat sort of coursework ones were in Year 8… I'd only just got my netbook, and it was just a bit ….uhhh… I wasn't really sure how to work, and the teachers were unsure, because I'd never worked with a netbook before.

Mum: it was languages….

Zara: yeah!

R: yeah, so was German the only language that you learnt or did you do French as well, or …?

Zara: I did French at Primary School but, I moved to German because I had to. Given the choice I probably wouldn't have sat a language.

R: Yeah

Zara: Yeah

Mum: you had to do one didn't you?

Zara: You had to do one

Mum: and they've got this strange system at school where every other year they only do French, or German, and this year they had to do German.

Zara: Had to do German. So I basically wasted 4 years of Primary School [laughs].

Mum: you just had to do German.

Zara: yeah.

R: yeah that's a shame.

Mum: you could do the other one was an option, but you didn't want to.

Zara: no, I didn't want to take another one!

R: No, doing one language seems quite enough, doesn't it?

R: Yeah, at my son's school they do French & Spanish. But they do it every year but half the year do French, half the year do Spanish. Which never really erm…. Yeah you can take Spanish as well, but he always wanted to take Spanish and he got put in the French side and so he didn't enjoy French either. It would have been nice if there's a choice, but yeah. Erm, and what would you say….. you know we've talked quite a bit about things that you find difficult, and that's always quite hard to sort of, remember those things. But what would you say were your strengths, I mean you talked quite a bit about your creative writing and how you really enjoy that. If you had to list to someone, you know, 'my strengths are'; 'I'm really good at', what would you say?

Zara: I have quite a good memory, I seem to remember a lot … of stuff.

R: right

Zara: Some people seem to struggle with short term memory, I can just remember things really quickly.

R: right

Mum: I think, the first thing about Zara, it’s a little bit of a … forgotten the word now …. not dilemma, I know she gets quite emotional, she’s very good at, she doesn’t mind standing up and talking infront of people. Erm….we went to a Guide evening, at a Guide meeting last week, and she had to do a presentation

Zara: a presentation

Mum: And you were quite happy to stand up, even though it was in front of 30 people and talk. Erm, you’re very confident about talking, particularly to adults, if she goes into a room and she doesn’t know people, she’s quite happy to talk to people.

Zara: Yeah.

Mum: Erm, whereas you know, sometimes, I think children shy away talking to adults. In fact actually to be honest, she’s better at getting on with adults …

Zara: than I am with children [laughs a little]

Mum: your peers, aren’t you? The other thing is she’s quite plucky, in that she’ll put herself forward. The Guide thing, she went to Switzerland with Guides this summer and last summer…and this coming summer she’s going to this Guide….

Zara: Guide Festival

Mum: Guide jamboree in Finland, she’s one 16 for the South West of England going, aren’t you?

R: oh wow!

Mum: you went to a selection weekend and all sorts for that!

Zara: Yeah

Mum: so in that sense you’re quite confident and outgoing

Zara: Yeah

Mum: you don’t mind going away

Zara: No.

Mum: and trying new experiences in that sense.

Zara: Yeah

R: and trying new things? How long have you been doing Guides?

Zara: I haven't actually managed to persuade mum to go camping

[laughter from everyone]

Zara: You need to come camping! [implores mum]

Mum: oh [inaudible]

[more laughter]

R: yeah, camping's good fun … it is. So how long have you been doing Guides for?

Zara: I started doing Rainbows when I was five? Five-ish, and then I worked my way up….so now I'm 14 I'm going to the Rangers cos they're the older division and I'm a Young Leader at a Brownie unit as well.

R: oh ok, that's really good.

Zara: Yeah

R: It sounds like you're really busy as well then

Mum: You are yeah, you're busy, aren't you?

Zara: Yeah I …quite busy.

R: yeah, and what do you think, having Dyspraxia, what do you think is something that's positive about having Dyspraxia – or do you not? I mean you might not think there's something positive about it? But is there something positive you think?

Zara: I don't … to be honest, you know … [struggled to answer this] I don't really think … there's anything positive about my Dyspraxia, particularly.

Mum: No you're just frustrated aren't you really?

Zara: Yeah [laughs]

R: Yeah, that's quite common I think. Erm a lot of the children I've been talking to have said that they really do feel that frustration. So I think that's a very common thing.

Mum: I think…you know….I think….I think it's inevitable that she compars herself with her sister, not that that's something….cos we see them as…they're very very different they're like chalk and cheese….

R:– mmm

Mum: just things like Sophie's got lovely handwriting and she's extremely sporty and I think you find that…

Zara: It's horrible! [sounds upset]

Mum: Well when you find it frustrating that she can just turn her hand to…. sporty-wise…can't she? She can sort of do virtually anything, you know she's done all sorts of things, hasn't she? And erm, I think you find that frustrating. She's just got that …

Zara: ability

Mum: …. Ability, but yeah you would…..but she has….cos you're much more confident whereas she's very shy, but you don't see that side, you just see the…..

R: yes, and is she your younger sister or older sister?

Zara: Younger, younger by two years.

R: right ok, yeah. And how…..I always ask that question…. 'and how is your relationship with your sibling?' …. siblings always argue and you know, there's always kind of normal sibling relationships but do you get on well?

Zara: No [laughter] No…er…..we argue like every siblings, but I don't particularly think … that … we haven't really talked about it really, to be honest…. we're very different, we just don't talk to each other.

R: right

Mum: Well you do talk to each other, don’t you! You will do things together like play on the Wii together occasionally or watch a film but asides from that I wouldn’t say…..no…..I wouldn’t say your particularly …

R: and you have very different interests than your sister?

Zara: Yeah, we have very different interests. Sophie loves sports and she’s very…..I say popular because she’s very on her phone 100% of the time.

Mum: well that’s interesting about it….isn’t it……[inaudible] is that Zara hates…. well no hates, but you’re not all interested in social media really are you?

Zara: No! It’s a bit weird.

Mum: Her phone is the end of her hand…her sister.

Zara: She’s very popular and she’s hanging out as she’s one of the popular people.

Mum: Whereas you….not so popular.

Zara: Yeah [laughs]

Mum: and erm she’s….and you’re not really interested in being on Facebook or Instagram or anything like that…although you’re on it but you don’t really …

Zara: use it… no. I only use it because I have to [laughs]

R: yeah … and erm do a lot of your friends use social media then?

Zara: erm, I think a couple of them do, but they’re not massively on it and they don’t post stuff I mean every other hour. But the last time anyone posted something that was of vague interest to me it was about two weeks ago [laughs]. So … yeah … it just doesn’t really bother me. I suppose, I think we’re sort of all quite…I guess we’re almost quite misfity aren’t we? Yeah….no we’re not sort of … not sort of normal teenagers, I guess. We’re just a bit different.

R: What makes you say that?

Zara: I guess, we don't really care particularly what everybody else is interested in. We don't care about social media, we don't particularly care about …like…..

Mum: Labels

Zara: Labels… we're not particularly …..we don't listen to like chart music and stuff …

R:– mmm

Zara: and I think sometimes people think we're a bit weird cos we don't really care particularly.

R: mmm

Mum: her group of friends are known collectively at school as [inaudible] girls [talking over each other here]

Mum: which you actually quite like, don't you?

[inaudible]

R:– That's a good thing to be known as I think.

Zara: yeah, we're quite quiet, yeah.

R: yeah, that's a good thing. So what do you think, erm, so you're in Year 10 now, aren't you?

Zara: yeah.

R: So have you thought about what you might like to do once you've done your GCSE's?

Zara: Erm…well I want to go to college and university and I think I want to do something English or History, I kind of .. I'd quite like to be an English Teacher or a writer of some sorts or possibly work at a book publishers or something.

R: Right ok, so you'd go and do … what would you do? Some A-levels maybe?

Zara: yeah I think I would probably want to do 3 or 4 A-levels and hopefully then go to university and get a degree in English or some sort. And then I think I'd quite like to teach English, I think.

R: yeah, yeah that sounds … it fits with your Creative Writing, I think, doesn't it?

Zara: yeah.

R: And at your school, is there a sixth form at your school?

Zara: No.

R: So it would be different ...

Zara: We feed into a sixth form – which like 60% of the year end up going to, to this particular sixth form. Oh we feed into two: we feed into one which is sort of more vocational courses and then one which is A-levels. I think like 95% of the year end up going to one of those two rather than … so I'll probably end up going to one where you do your A levels at.

R: yeah.

Zara: That will be our local one, wouldn't it? Yeah. [to mum]

R: So, is your school far away from home?

Zara: Five miles-ish.. yeah five miles, so not really far, but quite far …

R:– So you have to get a bus? Or …

Zara: No. I have to get mum to take me or I could get the bus but, I'd have to get up even earlier and I…

R: [laughs]

Zara: and people I don't like take the bus so I don't exactly want to use it...

Mum: Zara finds one of the things she gets quite panicky about is being late.

Zara: yeah I worry about being late.

Mum: and the school she actually goes to is actually out of the catchment….so she either has to get a public bus or I take her or occasionally her dad takes her er….but one of the things we do it that way… sometimes you have to get the bus home…. but in the mornings you really panic about being late so it's not as stressed…sort of eliminates that stress.

Zara: yeah the bus comes round this area at sort of half past or quarter past the hour…

R: Right

Zara: So I'd have to leave the house at quarter past seven and I just don't want to …

Mum: Well it's either that or …

Zara: or we just end up being late…so …

R: yeah. It's much cosier in the car anyway, I think.

[All laugh]

R: Yeah. So you said that you get quite anxious about being late. Is there any other things that … and you found a way round that and you get a lift to school so that you're not late, you know and you're not worrying about being late. Is there anything else about school on a daily basis that makes you anxious? I don't know, like at break times or …

Zara: I don't think so …

Mum: Tests

Zara: Yeah tests and exams I can get quite nervy about but other than that I think Im generally ok. You know when I was in Year 7 I used to really panic about getting my homework in on time and I used to do it the night it was set…. I had this idea in Year 7 basically all the teachers would say 'you should do your homework the night it is set', but then I used to end up getting …like for some reason they all used to set my homework on a Thursday, so I'd end up doing it all on a Thursday as I was really worried about it not being done or being late.

Mum: Even if you had a week to do it.

Zara: yeah, even if I had a week to do it or something I'd do it on the Thursday.

R: mmm … on the Thursday.

Zara: Yeah, I've got better, I can spread it out now.

R: And do you find the homework … do you find the homework Ok? or do you find it quite difficult to do it out of the school?

Zara: No, I find homework ok - I can just sort of get my head down and do it. I wouldn't say I find … I wouldn't say I find it easy but I think I can go and find a way to focus on it.

R: right. And talking of focus, what helps you focus more, do you think?

Zara: I just like, I think I basically shut myself in my room and leave myself alone. I shut the door…. I don't really let anybody in erm sometimes I'll put a bit of music on through my headphones but aside from that I don't really …. I don't really have any sort of strategies for focusing I sort of just do it.

Mum: Yeah, you like alone, you don't like any helping.

Zara: No ...

R: yeah.

Mum: Quite independent in that way.

Zara: Yeah. That reminds me in Year 7 & 8 they used to set us loads of craft projects in stuff like History 'Make a model of a castle out of a bit of Playdough' or something or do this …

Mum: make a shield

Zara: or make a shield or one thing in Year 8 we were given a burger box, you know the ones they used to give you to put burgers in at school.

R: Mmm

Zara: We had to make an island in the burger box …

R: oh God!

Zara: yeah, so those ... dad used to help me out cos he is quite crafty, but asides from that, I don't really ask for help with homework.

R: yeah.

Mum: Sometimes you practice with cooking

Zara: yeah, sometimes if we've got something in cooking me and mum will help practice together but asides from that we don't really….I'm quite a focussed person.

R: yeah. And quite like the space to do it on your own?

Zara: Yeah.

R: Yeah. Erm and in class do you find that erm, the classroom environment some classes can be really quiet and other classes … I did some work in a school once and I couldn't believe how noisy the kids were, you know…and I was thinking, 'God I can't even concentrate on what the teacher's saying!' so you know, some classes can be particularly noisy….do you find that, sort of?

Zara: Errrrmmm, I just don't like noise … if there are people making….well, we have a couple of trouble-makers in…some of….my classes, but I think generally I'm quite a quiet….if I can focus on getting the work done because, and ermmm I don't really have that problem at school particularly.

R: right.

Zara: Because, I was saying there's only … there's only sort of one trouble-maker and sometimes his friends will join in, but, it doesn't really affect me particularly, because I just want to focus.

R: mmm

Mum: I think their school is actually streamed from Year 7 and still are all the way through.

Zara: Yeah, asides from options.

Mum: Yeah asides from options but and so generally you're quite good in the top one or two sets so you don't ... well those children tend to be a bit more …

R: Lower down?

Mum: and less focused generally.

Zara: but … in Year 9 … they decided to put us all in mixed ability science class [laughs] and we used to have these… yeah … it wasn't a good idea! Yeah, and there was a couple….there were quite a lot of noisy trouble-makers, and they used to go around sort of flipping tables over….and it was a Science class as well, so, and our teacher, she was only a newly qualified teacher I think in her first year…. in Year 9…so yeah, I think so….she didn't really know what to do….so that's how…. so that's why a couple of classes I did find it hard to focus but I didn't really have problems in class focussing.

R: yeah, I think anybody would find it very difficult, I mean like I said, I worked in this school just for a few sessions, and I couldn't concentrate on what the teacher was trying to erm, you know to say cos the kids were being very noisy and disruptive. So it's good that they've put you in your sets with people that are like you and are focussed with getting on with your work. Yeah. And you did say, a while back, you were saying that generally you find it fine to focus but in science you found it difficult if there were too many instructions.

Zara: yeah.

R: Do you find that anywhere else, that if you've got too many things or too much information at once, do you find that difficult to process, or not really?

Zara: I think sometimes I can, like in Maths they give us notes and we have to try to copy them down off the board…..and if so, and if it's a graph or a diagram we have to copy or something and they say 'oh you've got to plot this here – this here - this has got to be here – you've got to rotate this' sometimes I find that a bit difficult….but asides from that I think ...

Mum: … the other thing is you find quite difficult is, if at home sometimes….if going out and sometimes I think perhaps Zara needs a little bit more help or organisation….. and if you say to her to do several things, 'like get you coat, find your gloves, get your shoes they are in the kitchen', oh I don't know … and then get something out of the garage 'your wellies are in the garage' so you're giving her lots of things…. you find it really difficult to think, what sort of … order.

Zara: order to do it in.

Mum: … to put them in, and you won't necessarily do them ... you won't get the stuff from upstairs and then come downstairs.

Zara: I'll get bits from downstairs then go back upstairs, yeah!

R: [giggles] but you generally get them all done, but maybe not in the best order.

Zara: yeah, generally I get it all done but maybe just not in the right order.

Mum: But sometimes you get a bit flustered.

Zara: yeah, sometimes I get a bit 'Ohhh, I haven't done this' but I think ...

Mum: And she'll say 'oh I don't know which one to do first'

Zara: yeah but 70% I think I'm generally OK.

R: mmm and what do you do for erm for relaxation when you do get flustered or when you get a bit overwhelmed and everything's a bit too much, do you have any strategies? Cos you said at school that you go and see Learning Support, but do you have any strategies yourself, when you're at home or …

Mum: Read.

Zara: yeah I just sort of …

Mum: Or you put your ipod on, don't you?

Zara: Yeah, I'll just sort of [laughs] basically or I'll just sort of take a breathe, or reading or listen to some music for a minute or like mum said I'll go and watch some high quality television [said ironically – everyone laughs]

Mum: ITV2!

Zara: ITV2 yeah! [laughs]

R: yeah, and do you know of anyone else in your school that has dyspraxia or anyone outside of school?

Zara: I know … one girl who's got something, she's sort of completely the other end of the spectrum so, because her dyspraxia means she can't really see the board properly….. she's got lovely handwriting, and she's really good at Art, but I think her one's more about brain processing than mmmm about actually doing it … I don't really know anybody else who's got it.

Mum: That's interesting isn't it?

Zara: yeah, she's the only person I know, I think, aside from…..well you think you've got dyspraxia, don't you? [asks mum] Mum thinks …

Mum: Well lots of things that Zara has, I mean I didn't….as a child… nobody … I was terrible…at…I couldn't do sports, erm I found it really difficult to learn to drive….and there's certain special awareness things that I've got, and I'm sure now looking back….

Zara: You might have had …

Mum: and I think looking at your grandpa, my dad, I think he probably had it as well.

R: yeah.

Mum: I see things now and …

Zara: I get some traits….

Mum: I'm sure there's things … because there's a lot of things … there's things that Zara can't, I mean I can't…..do a drawing and put it on paper are two different things, and sort of spatial things…..so I think looking back, there probably were …

Zara: it was probably her-e-dectory or whatever it is [NB not quite said correctly]

Mum: Hereditary

Zara: yeah

R: mmm, yeah, I think a lot of the people I've been speaking to, the parents have said…you know…since their child has been diagnosed they've started to think, that actually, you know, that fits with them as well. I think it's quite common to … I often say…my son has Dyspraxia as well and I often say to him, you know…we do very similar things, and quite often I will just say well, you know, clearly if you've got dyspraxia I must have [laughs]…. because we'll do the same things, we'll trip over the same things. So do you, knowing … even though the person that you know had dyspraxia is slightly different, is it comforting at all to know someone else with dyspraxia, or does that not really … ?

Zara: no, although in the first two years, I had this really good teacher…. she used to run the writing club, and I wrote a piece on dyspraxia….and she actually then said 'oh yeah, I've got dyspraxia too' and Im like 'What! This is news to me'…. but yeah, she had the same thing….she had the same sort of dyspraxia as me….so she found it really hard to write so she used to have to type stuff when she was marking her work….she said that sometimes students would complain they couldn't read what she'd written.

R: right.

Zara: But then, she moved to a different school and that was it. So yeah she's the only person I can think of, aside from my friend. Burt as I say although I know someone else who's got dyspraxia, it's not basically the same thing that I have, so for me it's not exactly comforting.

R: No and each person's dyspraxia is slightly different as well, you know. Yeah, and are you part of any … have the heard of the Dyspraxia Foundation?

Zara: yes. We're members of it but we don't go to any …

Mum: There was one thing we were going to go to, but it turned out to be for older people than you. There's a Colchester dyspraxic group, and they're basically for younger…. the lady that runs it …is running it for younger children….

Zara:….. her son's about ten.

Mum: so they to seem to be very….they have meetings

[Talking over other]

Zara: That's why I'm sort of in the middle at the moment aren't I? I'm not over 16 but I'm not sort of under 12 either [laughs]

R: right

Zara: So there's not really … anything at the moment,

R: And would you like there to be anything, or are you not really fussed by it?

Zara: I kind of think it would be quite nice in some ways to have a sort of group. It's just that I don't know how many people have actually…..I read this survey that was like 'One in ten people have dyspraxia' and I was like 'no they don't!'….I only know what, three….what two people who have dyspraxia, aside from me….that's not one in ten [laughing] I'm not that antisocial!

[All laughing]

R: Yeah, I mean the figures are really high and then when you look at it, you know, it's … the figures do suggest that in every classroom there potentially could be a child with dyspraxia. But then, like you say, you only know of that teacher, and your other friend and so it doesn't in reality those figures don't really match up. Yeah.

Zara: I know it's like I went on this … I found this website the other day 'Celebrities with dyspraxia' and there was only about six of them! and then they'd obviously run out of people after that! [all laughing]. I don't think the figures actually add up to how many people …..the research which I don't really know…..there's actually that many people….. I don't think 10% of the population does have dyspraxia.

R: No, no. It certainly is a very misleading figure, I think. As with a lot of those sort of figures they come up with, you have kind of look at how they reach that figure and who they included in their criteria and everything…..because quite often, sometimes they will be very strict about what their definition is of dyspraxia and sometimes…. some research will include people who have been diagnosed with dyspraxia, for example, but also other people who think they have it, and then that's how you get these big figures. So yeah, quite often you have to kind of take that figure with a pinch of salt, I think. The range I've heard is between 5% and 18% of the population, but it surely cannot be 18% of the population, because like you said …

Zara: That's one in five-ish

[laughing all]

R: so I think these figures - are never really very helpful.

Zara: I don't think I'll ever be able to get a definite answer but I think the fact there are so many figures bouncing around everywhere… that I guess, nobody really knows what it is as well, which I feel is quite depressing because before I started secondary school…. I think at primary school in Year 6 because there was only 40 of us in my year I think everybody knew by the end. But then at secondary school …

Mum: there's 250

Zara: Yeah yeah 250 people a year and only about…..and people ask me 'why do you use a netbook' nobody asides from about two people knew why I actually used it, and what dyspraxia was.

R: mmm, yeah. It makes it harder when there's a lack of understanding as well if they don't know what it is.

Zara: yeah

R: yeah. And what would be the one thing, if you could, you know, the one thing that you would want people to know – if you could tell people one thing about how it is to be a teenager with dyspraxia, or it might be more than one thing?

Zara: Erm I'd say that it's, I mean it's really so frustrating, isn't it? Like I said, the other girl with dyspraxia… she's bright…she's very bright, but she's slightly... but I think she can't … I think she can't get her ideas out….she has problems with thought process, so I think she's lots of ideas flying round your head but you can't get it down and that's frustration.

Mum: I think it's the frustration and perhaps is the fact the people just don't…

Zara: don't get it, no.

R: No. Yeah, there does need to be a lot more awareness and understanding I think, of what dyspraxia is and how it actually has an impact.

Zara: There was also this thing…. there was a woman MP and she's trying to campaign for more dyspraxia awareness in parliament, isn't she? But I don't really think there is enough general awareness about it. Like there's no …

Mum: I must admit, yeah, when Zara first got her diagnosis I wasn't 100%.... I didn't really know what…. I didn't know all the ins and outs of it, and I think when you do get….and you know, as you've told friends and relations, people think you know 'what is it?'

R: mmmmm

Mum: I don't think…. I think now Dyslexia is quite prominent …

Zara: Yeah people know what it is….it's like there's loads of documentaries….

Mum: But people don't know….is it a form of Dyslexia or?

Zara: There's loads of documentaries about Dyslexia and stuff but no one seems to know what dyspraxia is!

R: Yeah.

Mum: And autism and ADHD which I know sometimes go in hand

Zara: But they're not the same, are they?

R: No, so do you think it would be helpful if there was more…. like some documentaries on what dyspraxia is and things?

Zara: yeah, because everyone knows what Dyslexia is…..but there's like this children's TV show and one, like the main character has Dyslexia….and there was a documentary show about Dyslexia but there's been nothing about dyspraxia.

R: mmmm

Zara: I know it can affect a lot less of the population, but I still don't think people can quite understand what it is.

R: yeah, yeah, no definitely. Do you think from your experience…. I mean I'm focusing on Education because I think that there's not been enough research looking at dyspraxia and Education….but do you think there's other areas where the dyspraxia maybe affects you more? Other areas of your life or?

Zara: I don’t really think it particularly affects anything does it, aside from school and perhaps frustration and stress levels. But aside…..I don’t particularly feel it affects my ability to anything so.

R: no.

Mum: I mean the Guide

Zara: The Guide’s know don’t they!

Mum: The Guide unit has been very good haven’t they and one of the Guiding Leaders actually is a GP….she’s a doctor and so I think that’s helped hasn’t it really…. and erm but you know they’re aware…..we’ve always made them aware of it so they always seem to be Ok about it. They always seem to manage to help you with anything.

Zara: Yeah.

Mum: Even where it was different Guide Leaders that took you to … and you went to the Isle of Wight and things, I think, because they have very big consent forms.

Zara: They’re about 5 pages long the consent forms!

Mum: And they’re always very good….and then if you explain…. I tend to go and tell them, or try to speak to somebody or email them and I’ll explain.

Zara: I went on Guide Camp on the Isle of Wight, I didn’t know anyone going…except just a couple of friends… but mum told them and they were obviously really good at it….and they knew exactly what I needed help with.

Mum: So the fact that you might follow instructions but need help with clips or something, you might need a bit of help with.

Zara: Yeah….like height clips and so on ...

Mum: But I guess you do things at school, don’t you that it’s not going to….like the writing…..you know you don’t do dance lessons, so I think you choose your activities that are going to be less …influenced by dyspraxia.

Zara: well, yeah…..well yeah….well when I first got diagnosed with dyspraxia, when I was about 5 or 6, I went to this ballet club, because I didn't really understand it and the ballet teacher was a bit … mmm she didn't really enjoy … well yes.

Mum: Well it was one of those really unfortunate experiences, you know every 5 or 6 year old wanted to be Angelina Ballerina [laughter] when you know if you have dyspraxia …..well when you first went … obviously she found the ballet hard and a little bit hard getting all the moves together…..and things and do the ten skips and the ballet teacher was quite harsh I think….looking back on it.

Zara: And when you found out about it didn't you

Mum: well you stopped

Zara: I stopped….we stopped once I got the diagnosis but basically she wouldn't let me do my ballet exam…..a culmination of that and the fact that I was ill the week before.

Mum: I think it was an excuse. She thought oh you know she won't pass, and this was a bit devastating when you're 5 or 6… it was quite harsh.

Zara: And they said, if I did pass it, I would probably only get just a pass….I wouldn't get a Merit or Distinction…..so basically they were like 'No, you're not doing it!'

R: Oh goodness.

Zara: Yeah, so like I say try to explain that to a 5 or 6 year old it was quite hard……so I just stopped going about two weeks after that, didn't I?

R: yeah that is ...

Mum: What about Swimming?

Zara: Swimming was hard as well. I did swimming because you thought it was an important thing to learn [directed at mum]….and when I started going, I was about 4……well I could do it, I just wasn't really good…..soon I got out of my own depth because I started thrashing and panicking…. and I just wouldn't be able to coordinate everything together.

Mum: I think that was one of the first things, perhaps when she was about 6, because she'd been going for a couple of years, and she was still relatively in a low group and everybody else was passing you [directed at Zara] including your sister who were like two years younger and you suddenly…..and I was having a word and the swimming teacher said 'you know some people just don't get it' she was very nice actually, but when you get that diagnosis things start to make a lot more sense, don't they?

R: mmm, do you think having that diagnosis…. I mean you can't remember having the assessment done because you were very young, but do you think, looking back, having a diagnosis is helpful, because like you say, it makes more sense.

Zara: yeah, I think it does make more sense. I think it also lets people be aware of how they can help you and what you might struggle at.

R: mmmm, yeah. When we've been listening to you talk, you sound like you're a very determined and hard-working young lady. That's the impression that I'm getting. Do you think, I mean it's always hard to imagine, isn't it, because you are who you are erm but do you think that having dyspraxia has made you possibly more hard-working and determined or do you think you just would have been like that anyway?

Zara: I think I would probably have had to work less hard, if that makes any sense, but I think I would still would have been quite hard working.

Mum: that sounds like a pretty fair assessment. Some of things you've had to work harder at, but I think you'd be hard-working by nature anyway.

R:Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Mum: if you do something you put a lot of effort into it

R: Yeah that's a very good explanation actually, I like that! Yeah, it's a good way of explaining. I think quite often it's the extra effort like you say that you have to put in to some things when you've got dyspraxia that's very tiring and frustrating at times, isn't it? But yeah, you do sound like you're quite a hard-working determined young lady anyway. So, that will get you amazing things in life.

Mum: You've done a couple of school productions….and when you've been in the chorus line and you've found the dancing was a bit hard but you've got this phenomenal memory so she'd remember all the steps…she's very good at remembering all the steps. So she knows she's got to do that and she'd be fine.

Zara: I could remember but sometimes oh so if I was just a bit slow or slightly behind but then it all came together at the end.

R: Yeah, that's great. Do you….erm….with your Creative Writing do you have a sense of pride in the things that you produce?

Zara: Yeah.

R: Are you proud of yourself when you produce something?

Zara: If I do something and I give it to a teacher and they look at it and they say, 'oh yeah, this is really good', or they give me praise about it, I then feel really pleased. But I mean….but yeah, I do, I feel a lot of pride, like winning that competition when I was in year … when I was 12 I think yeah it was a very happy….yeah

Mum: yeah and you've had a few things for the school… one thing on the school website, haven't you? You've got pride in that.

Zara: Yeah!

R: That's really good. And is there anything that we haven't talked about that you think would be important for people to know about?

Mum: I think frustration is probably the thing with everyday life like even things like eating.

Zara: Well eating I've got a lot better at… I used to hold the fork weirdly…

Mum: And erm….particularly when you were younger, that was another thing, you used to kind of knock things over

Zara: Like drinks!

Mum: and spill things, you found it quite difficult to know where to place things, you would do it right on the edge of the table and erm…. I think, and at the beginning doing buttons and even turning jumpers inside out, I think it was it … and I think there are still some things you get frustrated…. you can't tie ties or laces, can you? There are still some sort of little, I don't want to put words in your mouth,

Zara: No.

Mum: I think sometimes it's just the frustration of it ... of sort of everyday life. Sorry trying to do things that are just every day, and then for whatever reason, finding it harder or difficult. You get frustrated then…..oh wrapping presents is a good one!

Zara: yeah wrapping presents at Christmas….. I have to get mum to help me do a lot of my present wrapping cos I couldn't hold the paper and do the Sellotape and everything at the same time….I think … yeah, I don't really think there's anything particularly that it does, that affects one specific area, aside from everything we've covered.

R: Yeah. But it's the little daily things as well, isn't it? Like you said, it's the … probably things people take for granted, like wrapping presents and erm….I know with my son he….I remembered I tell everyone about this….we had this very big…he likes cake…and er….he’s actually 15 so in the same year at school as you and we’d brought this very very big cheesecake, blueberry cheesecake, and we’d had a slice me and him, and then he asked if he could have another slice…..and he….but he placed the cheesecake a bit too close to the edge of the counter so when he cut it the whole cheesecake flipped up in the air and landed on the floor and he was so devastated and you know upset and he just kept saying ‘oh I keep dropping things’ and was upset and he was quite young then but now he’s come to a stage where he now will just…he’s seems to have got an acceptance of it…so he still, you know, will still have those things with everyday life but he seems to sort of be able to erm…not get quite as upset as he used to, but he would certainly would do those…and it was those things…the little everyday things that mostly we would take for granted that he would find the most difficult or frustrating and so quite often I wonder if it is actually the smaller things that are most difficult and you know the much bigger tasks, erm but with those they can build up to quite a lot of frustration throughout the day can’t they?

Zara: Yeah

Mum: yeah I think a couple of those things… it gets really upset or frustrated

Zara: Yeah, so I have like….if I have two or three in one day sometimes it’s a bit….it can tip me over the edge cant it?

R: and do you feel able to…are you more accepting of it now?

Zara: Yeah…. I think when I was little I was like…’why me?’ but now I’m just yeah…well I’ve got it haven’t I, I’ve just got to deal with it.

Mum: I think generally you do get upset sometimes but it’s not…I think you understand it a bit better now.

R: Yeah ok, erm I haven’t got anything more at the moment that I would like to ask you about, is there anything else you’d like to tell me?

Mum: Well actually you did a bit of writing about dyspraxia, cos you did a very good bit about….

Zara: It was about 2 years ago now, I was about 13….

Mum: but it was quote interesting to see how you perceived your dyspraxia at the time…

R: Yeah I’d be very interested in reading that if you wanted to share that with me you could certainly email that to me, that’d be really nice and one things that I’d like to do once I’ve done my PhD is that I want to sort of produce a…..because a lot of like I said a lot of the information out there is very much from a professional or parents perspective and I’d like to produce something that sort of gives the child’s perspective so maybe like a booklet or something, so yeah maybe after I’ve done the PhD I might look to sort of erm maybe come to speak to people again and make a booklet that can be sent round to schools so that schools actually have some information from children themselves to try and maybe get a bit of a better understanding, so yeah well have to see cos the PhD takes quite a lot of time

Mum: How many years is that?

R: 6 years in total. You can do a PhD in 3 years but that’s if you do it full time and I’m working so its 6 years part time. Yes its good just a lot of work [laughs]. Well have you got anything else you wanted to add mum?

Mum: no I was just going to say if you want to skype us again or come back because of something we’ve said they I’m sure we’d be happy to.

Zara: Yeah, I’d be happy to.

R: Yeah I was going to say cos sometimes it’s when you go away and you yourself might think ‘oh I should have told her about this’ or I might think ‘oh actually I’d like to ask her a bit more about something, so yeah if you’d be happy to then and obviously if you think of something later on that you’d like to tell me about then send me an email and we’ll skype again.

Zara: Ok.

Mum: I know something I found useful, I know it’s form an older persons perspective but there’s a book called Caged in Chaos

R: Yes

Mum: erm I’ve read that

Zara: I read it as well

Mum: You read it as well and I found it really…to me that was a really good insight cos as a parent its quite difficult to get information as well and again because there are so many different forms of dyspraxia I found it quite hard to get a lot…

Zara: It’s all parents perspectives isn’t it

Mum: Well it’s it’s just trying to find anything that’s not…I mean there’s a lot of stuff that’s you know dyspraxia is this, this and this, but I found it quite hard to know initially how we could help you and what we could do

R: Yeah

Zara: Yeah, cos I read it a year ago, yeah

R: Yeah I thought that was a really good book and there’s another one that’s come out for younger children its written about….it’s called the Disorganised Dragon and it’s written as a story and the dragon actually has dyspraxia so it’s kind of aimed at…I don’t know that its aimed at very young kids but I think it’s aimed at maybe late primary, but it’s actually quite nice cos its….I mean the Caged in Chaos is actually a really good book and you hear it from that persons perspective which I think is really good and the Disorganised Dragon is quite nice because it's a third person, you know because it's a dragon and its made into a whole story I think sometimes for younger kids that's probably easier for them to read because I think they caged in Chaos is probably for your age and upwards but for younger kids its harder to read that, so there's that one as well which I think is quite a sweet book. But erm but there isn't a lot….I think you're right there isn't a lot of information, you know a lot of the websites are…they all say the same thing, you know…this is what dyspraxia is…and then you look down and think there'll be some information about what we can do and how we can help but that seems to be missing yeah and its either that or all the academic journals which half the time don't make any sense….

Zara: yeah or the ones that say 18% of the population have dyspraxia [laughs] and it's like yeah

R: and you kind of get put off by that….you read that as the first sentence and you think no I don't wanna read this one…so yeah there could definitely be a lot more information and resources definitely. Well thank you again for taking the time to talk with me and I hope you have found it useful as well.

Appendix O: PhD-6 (T) Toby Interview transcript

(R: = researcher Toby: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Participant was interviewed via skype at his request. His mum was present at his request and to help 'translate' as he has verbal dyspraxia and finds it difficult to speak sometimes)

Mum: Sorry I don't know what happened there [trying to connect via skype]

R: No it's fine, it's quite often the way with Skype. So yes I was just saying so that, just so that I can remember what you said and concentrate on talking to you rather than making notes or anything if it's okay with you I was going to record our discussion? And that's only for me to hear and once I listen back to it, it gets deleted and everything, erm and then when I transcribe the interview I take all of your personal details out, so I change your name and take out any details like your school for example, anything that might identify you, I take it all out and change it so nobody would know and that it was you if I was using any of the quotes in my PhD.

Mum: That's fine

R: so is that okay?

Mum: Yeah, of course it is yep.

R: fantastic and so you've got the consent forms, it's just really a part of the ethical procedure for the University so, I mean obviously you are here now so if you are happy to take part then that's ok but if you could return them to me that would be great.

Mum: Yes that's fine.

R: Ok so you didn't really have any questions about the research as such?

Mum: No.

R: No. and you haven't got any Toby?

Toby: Er, No.

R: Ok. The other thing, the important thing to remember is I'll obviously talk to you about your dyspraxia and you can tell me as much or as little as you like about your experiences, and that if at any point you want to stop or you don't want to answer a question then please do you tell me, you don't have to say why, you can just tell me, that will be absolutely fine.

Toby: Alright.

R: Ok, so how old are you Toby?

Toby: 12

R: 12 ok, and where abouts are you, where do you live?

Toby: [difficult to understand]

Mum: Bedfordshire

R: Ah Bedfordshire ok, so yes that's quite a long way from London isn't it?

Mum: Yes it is.

R: Ok so you're at secondary school and what year are you in now? Year 8?

Toby: Year 8

R: so do you remember at what age you were diagnosed with dyspraxia?

Toby: three

R: At three. Ok, so that's quite young for a diagnosis. So you won't probably remember at all before being three, but do you remember what were your first memories of your dyspraxia? Do you remember what things you found difficult maybe?

Toby: Talking.

R: Right, ok

Mum: He used to find it really frustrated, so frustrating. He used to mime things, lead us to places cos he couldn't verbalize it properly

R: Ok and so does your dyspraxia affect just your talking or is other areas as well?

Toby: Other areas.

R: Right ok. And when you remember having difficult with talking and your mum said you would lead them to places to show them things and you were trying to mime things, so did you know what you wanted to say you just couldn't say it?

Toby: yes.

R: Ok

Mum: Yeah that was right yeah

R: And how did that make you feel when you wanted to say things but couldn't?

Toby: Angry

Mum: and really frustrated, didn't you? You felt really frustrated.

R: and what was that like when you went to school? Did you start school at 5?

Mum: 4, just over 4, cos you were 4 in the May and you started school in the September.

R: Right and that must have been really tough I guess?

Toby: yeah.

R: and so when you were diagnosed when you were three did you get any support or help to develop some of those skills? Do you remember?

Mum: not a lot at school really, speech therapy that was brilliant, that was from an early age wasn't it? But the speech therapist said it probably is verbal dyspraxia at sort of two-ish nearly three and then he was seen in year 2 at primary school by the psychologist, Ed Psych, who said 'oh yes its dyspraxia', he was a bit older then, in year 2.

R: in year 2 yeah. And so as well as the difficulties with speaking you said you did have other difficulties with dyspraxia do you know what they were?

Mum: doing buttons up wasn't it?

Toby: Buttons

Mum: and writing holding a pen, wasn't it Toby, pen grip, tying shoe laces, wasn't it?

Toby: [difficult to hear]

Mum: it still is now isn't it, you still have a bit of difficulty with buttons shoe laces and pen holding.

R: Right so those things are still things that are difficult now? So do you still find those things make you feel angry and frustrated?

Toby: Sometimes

R: Right. And what do you do when those things are making you feel angry and frustrated?

Toby: mmmm………I don't know.

R: Do you have ways of coping with them?

Mum: We sort of help tying shoe laces don't we sometimes?

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: so we have handgrips at school as well, they've been a bit helpful, haven't they?

Toby: Yeah

Mum; sometimes you don't bother do you sometimes it's like too much hard work, sometimes the effort it takes, sometimes homework, the effort it takes holding the pen properly so you get tired easily.

R: Yeah, so do you find it easier if you use a laptop or something?

Toby: Yeah.

R: And do you have a laptop that you can use at school?

Toby: Erm, I've got an alphasmart, like a laptop thing.

R: Right, oh alphasmart yes I've heard of those, the alphasmart comes up on a small screen doesn't it and you have to put it onto a computer later?

Toby: yeah

R: and so do you use that in most lessons now?

Toby: Yeah

R: And is that easier do you think to get your ideas down onto paper?

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: But you don't always use spell check do you? so it can be a bit tricky after when you printed it all out and there's these miss spelled words so you've got to perhaps got to thinking you use spell check on it so to a point its helpful isn't it?

R: And so how have friendships been at school? Because if you were finding it difficult to speak and you were leading your parents to things how did you find friendships when you started school?

Toby: I can't remember

R: Right

Mum: you did have friends

Toby: I had friends

Mum: at school but it was a small village school so there was really all sorts of ages in the same class really, there were 2 classrooms and 64 children so you were in with reception children year one and two, year three, four five and six, so with all sorts of age groups so I think it helped really.

R: I was going to say that's a nice idea really to mix different age groups so they can learn from each other

Mum: yes that's it yeah it was a nice school

R: Yeah, yeah and did it help to have older children in your class Toby?

Toby: Yeah

R: Right

Mum: Plus you had your older brother there he was in year 6 when you went up to the juniors in year 3

R: Right so your brother is a couple of years older than you?

Toby: Yes he's

Mum: three years older

Toby: three

R: Right ok. And did he help you a lot while you were in that same school?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Good. And what about, you were saying it's a very small school, how was it, is your secondary school quite a big secondary school?

Toby: Yeah

Mum: How many kids are there Toby?

Toby: 1200

Mum: 1200 children

R: Goodness me.

Mum: it’s that big a school

R: So that’s quite a big change isn’t it going from a school with 60 to a school with 1200?

Mum: yeah, yeah it is

R: how did you find that change?

Toby: er…ok

R: It was ok?

Toby: yeah

Mum: you knew a few from your football team didn’t you?

Toby: Yeah

Mum: which came in from different schools so that was good.

R: You part of a football team sorry?

Toby: Yeah

R: Right ok, and do you enjoy football?

Toby: Yeah.

Right ok, that’s really good. So if you enjoy football do you enjoy other kinds of sports and things?

Toby: Yeah Judo

Mum: Judo.

R: Judo ok.

Mum: that’s his thing, isn’t it Toby?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Ah.

Mum: Judo.

R: Yeah I use to do Judo as a kid many years ago. Me and my brother did that for a while it was quite good. And is the judo at school or is that outside of school?

Toby: Outside.

R: right ok. So erm, how were your teachers at primary school? Did you get on well with your teachers there?

Mum: be honest.

Toby: erm well not really no.

R: not really. What was it about the teachers that you didn't like?

Toby: They didn't help me.

R: They didn't help.

Toby: no.

R: Right. Do you think that they understood or not?

Toby: no.

R: right ok.

Mum: the lack in awareness really completely.

R: yeah makes it very difficult when they haven't got the awareness. And that must have been very tough for you Toby being in school if you didn't feel they were helping.

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: and you used to get o frustrated when you came home from school and say nobody's helping me, you know I'm struggling didn't you? It started off well September for two weeks then it just went downhill nobody listened to Toby read, nobody helped him with work or reading or spellings.

R: Right. And did you want to do those things Toby?

Toby: Yeah

R: So you wanted them to help you and you wanted to do the reading and spellings?

Toby: Yeah.

R: What was your favorite thing you wanted to do at school? If you had the help, what was the thing you wanted to do the most?

Mum: get better at English was it?

Toby: Get better at English.

Mum: Was it? Yeah. Get better at reading and comprehension and writing, yeah.

R: Yeah and did you do a lot of that at home? Did you do a lot of reading at home?

Toby: Quite a lot.

Mum: and you got a tutor with you since year 5 once a week to help with English and things, Maths has always been ok, you passed your SATS didn't you, you sat English and Maths, it was like an average mark, so that was good.

R: Yeah. That's brilliant. And how do you find tests like SATS and stuff?

Toby: Hard.

Mum: you did get help form Mrs Barlow didn't you. Did she read the questions for you?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Right, so you got a bit of help during the tests?

Toby: Yeah.

R: ok that's good. And so does it help then when someone is reading it too you?

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: sort of interpreting the question isn't it, because Mary your Maths teacher said that Maths isn't really a problem but it's the interpreting of the question, so once Toby realizes what’s expected then he’s fine, whereas some of the Maths teachers at school think that perhaps there’s a bit of a Maths problem, but the Maths is fine it’s just the interpreting things really.

R: yes. And it’s a lot if you’re having to read it all and interpret it at the same time, that’s a lot to take on isn’t it.

Toby: Yeah.

R: and so you didn’t seem too happy with you teachers at Primary school, do you think the teachers at your secondary school help more?

Toby: A bit [inaudible]

Mum: I’ve had to really push haven’t I again? I’ve contacted school because they hardly got any help at all in the first year.

R: and…

Mum: sorry

R: sorry I was just going to say has he got any statement of education or any ……

Mum: No.

R: So no formal…

Mum: nothing, no, Toby had an IEP throughout primary school but it wasn’t really acted upon, it looked great on paper but in practice it didn’t really happen, but that’s just gone, at sort of secondary school he hasn’t got an IEP and I’ve questioned it a few times but there’s no IEP.

R: Oh my goodness.

Mum: yeah so it’s all a bit difficult, it’s all a bit frustrating really.

R: Yeah I was wondering because sometimes when they have something formal, something like the statement or the IEP there’s something more to sort of get the school to act upon.

Mum: Yeah, but there's nothing, it's just gone.

R: have they explained why?

Mum: no. and I've asked them twice, two or three times really but they haven't given me an explanation at all.

R: Right. Goodness me. Yeah that's very hard isn't it? And they haven't suggested any kind of support or help that they can put in really?

Mum: they've said…what have they said Toby? You get a special class for English, don't you, smaller class with learning support English teacher, erm, and then you were getting a little bit of help with the learning support TA's was it in History last year

Toby: History.

Mum: but that's stopped this year, so I've questioned them about that and I haven't really had an answer about that.

R: So which other topics did you get learning support in, any help from learning support at all?

Toby: No.

Mum: so he was getting…was doing extra Maths and English, extra English?

Toby: yeah English and Maths.

Mum: so extra English and Maths in consolidation time each morning last year, last sort of year 7 but that's all stopped as well now.

R: Right. Oh dear. And how's that for you Toby now that it's all stopped? Did you find it useful when it was there?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and how's that feel for you now that it's stopped?

Toby: [makes a noise]

Mum: it's a bit frustrating because you come home and say I haven't been helped today and I can't understand why sort of kids with dyslexia perhaps get helped and sent off to learning to support and Toby sees that perhaps he needs help and is struggling, he sees them getting help but of course he doesn't get the same sort of support.

R: Yeah that's very frustrating.

Mum: yeah it is but there's a really nice learning support TA isn't there who sort of fights your corner really and she sorts of tells us that if Toby has difficult at school with certain teachers that to flag it to her and shell sort of address these things. A science teacher a few months ago said he wasn't trying but he was trying but he just didn't [inaudible] he said that he just shouted at him and said you're not trying but he was trying.

[Skype connection lost]

R: so you were telling me that the science teacher had shouted at him saying that he wasn't trying but that he was really trying…

Toby: Yeah.

R: and is it that he couldn't see that you were trying because you were having a trouble getting the work down on paper? Why did he think you weren't trying?

Toby: [trying to speak]

Mum: didn't understand it.

Toby: I didn't understand the work.

Mum: You didn't understand it that's what you told us.

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: so you didn't get it but that would have been perceived as Toby's lack of trying.

R: Yeah.

Mum: but last year you had a really insightful teacher Mr Osbourne in Science and he used to go through the questions with you in tasks, and you did fine and meeting greats, did really well, really enjoyed science and learnt loads, but unfortunately teaching isn't really consistent, it depends on the teacher, a lot don't have an insight into dyspraxia.

R: yeah unfortunately that seems to be very common, erm that a lot of teachers don't actually understand it and so quite often they'll perceive that the child isn't working or isn't trying when actually they are trying much harder than anyone could really believe and that could be very frustrating yeah. So when you've got a teacher that's a bit more insightful and does seem to understand a bit more and helps does that help you to enjoy school more?

Toby: Yeah.

R: so you like learning?

Toby: Yeah, I like learning.

Mum: Yeah he does.

R: and what would be your favorite subjects? Now that you're at secondary school?

Toby: ICT and PE

R: ICT and PE, right. And do you have any difficult with erm coordination? Because a lot of people with dyspraxia have a lot of difficult with kicking a football for example but you really like all that sort of stuff?

Toby: Yeah I have some problem with coordination.

R: Right but you still really enjoy it?

Mum: So in what way do you have trouble? Because you can kick a ball ok?

Toby: I can kick a ball ok, it's my hands.

R: Your hands?

Mum: oh sorry.

R: No that's ok. So you can kick a ball ok but you have difficulty with your hands, is that what you were saying?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Right, and what kind of things does that involve? So is that sort of hitting things with a bat or…?

Toby: Like, yeah like hitting things with a bat and cricket [inaudible]

Mum: Badminton, it's a bit tricky.

Toby: yeah badminton.

R: It's really good actually that you really like the sporty things.

Mum: because you do really well at Judo you do competitions.

R: Right and how long have you been doing Judo outside of school?

Toby: Two year.

R: right ok. And what's that like when you take part in competitions?

Toby: Good.

R: It's good? Yeah

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: you're not phased but competitions are you really? You're really cool about them.

R: excellent. And your judo instructor, because they're like teachers in a way aren't they? Is it a man or a lady the judo instructor?

Toby: A man.

R: A man, and do you find, how do you get on with him?

Toby: Good.

Mum: they’re great, really supportive, understanding, erm so they’re just brilliant aren’t they really?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and do you think its erm with some teachers that you’ve had that you’ve got on well with what is it that you think makes them easier to get on with?

Toby: er……they help you and they teach you stuff.

R: Right ok.

Mum: and they’re quite kind the teachers who you like.

Toby: yeah kind.

Mum: aren’t they really? Who have helped you?

Toby: Yeah.

R: yeah that’s important. And so do you take part in any other kind of activities at school, outside of lessons so maybe lunchtime or after school?

Toby: No.

Mum: well it’s a bit tricky now because they’ve cut the lunch break to half an hour.

Toby: Half an hour.

Mum: so you used to play footie, did you used to play footie?

Toby: yeah used to play football.

Mum: But they’ve locked all the balls away now because it’s only half an hour, erm so they’ve got to get 1200 children in to sort of sittings so it’s all a bit tricky so there’s no time for footie so it’s a shame.

R: Yeah that is a shame and not an awful lot of time really to get that many kids into the different sittings. And how do you find that because that’s quite a squashed up day isn’t it with not many breaks. How do you find the school day in general?

Toby: Not very good.

R: right. In what was is it not very good?

Toby: You don't get enough lunch or break.

R: Right. And do you think you need some more breaks?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and do you get very tired at the end of the day?

Toby: yeah.

Mum: no energy left with the homework is there? That's always been a bit of a problem, it's always been a bit too much of an effort really.

R: Yeah and at secondary school you get quite a bit of homework don't you?

Toby: yeah.

R: and so if you've got no energy left, what happens? Do you do the homework or do you not get it done?

Toby: I normally do it…..

Mum: we normally help quite a lot need a lot of help support and encouragement and yeah.

R: Yeah.

Mum: motivation.

R: yeah its quite tough when you've had a long day and you're very tired to then try and motivate yourself to do more….do you find it easier to do the homework for your favorite subjects?

Toby: Not really no.

R: No. and what would be your worst subject?

Mum: ICT you did the other week you did that independently, that was really good.

Toby: which one?

Mum: I don’t know now. Sorry Toby.

R: So yeah what would be your least favorite subjects at school?

Toby: Art and French.

R: Ok. And what is it about art and French that you dislike?

Toby: Art I can’t draw and French I can’t talk French.

R: Yeah it’s hard to learn another language isn’t it?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and Art is quite a creative thing, or it can be, are you not, do you not quite like creative things or is it that you like it but find it difficult to do?

Toby: I like it but I can’t like draw.

Mum: but you are creative because some of the Lego…

Toby: I am creative.

Mum: some of the Lego creations you can do are marvelous aren’t they, you build lovely little things without any instructions.

R: Ok, that is very creative.

Mum: Lego yeah it’s brilliant.

R: yeah that is…sometimes its erm Art can be taught in a way that makes it seem like it isn’t creative erm especially if it’s having to do things like drawing that you find quite difficult.

Toby: yeah.

Mum: and you’re good at cooking too aren’t you, creating things at cooking, you made a really nice chocolate cheesecake on Monday it was lush, it was really good. Cakes you like making cakes, you’re good at making and decorating cakes so yeah.

R: Oh brilliant, so it does sound like you like creative things but maybe not quite so much with the drawing.

Toby: yeah.

Mum: is it holding a pencil or a paint brush is a bit tricky?

Toby: yeah.

Mum: that's the main thing is it?

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: Yeah.

Toby: Holding a pencil.

Mum: Holding the pencil is a bit tricky….right ok.

R: Yeah that makes sense. And so have you got lots of friends at secondary school now?

Toby: yeah.

R: and was it easy to go from your small primary school to your secondary school? Was it easy to make friends when you got there?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Yeah ok. And does your brother….

Mum: and you……sorry Casey

R: no no no, was just wondering if your brother went to the same secondary school.

Mum: yes, so that sort of helped because Daniel's friends all sort of knew Toby so they came and spoke to Toby and things and plus Toby knew a few of his football friends erm they moved up from a different primary school but came to the same school so that sort of helped as well.

R: that's good, so there were lots of familiar faces?

Toby: yeah.

Mum: and there's some from Judo now?

Toby: yeah

R: right. And erm you were saying when you were little that the things you remember finding difficult were erm speaking and handwriting and things like that are they the same kinds of things you find difficult now or is there anything else as you've got older that you find difficult?

Toby: erm just like the same things as when I was younger.

R: yeah. And have you found some ways to deal with them?

Toby: No. not really.

R: Ok. And do you think that you friends understand about your dyspraxia? Do they know much about it?

Toby: they know I have it

R: right, and are they understanding about it?

Toby: yeah.

R: that's good.

Mum: some of the teachers haven't been though have they, with the geography teacher in year 7 you were struggling to write something and she told you to speed up and you said but I've got a problem and she said well that's no excuse.

R: oh goodness me.

Mum: so we found that a bit difficult didn't we Toby.

Toby: Yeah.

R: and how do you react when a teacher says something like that and you're at school?

Toby: er I react alright.

Mum: you said you feel a bit angry though

Toby: yeah a bit angry

R: and when teachers don't understand erm one of the things I've been asking all the children I've been talking too is if they could tell the teachers if they could tell teachers something about dyspraxia to help them understand what one thing would they like them to know, so for the teachers that don't understand is there something that you'd really wish they could know or understand?

Toby: [long pause]

Mum: to explain things better maybe?

Toby: yeah to explain things better.

Mum: and it takes just a little bit longer

Toby: yeah

Mum: sort of to write things down, would you say Toby?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and so you said it can just take a little bit longer to write things down, so is it sometimes do you feel a bit pressured by the time at school?

Toby: Yeah.

R: Yeah.

Mum: you had a bit of a problem writing things in your homework book didn't you?

Toby: Yeah.

Mum: so they'd only be half written down because the bell would go and Toby would have to move on and there was no time for the teacher to explain it to him so we asked if the teachers could write it in but it didn't always happen, but then so the really supportive learning support TA emailed all the teachers which sort of helped for a bit…

R: But doesn't tend to stay?

Mum: Not consistently.

R: and would you like more help and support if they could offer it and offer it more consistently?

Toby: yeah.

R: and thinking about after school which seems a long way away but do you have any plans of what you'd like to do after school?

Toby: Not really. I was…

Mum: You'd like…

Toby: I'd like to be a teacher at a college

Mum: You can do a form of judo with apprenticeship can't you? In certain I think there's one in London, one in Wolverhampton isn't there?

R: Right ok. So that would be to learn how to teach it would it?

Toby: Er think so.

Mum: it's just to get some sort of qualification and to do some sort of judo I think and where they can pick who the sort of good judo players are sort of thing and move them on.

R: yeah that sounds great.

Mum: or work in a zoo, that's what you've said for years.

R: Ah ok, so you like animals?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and have you got any pets at home at the moment?

Toby: A cat and fish.

R: Ok. And what is it you like about animals then? About working with animals?

Toby: er…….

Mum: you're quite caring aren't you really, and you've always liked animals, and you've always had a little cuddly toy when you were tiny in every photo Toby was gripping a cuddly toy, a little animal of some description.

R: and so do you know, have you looked into the route to achieving either of those things? Have you looked at how you would get on to this apprenticeship for the judo? Have looked much in to that?

Toby: I haven't no not really.

Mum: so we looked at them.

Toby: we looked at them.

Mum: and we looked at courses at local colleges for animal care and they do various sort of levels.

R: ok, yeah it always seems a bit early doesn't it to be thinking about those things, but sometimes it's quite nice to have an idea of where you'd like to be going after school. So what would you said that you think your strengths are at school? What would you said you're good at at school?

Toby: erm….

R: or maybe not at school, maybe just things you would say you were good at?

Toby: erm…..not sure.

Mum: But you are…..

Toby: I'm not!

Mum: What you good at? Judo.

Toby: yeah judo.

Mum: so your coaches think that you're very good at judo but they say you're very unassuming don't they? So you're not a bit boastful are you? But you're good at judo, you're good at football, your football coaches said you're really good at football. You're good at ICT, your ICT teacher says you're really good, don't they?

Toby: Yeah.

R: and chocolate cheese cake

Mum: Yeah

R: that does sound really good. I was just thinking about what you were saying about some teachers not helping and not having the right kind of support at school, do you think you're able to talk to your teachers and other people at school about your dyspraxia?

Toby: Not really no.

R: Right and what makes it difficult to talk to them about it do you think?

Toby: I don't know them as well.

R: right ok.

Mum: you don't like talking

Toby: I don't like talking

Mum: you say quite a lot you don't like talking to the teachers and explain things.

R: yeah. Would it be easier if there was somebody more familiar with you?

Toby: yeah.

Mum: so the teaching assistant she's really nice isn't she

Toby: yeah.

Mum: she understands and fights your corner for you really.

R: and do you feel able to talk to her or do you still not want to talk to her much?

Toby: not really.

R: Not really no, and do you think you're involved in any decisions about your education? Or is it a bit difficult when they teachers don't talk to you and don't understand?

Mum: not but the teaching assistant she was trying to raise awareness she was going to do some sort of inset day to flag I to the other teachers, she was really keen and said she wants to read your research once it's published.

R: yes once it's published I'll send you a copy. I can also come up and give a talk to the school?

Mum: really, could you do that?

R: yeah I'd be more than happy to. I think there's a lot of teachers that do not have enough of an understanding and it makes it very hard then if they don't understand. I've got this really passion about going out and giving talks and training, so you it is something I do do in my work to go and give talks and training, so I could always arrange with the school to go and give a talk.

Mum: that would be great, perhaps I could give your contact details to Mrs Fordham?

R: Yes of course, and she can contact me.

Mum: so the royal college of nursing, they've got a really good resource to sort of help mainly student nurses and qualified nurses who have got dyspraxia, dyslexia and dyscalculia, some really good strategies, so Mrs Fordham took those and she is going to put some sort of teaching pack together, for teachers and she said it's surprising that nursing has got far more info on these conditions than teaching, its crazy.

R: It is, I think in schools it tends to be things like dyslexia is very well understood but everything else doesn't seem to be, so it's a real shame because it's not helpful for the teachers either, if they can't understand then they're not doing what they need to be doing, which is to help all children to be learning, so yeah I think its really important that they get some understanding. And do you think it would make it easier for you Toby if all your teachers had had some training on dyspraxia and understand it a bit more?

Toby: yeah.

R: Yeah, and so do you generally like school? Or not like it?

Toby: er………..yeah I quite like it yeah.

R: what is it you like most about school?

Toby: er……….talking to my friends.

R: right.

Mum: you enjoy PE and ICT

Toby: yeah I enjoy PE and ICT

R: but is it the spending time with your friends that makes it the most fun?

Toby: Yeah [laughs]

R: and do you see your friends outside of school?

Toby: er…….sometimes

Mum: a few miles away don't they really, but you see them at training, footie training it's on a Monday and football games on a Sunday

Toby: yeah

Mum: and then judo on a Thursday and Saturday so

R: Gosh busy week.

Mum: oh it is.

R: and you were saying that at the end of the day you're quite tired and it's hard to motivate you to do homework and things but also do quite a lot of the football and the judo and things like that do you find you've got the energy for those?

Toby: er yeah

R: yeah, what is it about that's motivates you that's different from homework?

Toby: Homework's boring.

R: Yes [laughs] yep that makes sense.

Mum: and it's a bit lengthy sometimes isn't it, it's a bit too in-depth, and some of it's just a little bit pointless isn't it some of it?

Toby: yeah.

Mum: yeah, that's what dad says isn't it some of it.

R: yeah and guess if you've been doing it all day it's hard to motivate yourself to do more.

Toby: yeah.

R: and so I imagine it will be next year that you get to choose what GCSE choices you have isn't it?

Toby: yeah.

R: Do you know what your choices will be? What kinds of things you think you might choose to do?

Toby: Yeah.

R: What might you do?

Toby: PE, ICT, history and cooking.

R: right ok, so do you like History?

Toby: yeah it's alright.

R: what is it about History that you think you might choose that subject?

Toby: er….because I like doing the Viking, Tudors.

R: quite interesting. So is there a lot of writing in those kinds of subjects? In History anyway?

Toby: yeah quite a bit.

R: and is that where you get to use the alphasmart?
Toby: Yeah.
R: and is the alphasmart, I've never used one, is it a bit like a laptop to use?
Toby: yeah.
R: and do you have a laptop or alphasmart at home for doing your homework?
Toby: No. I have a laptop computer for homework but at school I use the alphasmart.
R: and so what are the things that you enjoy apart from your sport?
Toby: er….
R: or is it just the sports that you like.
Toby: just the sports.
Mum: what about Maths with Mr Evans?
Toby: yeah.
R: it's ok? And so you were diagnosed when you were 3, you probably won't remember that at all will you? But how do you feel about dyspraxia now that you're a bit older?
[Long silent pause]
Mum: something that you used to say to me was that I wish I didn't have dyspraxia
R: right
Mum: sometimes when you say my memory isn't quite as good because I've dyspraxia so you went into a class room once and you forgotten where you were sitting the previous weeks and the teachers couldn't understand that and you got told off and sent out I think
Toby: Yeah.

Mum: So you found that a little bit difficult.

R: yeah that is…..so do you still feel that way?

Toby: Yeah.

R: yeah and what would make it better do you think? For you?

[Long pause]

Mum: Teachers perhaps explaining things or helping you?

Toby: yeah teachers helping you

R: right ok

Mum: being more understanding really is it Toby cos that's what we sort of say when you come home some days?

Toby: yeah

R: Yeah, and so how do you feel on those days where they haven't been understanding and helping and you come home and say to your mum that you haven't had much help, how do you feel?

Toby: angry.

Mum: and a bit down about it

Toby: yeah

Mum: aren't you some days?

Toby: Yeah

R: and is that angry with them for not helping?

Toby: yeah, with them yeah.

Mum: you were waiting in Maths the other day for the teacher to help you and you had your hand up for ten or fifteen minutes so you found that really tricky

Toby: yeah

Mum: frustrating

R: Yeah. And is there anything else about school that we haven't discussed that you think it would be good to know about?

Toby: don't think so is there?

Mum: Can't think of anything

Toby: no don't think so.

R: Ok. And outside of school I think we've figured that you've got quite a busy lifestyle outside of school haven't you?

Toby: Yeah.

R: lots of football and judo and baking.

Toby: Yeah.

R: That sounds good, ok is there anything else mum that you think we haven't discussed that you think would be worth mentioning?

Mum: Erm I don't think so I think we've covered most things and most of Toby's difficulties really, the frustrations.

R: Yeah and I think you know after I've finished doing all my interviews and writing it all up I was saying to one of the other children that I was interviewing that what I'd like to do is, a PhD is a long and complicated piece of work, but what I'd like to do is take all the mumbo jumbo out of it and make a little booklet that has all these things in that can be sent round to schools because, obviously with no one's name in or anything but just sort of saying these are the kinds of things that children are saying that they're finding difficult or that they would need to help and erm again trying to raise awareness. I will send you details of the PhD once its published and anything like that I'll obviously stay in touch and send it through and see what you think.

Mum: yeah.

Toby: Yeah.

R: Ok, well thank you, I don’t want to take too much of your time this evening

Mum: no it’s fine.

R: and how do you feel Toby was it ok talking about your dyspraxia?

Toby: yeah. Fine.

Mum: Yeah you’ve been fine cos it’s not your favorite thing talking

Toby: yeah it’s been fine

Mum: well done

R: yes thank you

Appendix P: PhD-7 (E) Esme Interview transcript

(R: = researcher Esme: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place in a local restaurant/public house at a location chosen by the participant. Her mum was present at her request.)

R: Because of the type of analysis that I'm doing is qualitative, so it's sort of doing these interviews of varying lengths but really sort of looking in depth at the persons experience and what that means to them and how they make sense of it all, so erm, the sample size is actually purposefully small, so I've actually got 10 participants at the moment, erm, which will probably be all that I do have, erm whereas with other studies you can do sort of surveys, questionnaires and things but my feeling was that if we really want to get down to the nitty gritty of what its really like, you can't do that on a survey.

Mum: No, on a survey you cant. I guess that's the only difficulty really is that no two experiences are the same are they?

R: Well this is the other thing, erm which is quite an interesting thing really to come out of it, but it's actually erm you know, I mean with a smaller….when you do a large thing you get less quality but you get more sort of 'well we've interview 300 people or 3000' whereas this is going to be smaller and obviously I'm going to interview 10 people you know and to say that that is going to be applicable to everyone you know you can't say that, but what it does give is a flavour of how some people experience it and actually some of those differences and they could all be very different. I mean I've used this methodology before when I was interviewing adults, they all had the same experience, they were all fathers who'd had a child born prematurely, and they all had that same experience in common but actually their differences were vast and what came out of that is that actually we can't just have a blanket approach because there are all these differences. So it's a useful, even though it's a small scale, it's useful to have those smaller scale but more in depth that then back up some of the larger ones. So yeah it's going to be small but it doesn't feel small. And that's why I say that you might, you know if you ever read it once its published, you might be able to recognise 'oh I said that' because…

Mum: yes there's only 9 other people

R: Yes but nobody else would know who you were or who said what.

[Signing of consent forms]

Mum: I'll try and be quiet.

R: No its fine. So is there anything you wanted to ask [asks Esme]

Esme: No.

R: and are you happy to talk to me?

Esme: Yes.

R: The other thing that I did suggest in the information, but nobody so far has wanted to which is absolutely fine, which was if anyone wanted to do drawing while we were talking or anything like that, but I do have some paper and pencils if you feel like doing that or if at any point if you just want to doodle or draw anything, but so far nobody has wanted to so you would be the first. So these are for you to keep [giving consent forms and information forms].

Mum: just checking my other child is accounted for.

R: Please take phone calls if you need to.

Mum: Its ok, they should have been collected.

R: So how old are you Esme?

Esme: 13.

Mum: 13 and a half.

R: 13 and a half, that’s an important half. And so your school is just down the road?

Esme: yep.

R: How is it at secondary school?

Esme: I enjoy it.

R: Do you? How long have you been there? 2 and a half…what are you year 8?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Year 8, ok. So where would you like to start? Do you know how old you were when you were diagnosed with dyspraxia?

Esme: No.

R: You don’t.

Mum: do you remember what class you were in?

Esme: No.

R: That’s fine, you might not remember. Do you, how do you feel about your dyspraxia?

Esme: [Shrugs shoulders]

R: Not fussed about it? No, Ok. What about, what kinds of things do you think dyspraxia makes difficult for you?

[Long pause]

R: or maybe they didn’t make, maybe there’s nothing that made difficult for you.

Esme: I don’t know.

R: No that's fine. How about, what about erm, you say that you enjoy secondary school, what about primary school? Shall we start at primary school and go through to secondary school from there? Did you enjoy primary school?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Was yours quite a small primary school?

Mum: You're going to have to do some of the talking.

Esme: I went to two primary schools

R: Oh ok.

Esme: The second one was quite small.

R: Right, so you have one class for each or?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ah ok. Was that because you moved? Or…

Esme: Yeah.

R: So did you like both of them?

Esme: I liked the second one better.

R: You liked the second one better? What was it about the second one that you liked?

Esme: Erm the kind environment and everyone wanted to be my friend.

R: Ok, and being a bit smaller did that help as well?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok. And so what was it that made it a kinder environment. Was the previous primary school not particularly kind?

Esme: [Shook head and looked a little upset] No.

R: What kinds of things made it unkind?

Esme: [Mumbled] don't know really

R: Or do you not want to say?

Esme: [shook head].

R: Don't want to say, that's fine. But so you had a nice time at the second one and had lots of friends there?

Esme: Yeah.

R: and did those friends go with you to, some of those friends go with you to secondary school?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Ok that's quite good isn't it? And what was that like thinking about going from this nice small kind primary school?

Esme: It was a bit weird.

R: Was it? Did you know which secondary school you wanted to go to?

Esme: Yeah.

R: and was that the one you went to?

Esme: Yeah.

R: This is quite lovely and like you say very rural, but where I live we have about 3 secondary schools all within about 5 minutes' walk of me, so not quite sure if that's the same here or if there's not quite as much choice…

Mum: there's only one catchment school you'd be hard pushed to go outside

R: Ok, but you were happy with that one?

Esme: Yeah.

R: That's quite good.

Mum: Part of our move was focused on getting the right secondary

R: Yeah, yeah I think a lot of parents do that. So what kind of things, if we forget the first primary school for now, what age did you move to that second school?

Esme: Year 6, I was only there for 6 months.

R: Right oh wow gosh, so what was that like starting school for 6 months?

Esme: It was a bit weird cos everyone else had like done other stuff, known each other for longer, so

R: But they were all welcoming?

Esme: Yeah.

R: 6 months and you made loads of friends

Esme: [Nods]

R: that's great, really good. What kinds of things did you enjoy at primary school in those 6 months?

Esme: I don't know.

R: Cos you said they were kind, what were you favourite things to learn? Was it sports or arts or….

Esme: It was just all good.

R: It was all good.

Esme: Yeah. Even subjects that I don't really like, like maths and sports

R: but you even found those good?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Do you know what it was about that school that made you find, even the ones you didn't like, find them good?

Esme: [shakes head]

R: No sometimes we don't know we just find it works doesn't it? So, and only 6 months in that school but made friends and had a good time and then went to the secondary school. Did you go and visit the secondary school a lot before going up?

Esme: Yeah, I went on two visits.

R: Two visits.

Esme: One with the class and with two other people in the class.

R: Ok, did you spend the whole day there?

Esme: for the one with the whole class, but we only spent the morning with…

R: it was you and the other 2. Ok and what kinds of things did you do when you went for that morning?

Esme: I think we did 2 lessons so we had someone who had been at the primary school that took us round and then we went to 2 lessons with them and then we went on the tour of the school.

R: Ah ok.

Esme: I think [giggles]

R: and was that helpful to you do you think?

Esme: yeah.

R: and then when you went in the September did you feel....how did you feel then?

Esme: A bit nervous

R: Do you think it helped having visited it a couple of times?

Esme: Yeah.

R: And what’s it like at that school? You said you enjoyed it. Is it like the primary school? Do you find it kind?

Esme: Yeah.

R: and it must be different, secondary school is always different than primary. Like I said I’ve got an 8 year old and she does all her lessons in one class with the same teacher you know which most primary schools do and then going up to secondary school where my other two are and they’ve got different lessons, different books, different teachers, they have to move around a lot, how was that getting used to…

Esme: well I got lost a couple of times, but I had a friend there who knew her way around more, got used to it.

R: Yeah, was that friend that came up with you from primary?

Esme: No.

R: Oh she was already there?

Esme: No, I think erm she went to a different primary school but she lived in the village and didn't know anyone going

R: Ah ok, so you knew other people from the village who went to that school?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok, and what would you say your favourite subjects were, or are? Now that everything is in different lessons.

Esme: I don't really have any favourite subject.

R: you haven't got a favourite one. Have you got a least favourite one?

Esme: Probably PE.

R: Ok. And do you know what it is about PE that you don't like?

Esme: I don't really know.

R: Outside of school what kinds of things do you like to do?

Esme: I like swimming, and first aid.

R: Ah ok, are you part of a first aid, like the Red Cross or something?

Esme: St John's ambulance.

R: St John's ambulance ok, how long have you been doing that?

Esme: Before the summer, last summer.

Mum: A year maybe, yeah a year.

R: Ah ok excellent, and is that every week?

Esme: Yep.

R: So, swimming and first aid you like to do, have you done swimming for …… [Mum imitates playing the piano] what's this? Ah piano

Esme: [giggles]

R: Ok, how long have you played piano?

Esme: 6 and a half years.

R: Oh wow, how did you forget that one [laughs]

Mum: Maybe she didn't like doing it

R: I see. So piano, I used to play piano years ago, I keep having aspirations to do it again but I've never got round to it, so do you enjoy that one?

Esme: Yeah.

R: You can pretend your mums not here if you'd like [laughs]

Esme: [laughs]

R: I won't tell her [laughs], ok and do you do that in school as well? Do they have music lessons?

Esme: Well they do but I do it outside of school.

R: Ok so you have lessons outside of school as well?

Esme: With the same primary school teacher.

R: Ah really that's interesting. So do you…..a lot of your friends do those things, the St Johns Ambulance and the swimming?

Esme: Er well I've made friends there.

R: That's quite a busy week isn't it, piano lessons and swimming, do you do the swimming every week as well?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok. So you like swimming but other sports you're not keen on. Do you know what it is, it might be hard to pin point what it is about sport that you don't like but swimming's….is it swimming by yourself or in teams?

Esme: By myself.

R: So is it something about maybe doing something at your own pace that's nice about swimming.

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: and you're quite good at it, does that make it more enjoyable?

R: Have you always been quite good at it?

Esme: Yeah.

R: and have you ever wanted to do any other sports or have you not had the desire to do it?

Esme: [Shakes head]

R: No some people don't. I wondered if you wanted to and it was more difficult and that's why you didn't or you just didn't want to. Were they things, the St John's Ambulance and the piano and the swimming, were they things you decided you wanted to start to learn to do or were they things that your mum or dad or other people suggested?

Esme: I wanted to do the St John's Ambulance and Piano.

R: Ok. Yes, quite often us parents…. I've made my kids swim since they were very young, they all enjoy it now but it was one of those things I said, 'you will learn to swim', so yeah it's interesting to find which one you actually picked as things you wanted to do. So you don't particularly have a favourite lesson at school, do you have a favourite teacher?

Esme: No.

Mum: An old favourite teacher?

Esme: Mrs Cook, my last English teacher.

R: ok, so that was last year?

Esme: [nods]

R: Oh right and what made her your favourite?

Esme: She was really nice.

R: In what way?

Esme: Every way [giggles]

R: Was she helpful?

Esme: Yeah.

R: So, what makes her stand out as a favourite teacher whereas the other teachers are just….

Esme: She understood me.

R: Ok, and that's important. And do you think the other teachers don't understand?

Esme: Well I would say not as much as Mrs Cook.

R: Right ok. And do you dislike the teachers or are you just not fussed?

Esme: Not fussed.

R: Right ok. So what things did Mrs Cook understand? That you felt she understood about you? Cos you said she understood me.

Esme: Erm…………..

R: It doesn't matter, you don't have to say.

Mum: She put lots of things in place to help you with your learning didn't she?

Esme: [nods]

R: And that was English

Esme: Yep.

R: So are there certain things you find you need a bit of help with or a bit of understanding?

Esme: Not that comes to mind.

R: No. Ok, but when the teacher is helpful and understanding and kind that's…does that make things easier for you?

Esme: [Nods]

R: And so did you enjoy her lessons then?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Did you enjoy English before you had her as a teacher?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Right ok……and what about Maths? How's that?

Esme: Erm, I find it quite hard.

R: and are the teachers helpful with that?

Esme: Not really.

Mum: is this year better than last year though?

Esme: I don't know.

Mum: You don't know?

R: Do you have a learning….I don't know what they call it, they call it different things in different schools and it means different things in different schools, but in my son's school they call it a learning support team and they have a special room where that team is and they can provide all kinds of different support to different students, do you have that kind of…it might be called something different

Esme: Yeah, student centre.

R: Student centre, yeah there you go, every school seems to call it something different.

Mum: Yeah it's not very helpful is it?

R: No. and do you sometimes go there for any kind of help?

Esme: Sometimes.

Mum: So Esme does have what they call a student information sheet which is a bit like the old IEP's which I can send to you or you can look at now if that'd be useful?

R: Yeah that would be useful. Is it alright for me to have a look at this? [asking Esme]

Esme: [Nods]

R: [looks at Student Information Sheet mum is showing] Oh Alpha smart.

Mum: So there is access to some assistance or some suggestions to what teachers do, erm it's not provided uniformly.

R: No, no.

Mum: If at all.

Esme: mmmmm that's only in RE and citizenship [giggles]

Mum: The important lessons!

R: Ok. Thank you that's helpful, sometimes it's harder to say, sometimes easier when it's on a sheet. I think one of the difficulties with a lot of schools is having the action plan or sheet, whatever they call them, and then passing that information down doesn't seem to always happen in the way that it really should and that can make it difficult I think for you can't it? if there are certain things that need to be put in place, if not all teachers are doing it, it makes it hard. I noticed on their Alpha smart, I've never actually seen one of these but I've heard a number of people talk about them, so do you….[Esme pulls a face] is it not very good?

Esme: No cos you can only see that much of the writing so [indicated with her fingers].

R: I see yeah cos I've had a couple of people describe them to me and thought 'why wouldn't you use a laptop then maybe?'. Do you use the Alpha smart or a laptop?

Esme: Alpha smart normally in lessons but the end of year exams I use a laptop.

R: Ok. Does that help?

Mum: We're having a bit of a battle with the school at the moment cos they won't let you bring in your own IT but there are only 8 laptops for the entire secondary school.

R: So if you needed to use it they could be all gone anyway?

Mum: Yes and because Esme's level of need isn't as great as some children, yeah she doesn't have access to it, but the problem with the Alpha smart because she can only see a little part of the screen

R: You can't check what you're doing

Mum: you know when you have difficulties in organisational planning seeing the small part of it is not helpful at all.

R: No. And they don't allow you to bring your own one in?

Esme: [Shakes head]

R: If they did allow you to bring your own one in would you want to bring your own laptop in?

Esme: [nods]

R: So it is something you find really helps?

Esme: [nods]

R: And how does that make you feel if you've got, you find something like having a laptop helpful but there's a barrier with the school because they won't let you bring your own one and there's only 8, how does that make you feel?

Esme: A bit annoyed.

R: It is very annoying isn't it? Do the other people use the Alpha smart?

Esme: I don't know.

R: You don't see them? So is it the handwriting that the Alpha smart helps? Is the Alpha smart a bit like a keyboard?

Esme: yeah there's a keyboard with a tiny screen.

R: Sounds like those, years ago, those tiny toys

Mum: Word processor things

R: Yes that only showed the last two lines.

Mum: Education at the forefront of technology!

R: I was going to say, that's when I was about 6 or something. So yeah sorry is it the actually process of handwriting that you find difficult?

Esme: And getting it down on paper when I'm writing.

R: Yeah.

Esme: I find it easier on the laptop to get more down

R: ok. And is that about the speed of writing? Or…

Esme: I don't know.

R: Or just getting ideas out?

Esme: I don't know.

R: Don't know. But you find that using a laptop or keyboard of some kid helps you to get your ideas down more?

Esme: Yeah.

R: mmmm that's really interesting. Yeah. And do you use a laptop at home, for homework and things?

Esme: Yeah most of my homework is done on a computer.

Mum: [Mum moves the Dictaphone closer to Esme] You're being very quiet, your meant to be noisier

R: [Laughs] You can be as noisy as you like. It’s actually quite interesting you saying that because a few people that I’ve spoken to have said that actually they can get their ideas down easier by using some form of technology, erm, than the actual….but trying to understand what process that is a bit…yeah….bit harder to sort of….

Mum: I think particularly if you’re writing, we I say a lot, but a reasonable amount, the handwriting gets slower and the formation of letters less….neat….shall we say, but I think there’s more to it than just that physical barrier, there’s also the ideas are in your head Esme aren’t they and there’s almost like a disconnect between brain to hand

R: mmm brain to hand yeah.

Mum: so the keyboard doesn’t solve everything because it makes the speed a bit quicker but still there’s that barrier to get what you want to say on to the page isn’t there?

Esme: Yeah.

R: mmm, do you find if you’re…are you quite quick at typing then?

Esme: Reasonable.

R: But do you find maybe then that by typing it because that’s slightly quicker than when you’re writing, that those ideas in your head can get out rather than get lost, I don’t know I’m just wondering, cos if it takes….if the writing becomes slower and harder to produce some of those things you want to get out might get, maybe get lost and left behind?

Esme: Mmmm, yeah.

R: So you don’t think that there’s….so you’ve got all the ideas you want to write down or to say, but it’s the actually….

Esme: getting it on to the paper

R: The process yeah, and do you feel that when you use a laptop, do you feel that you’ve got everything on there that you wanted to or do you still feel…

Esme: Pretty much.

R: Ok. And you’re going to be able to use that in exams and things?

Esme: Yeah.

R: That’s good. It is good yeah. Do they give you any extra time in exams?

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: I don’t know if you get 10% or 25%

R: Its usually 25% But I don’t know different schools might have….

Mum: But obviously we’d need to apply for that officially, probably this time next year.

R: For GCSE’s yeah.

Mum: For GCSE’s.

R: Yeah, erm but that should be straight forward, if you’ve been having that then it’s usually a form filling exercise.

Mum: Yes it’s just providing the evidence for the requirement.

R: For the requirement yeah, yeah. Are there other things at school that help? So the laptop really helps, and a bit of extra times help? Is there anything else that helps you?

Esme: Prompt sheets.

R: Ok, and what are they? Do they give those in each lesson?

Esme: No Mrs Cook used to give them last year, so….

R: And is she…..now remember cos my brain…and she’s the English teacher isn’t she?

Esme: Yes

R: So she used to do prompt sheets?

Esme: mmmm[Nods]

R: and what would be on the prompt sheet?

Esme: I can’t remember.

R: But would she give you one at the start of the lesson?

Esme: Erm she’d give sentence starters.

R: ok.

Mum: I think it was things like sentence starters and remembering connectives and ‘have you used an example of the point that you’ve made’ and ‘have you explained it’ that sort of thing wasn’t it?

Esme: Yeah.

R: SO she’d give this sheet at the beginning with all those kinds of things on and then you’d do your work but you had something to refer to?

Esme: [nods]

R: that’s really helpful, yeah. Did everyone get one of those?

Esme: [Shakes head]

R: So it was just certain people that she would….and did you like that kind of support?

Esme: yeah.

R: That’s good. Was there something….cos sometimes some people don’t want the support that’s being put in place and at other times people do….but was that something that you asked for or was it something that she thought of?

Esme: I don’t know.

R: You don’t know? But you didn’t ask for it?

Esme: No.

Mum: I met with Esme’s teachers and she came up with that as an idea and so she put those prompts and support in place at the beginning of the year for Esme and slowly sort of removed them during the year as she got used to what you needed to produce and things so she was not only putting stuff in place for now but also planning for the future.

R: Planning for the future, yeah, that's really….god wouldn't it be good if every teacher was like that.

Mum: Yes and there are some amazing gems of teachers that just really get it and really know how to help the individual child, and then there's like the….

R: Yes, unfortunately, seems to be the same in many many schools, erm that you get the good few that are the hidden gems and the other ones that usually….yeah….try to keep telling them but it doesn't sink in.

Mum: [asks Esme] Do you want to talk about last year's History teacher?

Esme: Yeah?

Mum: You don't have to, I'm just asking you.

R: you don't have to, but if you do erm like I said none of your name or the school or…..even Mrs Cook I'm going to have to change her name to something else, I will change all their names so nobody ever….I mean nobody's going to read my boring PhD anyway [laughs]

Esme: [laughs]

R: It'll be very exciting but it's going to be a really long huge drawn out…. The exciting bit will be when I've spoken to all of you but that's in huge amounts of other stuff, but if they do read it they're still not going to be about to identify you know who you are because they'll be nothing in there, erm that will identify you so if you want to tell me about a particularly disastrous teacher or anything that they did then you can tell me, I'm not gonna go back and tell them.

Mum: He doesn't work there anymore anyway

R: Ah [laughs]

Esme: I don’t know how to start.

R: What was his name?

Esme: Mr Reynolds

R: Mr Reynolds, ok. And he was History teacher?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok so you’re year 8 now so this would have been year 7?

Esme: Yeah.

R: ok and what kind of History was he teaching you in year 7

Esme: Don’t know.

R: Don’t know, ok.

Esme: [laughs]

R: ok [laughs]

Mum: Did you like his lessons?

Esme: No.

R: Was it the topics you were learning that you didn’t like?

Esme: The teacher.

R: The teacher, ok. So was he…what kind of age was he? Was he an older teacher?

Esme: I don’t know.

Mum: Probably about our age….so quite young [laugh]

R: Yeah we’re young yeah [laughs] but if you ask my children they’d say I’m not. Ok so erm yeah that’s a hard age to define, it’s always easier if their older older you go ‘oh yeah their really old’, ok so he’s about our age, and did you like him at the beginning?

Esme: No.

R: No so instantly didn’t like him. What was he like in your first lesson?

Esme: Erm, I can’t remember my first lesson with him.

R: Ok, but something made you instantly not like him?

Esme: I don’t know.

R: You don’t know what. Did he make the lessons boring?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok so he wasn’t bringing History to life and making it a fun thing to learn about?

Esme: No.

R: Do you like History, do you like learning about things from History generally or….

Esme: Yeah.

R: You’re quite interested in hearing about things from the past?

Esme: [Nods]

R: So it’s not that you didn’t….weren’t keen on the subject? Ok. Ok. And was it more….was it to do with the work that you found him more difficult or was it his style of teaching?

Esme: I don’t know.

R: You don’t know. So was there anything particular that happened with History?

Esme: With the teacher?

R: mmmm.

Esme: Parents evening.

R: What happened at parents evening?

Esme: [Looks at mum]

Mum: It’s your story.

Esme: I don’t know how to say it though.

Mum: Was he supportive of you? Did he understand you?

Esme: No.

R: So at parents evening did you, you all went together, and so as he sat there explaining what he thought of your progress? Is that how they do it a parents evening?

Mum: Yeah.

R: yeah, and you didn't feel that it was supportive or?

Esme: No.

Mum: [Asks Esme] Do you want me to talk?

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: So erm, he started off with, well he couldn't find Esme's name in the book which didn't go down very well….

R: mmm that doesn't help does it?

Mum: so he didn't really know who she was, erm and then he started off with "well of course if Esme would just get on with her work when I've set it rather than just looking out of the window for 5 minutes before doing something she'd get an awful lot more down on paper"

R: That's helpful!.

Mum: and he talked at us for a period of time before I very politely said "Can I just stop you there, are you aware that Esme has Dyspraxia, here's her student information sheet, I'm sure you've received it and read it erm but these are the things that need to be put in place for Esme" including you know extra time from switching from one task to another, sentence starters, prompts things like that, erm and he just said "that's not dyspraxia" to me.

R: [Looks at Esme and asks] All while you were there as well?

Mum: Yes. And so you know I am an intelligent person and reasonably well read in the field of dyspraxia, I do also work in education, erm and so I just very politely took a deep breath and said “dyspraxia is more than not being able to catch a ball and having trouble holding a pencil” and went through the list of you know difficulties switching from tasks, organisational planning, all of the things that might be….and he just looked completely blankly at me and at the end of it looked at her sheet and said “oh I suppose I could move her to sit next to somebody less disruptive” and that was his concession.

R: And that was it?

Mum: Yep.

Esme: He didn’t move me.

R: He didn’t move you?

Mum: and he didn’t move you no, and he wasn’t very nice to you after that was he?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Oh really?

Esme: He told my form tutor.

R: he told your form tutor?

Esme: I told my form tutor.

R: Oh you told your form tutor?

Esme: That he didn’t listen.

R: Goodness me, and so he didn’t make any efforts after that?

Mum: and just clearly didn’t understand either.

R: no. and clearly didn’t want to understand either.

Mum: no.

R: I mean it’s one thing to not understand but then when someone points something out it would be helpful if you’d go ‘oh ok, erm can I have some information, I had really….’

Mum: Yes hadn’t realised that.

R: Dear me, so that’s not good for you is it?

Esme: No.

R: and did you tell your form tutor about that what had happened at parents evening or….about the fact that he just wasn’t helping afterwards?

Esme: Well I told him that he wasn’t helping afterwards and he said “don’t worry cos he’s not going to be here next year” so [laughs]

Mum: they did parents evening in the summer term so they’ve actually…you’ve not got much of the year left after you’ve met the teachers so it’s a bit of an odd way of doing it I find.

R: yeah, yeah, you can’t iron anything….it’d be ideal to do it at the beginning.

Mum: Yeah so what I did in year 7 with particularly with English, Maths and Science erm, as core subjects was to go and meet with any teachers in the first term just to you know show my face, to make sure they were aware of who she was…

R: Yeah and what she needed?

Mum: yeah and what she needed, so that was really helpful actually and there were Mrs Cook the amazing English teacher was just really helpful and put lots of stuff in place.

R: Goodness me. So did you know before that, did you feel before the parents evening that he just didn’t understand?

Esme: Yeah.

R: You'd kind of got that sense?

Esme: Yeah.

R: That makes it difficult then for you to learn his subject if erm and do you have meeting regularly with the erm SENCO or the team leader of the student support?

Esme: [Looks at mum]

Mum: Mrs Dalton.

Esme: Sometimes and I know that I can go to her if there's a problem.

R: ok. That's good. And do you go sometimes?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Yeah. And what's she like?

Esme: She's lovely and amazing.

R: Oh good. So you've got someone nice that you can got to and she understands?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah that's good. That is good, yeah. So would you say then that Mr Reynolds was one of your worst teachers?

Esme: teachers I've come across, yeah.

R: And do you find that those things, switching from tasks, do you find that in all lessons…those same kinds of…

Esme: Yeah.

R: So it would be helpful then wouldn't it if erm some of the things that have helped like having the prompt sheets actually happened in all lessons, if it's all the lessons that….

Mum: and if they've all read Esme's information they should all be providing those things, they should all be sitting her near the front directly facing the board and not next to disruptive children and it isn't helping across the board is it?

R: Could you ask to move do you think, if you felt that you were….or is that not….

Esme: I've tried that before but it didn't work.

R: Oh really. So did you feel that they listened to you then, cos if you've asked for something and they've got your information sheet and you've said 'please can I move' it doesn't sound like they're…not really…..do you feel that they are listening to you when you say you need something?

Esme: I don't really know.

R: No.

Mum: Yes and I think being a quiet, compliant child Esme is often put next to the….

R: Disruptive ones?

Mum: usually the disruptive boy isn't it? Who fights if he is put next to other boys, erm, yeah, which then is distracting and not helpful if you are trying really hard….

Esme: and he pushes my stuff off the table

Mum: Yeah and if you're trying really hard to concentrate and you know focus all of your energies on something and then….

R: You've got someone sat next to you whose disruptive and….

Mum: Pushes things off the desk yeah.

Esme: and talking to the person that's on the other side to me.

R: Oh no, so you're in the middle and their talking over you?

Esme: [Nods]

R: oh gosh yeah that’s even harder. If they could move you which they could [laughs] if they would move you is that something you would like?

Esme: [Nods]

R: So you would quite like all of these things that help?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Cos sometimes some people don’t even though they know it would help, they don’t want to have….different people have experienced it differently….but you clearly do want those things which is a real shame that its erm…

Mum: It is but I guess if you’ve got 5 children with additional needs in a class you’ve got to manage all of those things as well and you go for the ones that the most impact in terms of disruption I guess don’t you?

R: Yeah I suppose so. They do have this….schools seem to do that of placing disruptive children next to the more quieter children which in theory I can kind of see I suppose if you’re think that the quieter child is going to help the more disruptive one to calm down but in practice that doesn’t general happen in my experience, yeah. No. Ok, erm, o you said that you didn’t like PE, but obviously in, I don’t know about in your primary school but you probably do more PE at secondary school than you will have had to at primary school? Do you? Some primary schools do more than others.

Esme: Still two lessons a week.

Mum: About the same yeah.

R: Oh ok, about the same? Is it different kinds of things than you would have done?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Ok. And is it just the actual sport part....or is it….because with PE unlike other lessons you don’t just go in and sit down and start doing it, you’ve got to go

in and get changed and remember all your kit and you know remember not to bring the wrong….I sent my son in with the wrong coloured socks and he was not impressed…..and leaving certain bits behind, so yeah is it that part as well?
Esme: Yeah.
R: So do you struggle with organisational things?
Esme: [nods]
R: Do you have any strategies yourself that you've developed at home maybe?
Esme: No.
R: To help with organising?
Mum: I actually think you're really good at organising, I think you work really hard at it. You pack your bag and remember what you've got…. mostly, don't you.
Esme: but then I pack the old books instead of the new ones
Mum: If only you had some sort of system to put your old books in, in your bedroom
R: [Laughs]
Mum: Oh no wait you do [laughs]
R: ok. So would you, are you quite an organised, quite a tidy person at home?
Esme: no.
R: No.
Esme: [laughs]
R: I tell you what my son, whose got dyspraxia, he's not a tidy….it looks like a whirl wind has occurred in his bedroom, I don't know what he does, and he shares a room with his younger brother, I don't know if you share a room…do you share a room with your sister?

Esme: No.

R: He has to share a room with his younger brother and it's like you could draw a line down the room because his brothers side of the room is immaculate, neat, bed is made and everything is lined up and then his side of the room is just….I just walk in and go 'what happened' and can tidy it and he still does that, and I said to him one day I said "you always know where everything is though", cos if I tidy it up he doesn't know where anything is and I said 'you always know' even though I can't find anything and it does look like this whirlwind if I say 'go and get something' he'll go and get it and he said "well it's my organised chaos" and I just thought it is, its chaos but to him its organised and if I go in and mess with his organisation which to me is organised he just can't cope cos he can't find anything. So yeah it's interesting to know what kind of a person….and that's not actually to do with dyspraxia cos I'm quite messy too and my partners really tidy

Esme: [laughs]

R: but yeah it's good to know cos if you're not an immaculately tidy person but you find your own organisation

Mum: There are certain things you like to organise, aren't there? You're book shelves are all very ordered.

R: Are they?

Esme: [laughs]

Mum: Your coloured pencils very ordered. But then you have a floor-robe

R: I floor-robe, I like that, he has a floor-robe yes. And when I ask him to put his clothes away in his actually wardrobe it involves opening the door picking everything up and going like that [mimics pushing clothes in] and then shutting the door.

Esme: [laughs]

Mum: Does that sound familiar?

R: And I go in to get something and it all falls out, it's quite amazing really. So what is it about the books then and the pencils, why are they ordered?

Esme: Erm probably cos I like them the most.

R: Ah ok, so you like reading?

Esme: Yeah.

R: What kinds of things do you like reading?

Esme: Everything.

R: Everything, that's good.

Esme: I've read 4 books in a week

Mum: 4 books last week yeah.

R: Wow, my goodness that is really impressive. That is very good. So there's not any particular, just like anything and everything? Have you always like reading?

Esme: Yeah.

R: and is that something you always, is that something you could do without any real trouble, you could learn to read and there was nothing really preventing that?

Mum: You could read before you started school.

R: Brilliant. So what is it about reading then?

Esme: I don't know I just love it.

R: Is it all kind of fiction, or is it..

Esme: Yeah mostly fiction.

R: And what about writing, English, you said you had a good English teacher, but do you like writing stories and things?

Mum: Do you finish stories often? Start quite a lot don't you?

R: Start writing stories? Is that just for fun?

Esme: Yeah

R: And so the pencils are they for…..?

Esme: Colouring.

R: Colouring the stories that you're doing? Or just generally?

Esme: Yeah.

R: So are you quite an arty [person?

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: Yeah you do quite a lot of art don't you, but not messy art, you don't like painting…any funny textures.

R: Ah. Ok. So funny textures. Do you remember other things you haven't liked that are funny textures?

Esme: Yeah files.

Mum: Nail files.

R: Ok.

Esme: Mash potato.

R: Mash potato.

Mum: What about the beach on Sunday? You put your shoes back on because the sand felt like mud.

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: and you didn't like the texture.

R: Ah really.

Esme: [Laughs]

R: I remember taking my son when he was….he would have been 3…..and we took him to the beach and I'd just had my middle one and he was a tiny baby, and I sort of took him and this was before I knew, I knew there was something but I didn’t know what, and this was before I knew he had dyspraxia and I was saying ‘go on, go and run off’ and he wouldn’t take his shoes off and I said ‘you’re not running around in those shoes cos you’re going to make them filthy, take them off because you’re on a beach’ and he would not get off the mat and he actually would sit on the mat and scream if I tried to put him on the sand, he wouldn’t have and it wasn’t until later when I knew what it was, and now he still won’t run on the sand cos he doesn’t like the feel of it so he’ll put his shoes on and wreck his shoes and now of course I know what it is so I won’t force him to, but at the time I was thinking ‘you’re a 3 year old why are you not running off’.

Mum: Yes

R: ‘What is going on here’ but now he can actually speak and say what it is yeah sand was a real….

Mum: Yeah, I don’t think you mind sand do you? It’s the wet muddy sand.

Esme: Yeah.

R: And mash potato. What is it about mash potato?

Esme: [shrugs]

R: You just don’t like the texture?

Esme: Or the taste.

R: Or the taste. What’s your favourite food then?

Esme: Don’t know.

Mum: just like food I think, apart from mash potato.

R: So this academic year is running away really quickly isn’t it, we blink and it’ll be the summer holidays and then you’ll have one more year before you have to decide GCSE things. Do you have any idea at the moment what kind of…..how many subjects do you get to choose? I know my sons school was 4.

Mum: I'm not really sure, so you have to do a language, you have to do the two English obviously, you have to do maths and you have to do either 2 or 3 sciences so say that's 6 so yeah it must be 4 you get to choose.

R: Do you know what kinds of things you might choose?

Esme: I know what I want to be when I'm older.

R: Ah what's that?

Esme: Midwife.

R: Oh wow, ok. How long have you wanted to be a midwife?

Esme: A while.

Mum: 2 or 3 years I suppose.

R: ok. SO do you know what it is you need to do to get there?

Esme: Erm, sort of. I've talked to a few people about it.

R: So your sciences would be important won't they?

Esme: Yeah.

R: I suppose what GCSE's would you need in addition?

Mum: You'd need English and Maths.

R: yeah your English and Maths but they're compulsory and your sciences but they're compulsory but then I suppose it would be free range on your choices

Mum: just choose what you enjoy.

R: Choose what you enjoy yeah.

Mum: I think you have to do something practical so Art or home economics or DT, you have to do a history or a geography I think, do you have to RE or ethics? I think you have to do one of those don't you?

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: And then you get to choose another one I think.

R: Mmmm are you looking forward to that?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah, it's quite a nice time I think you get to….I remember my son saying 'yeah I can ditch the subjects I don't like' that's what he was looking forward to most was being able to not do certain subjects. You said when your mum said you have to do a history or a geography you said geography, do you still not like history after that teacher last year?

Esme: No I just prefer geography.

R: ok. And so what about at home you have a 10 year old sister is it?

Esme: Yeah.

R: How's things with your 10 year old sister?

Esme: [giggles] sometimes good sometimes not.

R: Yeah that's quite normal.

Esme: Sometimes we get on sometimes we don't.

R: That's quite normal I think. Quite nice that you have your own space though.

Esme: Yep.

Mum: Yes very lucky.

R: Yes my daughter has her own room but the boys currently share.

Mum: You did share for a while in the old house didn't you?

R: You prefer it in your own….

Esme: [nods]

R: Yep.

Mum: Well you've got the big room in this house as well.

Esme: Yeah where I can do my own thing in it or to it.

R: and is she quite good if you shut your bedroom door? Does she come in and pester you or…

Esme: [nods]

R: Oh she does

Esme: When I was getting dressed this morning.

Mum: It's because she loves you

R: Yeah, it's all normal sibling things.

Mum: I would say they get on very well.

R: Yes, just have the…..

Mum: Yeah the odd

Esme: [giggles]

R: I think it would be strange if siblings said 'oh yeah we never argue' I'd think why, most siblings do. And does she go to the primary, so shell be at the primary school that you went to?

Esme: Yeah.

R: So she'll come up, so she'll be coming up next year wont she in September?

Esme: Yeah.

R: How do you feel about that? Are you ok with that?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah that'll be quite nice for her having a big sister there.

Esme: Yeah, that's what I missed about starting.

R: mmmmm not having an older person there?

Esme: [nods]

R: Yeah.

Esme: I had people that I knew from friends of mums but erm yeah…..

R: Yeah that'd be….I remember saying to my eldest when my middle one went up 'now you are going to…' they have to get two buses as well it's about an hours journey for them, I said 'Yeah you are going….

Mum: you're really lucky cos it's a coach, a school coach

R: A school coach

Mum: A school coach and that's it it's not a public bus

R: Ah no this is two different buses and the buses always get cancelled and things and I said 'you are going to look after him aren't you cos he won't know the route' and he said 'oh yeah no no I will' so he got him on the first bus and then he forgot that he was meant to be looking after him so he got off and luckily my little one got to school, he's very resourceful and I said to my eldest ' you were meant to look after him' and he was like 'well I go him on the bus', 'I know you're meant to get him on the other bus too and into the gate' but after that he was very kind.

Esme: [laughs]

R: But yeah he just forgot. It's helpful if you've got just one coach….

Esme: Which goes into school so…..

R: Ah.

Mum: Yeah and picks you up really almost outside the house, you're very lucky.

Esme: [giggles]

R: Does it take long to get there?

Mum: no, it's only 3 miles, traffic crawls but it's yeah so.

R: SO if you, you've said that most teachers don't really do much to help and you've had, we've talked about one particularly bad teacher, and erm one particularly good teacher, if you could tell anybody, or if you could tell a teacher one thing about dyspraxia, so not necessarily about you but about dyspraxia, so it'd be something that you would wish teachers to know….

Esme: I don't I know that's a hard one

R: It is a hard one, yeah, there might not be, I just wondered if there was something sometimes that you thought 'god I wish they knew this' maybe there's lots of things. Do you know anyone else with dyspraxia?

Esme: [shakes head]

R: No.

Mum: Do we [inaudible]

Esme: [inaudible]

Mum: oh.

R: No?

Esme: But I'm not in contact with anyone.

Mum: You're not in contact with them anymore no.

R: Oh you did know someone but you're not in contact ah ok.

Mum: Amy?

Esme: Oh yeah Amy.

R: Is that someone at school?

Mum: It's quite nice she's a grown up.

Esme: I run the fun run with her didn't I?

Mum: You did run the fun run with her yes

R: Oh really oh ok. And how did you meet Amy?

Esme: Er her daughter goes to my primary school so…

R: Oh I see. Ah that's really good.

Esme: Yeah.

R: And so through her daughter you found out that she also has dyspraxia and got talking?

Esme: I think mum found out

Mum: I think I might have mentioned it so her daughter's younger than my youngest but erm we've got a mutual friend in common and I'd mentioned something about, actually it might have been the last research project we did, cos Amy's actually a teacher so, and Id mentioned it and she said 'I've got dyspraxia' and so it was quite nice I think to find somebody who'd been through…

R: Yes.

Mum: the difficulties of school and come out the other side a successful person so.

R: Yeah. Did you know there's a famous, a few famous people who have got dyspraxia?

Mum: Who do you know?

Esme: It's someone form Harry Potter.

R: Yes, Daniel Radcliffe who plays Harry Potter. And do you know the band Florence and the Machine? She's also got Dyspraxia, and then Richard Branson has reportedly, he's got dyslexia he's spoken out about dyslexia

Mum: Yes he does yeah

R: but he's reportedly got dyspraxia as well.

Esme: What about Eddie?

Mum: Eddie?

Esme: Clark.

Mum: Eddie Clark's got dyspraxia has he? Oh ok so there was a boy in Esme's class in Primary school.

Esme: He's in my class.

Mum: he's in your class now? Oh ok.
Esme: I sit next to him in I.T.

R: So you said at the beginning that you, you know when I said what do you think of your dyspraxia and you said not really sure…

Esme: [giggled]

R: Is it nice to know of other people

Esme: Yeah.

R: Cos you said you met, and I can't remember her name, see I'm useless with names…

Esme: Amy

R: Amy, so is it nice to meet people who have it as well?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah and what is it about cos Amy is a grown up, you've done a fun run with her, do you talk to her about it and things or…?

Mum: Did you or not?

Esme: I don't know. I don't think so.

R: No. But is it nice to know of other people?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Yeah.

Esme: She's really nice as well.

Mum: She is really nice.

R: Is there anything else about your dyspraxia or about school or that you think would be good to know about?

Esme: [Shakes head]

R: No. Is there anything you think that we might not have covered? [asks mum]

Mum: Erm just I think in terms of secondary school is that, well in primary and secondary school I think there is a lack of real in-depth awareness or all special educational needs, I'm sure you know this but dyspraxia in particular among staff and its really hit and miss as to whether they get it or understand it and obviously because there's no, no two people are exactly the same its really difficult.

R: Yeah it's really hard, yeah.

Mum: And I think in primary school you know the children in your class so much better because you're with them all day every day whereas there are some teachers that you only have once a week aren't there?

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: Once a fortnight even some of them cos they run a two week time table, erm and so they can't possibly know all of those children and get them all so I think there's a lot of difference from primary to secondary in that respect and erm just a lack of awareness of what could help potentially, yeah and I think obviously because Esme is you know is a bright child and is quite quiet and compliant, you know she's still achieving and so there's much less requirement really to put stuff in place to help her, because you're clever and still achieving stuff.

R: Do you think they don't understand how much effort goes into the….

Mum: yeah absolutely

R: Goes into the achieving

Mum: Yes absolutely, and actually just putting a few things in place could make things much easier for you to do your best and potentially even make you able to do a bit more, to achieve a bit more, I think you work really hard, don't you? And yeah like you say there's a lot of effort that goes into just you know focusing your attention and paying attention and sitting still and yeah being in a classroom and dealing with all the noises and distractions and cos you do have a tendency to respond to everything that's going on around you so if someone walks past the window you'll be looking, or if a small baby makes a cute noise over there its quite hard to ignore isn't it? Erm so yeah just the amount of effort involved in….

R: Staying on task yeah….

Mum: staying on task is really quite great.

R: yeah and how do you feel at the end of the day? Even though you finish at 5 past 3?

Mum: Which is quite nice.

R: Which is quite nice, but how do you feel having had all that going on all day where you've had to stay on task?

Esme: Tired.

R: You feel tired? Yeah.

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: Certainly when you were younger as well we'd say that obviously the effort of kind of doing all of those things and kind of you know remaining well behaved in school then noticing outbursts at home, which are much better now aren't they?

R: Yeah, mmm. And what do you think that was? Do you remember that?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Yeah and were you aware that you were having these outbursts at home? When you were having them?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Yeah and what was that do you think? Why did you…….my son had the same kinds of outbursts so erm you're not alone, in fact all my children have outbursts [laughs]

Mum: Yeah I think all children do I think don't they yeah

R: but he did go through, and actually still does occasionally go through phases where it’s almost every day so erm you’re not alone in that but do you know what made you feel…..

Esme: No.

R: just need to explode a bit?

Esme: [Nods]

R: Sometimes it is the..…well wonder if it is the exhaustion and the pent up having to have been a certain way…

Mum: Conformed and yeah

R: and conform all day when that sometimes you go home and it’s….

Mum: yeah the safe place…..

R: and an explosion needs to happen, yeah. Have you found ways to deal with that now or has it just changed?

Esme: I don’t know.

Mum: I think they were worse when we were at the old school, erm…

Esme: Yeah

Mum: But that could just be a maturity developmental change as well as a different environment but…

R: you didn’t like the old school though did you?

Esme: [Shakes head]

Mum: Not very much

R: No. So that may, yeah, do you want to tell me about the old school or do you still not want to?

Esme: I don’t mind talking about it.

R: ok. What was it about the old school that was really so bad?

Esme: I don’t know erm………..[long pause] that’s hard.

Mum: you think back.

R: Only think back if you want to, I don’t want you to feel like you have to.

Esme: I don’t know.

Mum: Was it friends or teachers or….

Esme: Friends

Mum: Ok what about them?

Esme: Well….they…weren’t….that…nice

Mum: Who weren’t that nice?

Esme: the friends and the teachers, there were some teachers that were amazing and some that weren’t

R: That weren’t. and the ones that weren’t amazing is that you being very kind saying they weren’t amazing? Cos we weren’t amazing sounds like ‘well they were a bit alright’ were they really not nice?

Esme: No.

R: No and do you think….was that because of anything you were finding difficult or….why do you think they weren’t nice?

Esme: I don’t know.

R: You don’t know.

Mum: Were you thinking of anyone in particular? Any experience in particular? Any year group?

Esme: Reception and year 6.

Mum: So those teachers then, do you think they understood you?

Esme: No.

R: Did they tell you off a lot? Was that part of it?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah and was that for things that you were really trying hard but they just didn't see that you were trying?

Esme: Yeah

Mum: I do remember an incident in reception actually where… well Esme could before she started school and so I think that's not usually a good thing because I think you end up being bored in reception if you can already read, erm and Esme's an October birthday so she's one of the oldest in the year anyway. I do remember an incident actually, so you could read which is fine but I think sort of sitting on the carpet doing phonics was a bit boring because you could already do those things but equally that you found hard I mean I don't think you ever drew a picture until you were at least 5, it just wasn't something that you did and so that fine motor skills wasn't really there when you were 4 or 5 erm and there was a sheet I think they had to write the letter 'R' like 500 times and then colour in the picture of the things that began with the letter 'R' and Esme's colouring in was certainly not within the lines and….

Esme: I did that with [inaudible]

Mum: Did you? There was a comment from the teacher saying 'this is not colouring in'. Yeah which erm yeah….

R: Oooh.

Mum: Was quite indicative actually of her style.

R: And did she say things….

Esme: But reception

Mum: Yeah I know

R: Did she say those things to you?

Esme: Not that I know of but it was a long time ago so

R: Yeah. Yes its erm, some teachers.

Mum: and the year 6 teacher as well at that school, I don't think she got you at all did she?

Esme: No. Friends and…

Mum: Yeah she didn't really understand who your friends were and she would just lunch you with people she thought you were friends with but you weren't really erm….

Esme: I had more friends in younger years I'd say

Mum: Yes

R: Ok

Esme: Or older years I'm in now

R: So the friends that you had when you were in primary school were in the year below you?

Esme: No, at the top of the school and then when I was like younger it would be the older ones yeah

R: ok. So did you find it difficult with the friends in your group in your class?

Mum: Yeah

Esme: Yeah.

R: Do you know why you found that?

Esme: [shrugs shoulders]

R: Just didn't get on with them?

Esme: just didn't get on with them

R: What kinds of things did they play in the playground? Did you like all the things they used to play?

Esme: Not really.

R: No. Yeah sometimes it's hard…boys tend to play football…sounds a really sexist thing to say…

Mum: But they do, that's what boys do at play time.

R: That's what they do at play time they play football but erm with girls it seems to be different with different years.

Mum: Yeah

R: Seems to change quite a lot so er, what would you do at play time?

Esme: I don't know.

R: No.

Mum: I think sometimes you used to sit in the corner and read a book.

Esme: [giggles]

R: Ah yes you're love of books.

Esme: Or sharpen pencils

Mum: Or sharpen pencils ok. And I think when you were sort of near the end of primary school I think you used to go and play with the reception children didn't you?

Esme: Yep.

Mum: look after them.

R: Yeah. And was that because it was something to do or was it nicer to go and spend time with them and look after them?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah. So at home, cos its quite a busy schedule you've got going on at home

Esme: [Giggles]

R: going on with the…and obviously with the 4 books a week that you're reading, I'm very impressed…

Mum: Yes that's due to not going to sleep at your bed time mostly

R: Do you find it difficult to go to sleep

Esme: [Nods]

R: Yeah. What is it? What is it that makes it difficult to sleep? Do you go up at your bedtime? Whatever time that might be

Esme: [Nods]

R: So you go up with the intention of going to sleep

Esme: [giggles]

Mum: Not sure you intend to

R: Kind of, no.

Mum: I think you intend to read

R: Your mums intention to go to sleep. Is it that you can’t sleep or is it that you just want to read a book?

Esme: Both.

R: Bit of both.

Mum: You’ve never been a good sleeper

Esme: [laughs]

R: No. has it always been hard to get to sleep, once you’re asleep is it ok or?

Esme: [Shakes head]

R: No.

Mum: But you’re a really light sleeper

Esme: Yeah.

Mum: Esme didn’t actually sleep through the night until she was 5

R: Right

Mum: and I’m not convinced that you sleep through the night now actually completely

Esme: I can be woken up by the buzz of the tooth brush

Mum: Yeah

R: Oh really

Mum: yeah and I mean and up until you were probably 10 or 11 erm if we walked up the stairs to go to bed she would wake up, just the slightest noise

R: Slightest noise, well that must make you even more exhausted then if you're waking up constantly.

Esme: I do get more sleep at granny and grandads though.

Mum: Do you.

Esme: Yeah cos the room I'm in it's like the other end of the house

Mum: Oh so it's quiet

R: Ah, ok

Esme: So, well it is near the stairs but grandads quite a quiet…

Mum: Stair creeper

Esme: [laughs] stair creeper. The only thing that would wake me up is the dog crying or something. Its better in the new house than the old house I'd say.

R: and the old house, have you moved far?

Mum: No, about 10 miles 15 miles.

R: Ah ok.

Mum: it's from one side of Cambridge to the other.

R: Yeah. I hadn't quite realised how big Cambridge was until everyone was going well this is Cambridge but then there is various stops and I was thinking they can't all be Cambridge but then Cambridge was another stop on [laughs]

Mum: Yeah another two yeah. And getting bigger as everywhere is…

R: Exactly yeah. So you were saying that you know what you want to do

Esme: Yeah.

R: So obviously to be a midwife you'll have to go to university

Esme: Yep.

R: So you looking forward to that?

Esme: I know which university I want to go to [laughs]

R: Wow, ok, so hang on a minute…. after you're GCSE's where are you going to stay….

Mum: We will discuss this nearer the time

R: Which one are you going to go to?

Esme: Keele

R: Keele, ok

Esme: [Laughs]

R: [Laughs] Your mum might have other things on her mind

Esme: You went there!

Mum: I did go there yes and my mum went there too

R: ah

Mum: So it would be a bit of a family thing wouldn't it but I think trying to decide that when you're 13 is a bit silly actually, it's really nice to have a goal and a direction

R: Yeah got to have a goal

Mum: Yeah but don't be so fixed in it that actually you might quite like to go somewhere else or do something else and you feel that you can't change your mind.

Esme: mmmm

R: What is it, Keele, because that's where your mum went and your gran went?

Esme: And it looks nice.

R: And it looks nice.

Mum: and there’s one crucial point about it I think that attracts you doesn’t it and that’s that it’s not in a city

Esme: Yeah and its er yeah.

R: So do you like the country?

Esme: Yeah

Mum: Yeah you don’t really like crowds do you?

Esme: no, I struggled in London and Birmingham.

R: I was going to say London’s its….even I don’t like…..I’ve lived in London all my life and still….every year we go up to the Lake District, have you ever been up there?

Mum: We’ve driven through on the way to Scotland, that’s the hilly bit on the way to Scotland.

R: The hilly bit on the way to Scotland yeah, and its lovely and every year I come home and think ‘I don’t want to go back to London’ everyone is so friendly and its…not slow…but it’s a slower pace of life

Mum: Peaceful

R: peaceful and ah and then you go back to London, so yeah somewhere not quite so busy maybe. And do you now before that, because your mum’s right….it’s good to have a goal but your mum’s right that’s quite a long way off before you sign the papers saying I want to go to Keele you might want to go somewhere else, but before that you’ll have to do A-levels or erm some other form of…do you where you’ll stay? Is there a 6th form at your school or?

Esme: No, but I know where I want [giggles]

Mum: No but she knows where she wants to go

R: You know where you want to go? I like this [laughs] where’s that?

Esme: St Albans

R: Oh Ok.

Mum: So that's about 8/10 miles that way [points]

R: That way, yep, and that's another quiet, well quiet-ish…

Mum: Yes it's a small town

R: Quiet-ish small town, yeah, its lovely St Albans actually.

Mum: Yeah although it is a big, yeah St Albans is a lovely town, although it is a big secondary school that has a 6th Form

Esme: Both of my uncles work there.

Mum: Yes both of your uncles work there.

R: Ah. So is there something about….because both of these places have connections with family….is there something about….

Esme: I don't know

R: If both your uncles didn't work there would you be thinking of going to St Albans

Esme: [Nods] Yeah

R: Oh you would. Ok. But the added bonus is that your uncles are there. And do you get on with, cos you've mentioned your nan and granddad and uncles, do you get on with all of those…all your family?

Esme: yeah.

R: and do they get you and understand you do you think?

Esme: Yeah.

R: Yeah that's good. And it's good to have that, I think schools can be such hard places generally that it's good to have people outside of school that really do get you and understand, because it might not seem like it but it makes it a lot easier I think. And what about your sister? Does she get you or is she just…?

Esme: Yeah I think she gets me

Mum: Yeah I thinks so. She's quite, it's a bit of role reversal sometimes, she's quite protective of you, yeah if there's something she thinks you'll find difficult she'll help wont she

Esme: Yeah

R: That's quite sweet.

Mum: She was extremely cross with the History teacher

R: Oh was she

Esme: She was giving him the hard stare and I was just looking the other way [giggles]

R: Oh no [laughs] oh that's brilliant

Esme: She is a character.

Mum: She does like to make sure you're ok doesn't she?

R: Mmmm that's nice, yeah that is nice, I can just picture that now, sitting there giving the evil stares at the history teacher.

Esme: She didn't come to this one

Mum: She didn't come to this one no, we had to leave her at home

R: Oh because you've done some research studies before haven't you? What did you have to do for that?

Mum: Can you remember?

Esme: No not really

Mum: It was looking at the relationship between executive functioning and dyspraxia and weather there's a link so there were a lot of the ABC movement type testing and then some erm sequencing and executive functioning

R: Ah so this one is very very different, this is having a little chat in a pub [laughs] compared to making you do things

Esme: yeah [laughs]

Mum: Yeah like hoping on one leg, and walking along a straight line and

Esme: Throwing balls at walls and me just throwing it over the wall [laughs]

Mum: I'm just trying to think some of the test you did where you had to say word association type things

Esme: She said I was really good at that, she was amazed

R: that's all that reading

Mum: That'll be it yeah. It was quite interesting that one wasn't it?

Esme: Yeah, done that twice.

Mum: She's done that twice, you've done a follow up study on that one haven't you?

R: Excellent, it's very…

Mum: That was with Goldsmiths University I think

R: Ok, did you have to go down, you went down there?

Esme: No they came here.

R: They came here, I was going to say otherwise you have to go into London

Esme: Yeah they said do you want to go to London…..Noooo [exaggerated No]

R: No I think I might have said to you, you can come to me at the university if you want

Esme: Yeah

R: Yeah some people want to but….

Mum: Yeah were not very keen on public transport are you?

Esme: Yeah

Mum: Yeah I think there's crowds and all sorts of things, and Esme was actually on a coach crash a couple of years ago as well

R: Oh goodness me

Mum: yeah so a lot of anxiety around

Esme: yeah

R: Did you always find public transport difficult before the crash?

Esme: Erm more as I got older, so when I was younger I didn't really mind, didn't really mind planes or trains but as I got older

R: Yeah, and was that on a school coach?

Esme: yeah school trip

R: Goodness me. And how was that, which is a silly question to ask, but how was it from your perspective?

Esme: Very scary

R: Very scary, mmm, was it in this country or were you on a trip or

Esme: This country yeah

R: Right. And were you far from home when it happened?

Esme: North…on the way to Manchester

R: Was that on the way to a trip?

Esme: We didn't actually go, we spent 4 hours in a field, well I spent one hour in a field

Mum: Yes you spent three hours in an ambulance yes

R: Oh my goodness were you injured?

Esme: broke my arm

R: Broke your…

Mum: She broke her arm

R: Broke your arm oh my goodness me

Mum: Yeah although we didn't find out until afterwards actually but they were treating her for shock in the ambulance

R: That sounds terrifying and how old were you then?

Esme: It was the second to last day of primary school

Mum: you were eleven weren't you

R: Oh no

Esme: When I found out my arm was broken I went and told my year 6 teacher and she said "that's why you didn't eat any lunch" [giggles]

R: [Laughs] that's a funny thing to say. Oh dear, so you didn't like public transport before but you really don't like it now?

Esme: Yeah

R: Ok I can understand that, that makes sense. But that's all recovered from now. So now I understand why we like Keele University and St Albans

Mum: Yeah

R: Plus they're both very lovely places

Mum: This is very true

R: I was going to say, it's not just because [laughs] they're both really lovely places, good choices. Ok, is there anything else, cos I'm very aware that you've got to get back, and you're probably very exhausted after school and having spoken to me but is there anything else that you've got a burning desire to tell me now?

Esme: No.

Mum: Are you happy?

Esme: [nods]

R: yeah? Good.

Mum: You're a happy person aren't you?

R: You seemed happy….you seem yeah you seem very happy, and I am still amazed at those 4 books a week. I brought my boys, for Christmas….

Mum: Not every week

R: No I know [laughs] for Christmas I was trying to encourage my lot to read more so I brought them those kindles and I thought I'll get books and you can share them on the library sort of thing and then I've only got to buy possibly only one book and you share it out and actually that really got them in to reading, I couldn't buy them quick enough, so actually I'm going to have to get some good titles cos they won't just pick a book up, I have to say "what about this one"

Mum: this one yeah

R: You know and the kind of books I read are not interesting to 12 year old, 15 year olds so I have to, so it's always nice to hear someone who says I love reading, you think see, I shall have to get you to talk to my children [laughs] rad more

Mum: Read more its good

R: it is. Well thank you very much for talking to me and yeah I will let you know when it gets to the point of no return, but if you suddenly decide that either you don't want me to use anything that we've talked about then let me know or if you suddenly, when we go away, think oh I should have told her this or actually I'd really like her to know that then you know you can email me things or you can phone me and I can come back down or we could chat over the phone or anything like that because sometimes it's hard when you're put on the spot and it's not until you go home and you think about think about things so if there's anything else that you want to add at any point then let me know and we can arrange that. Thank you very much.

Esme: you're welcome.

Mum: Can I just add something before we finish off, that I meant to tell you earlier actually is that as well as there being a real vast difference in response of teachers there's also I would say that Esme has got a really spikey profile of abilities so you’re absolutely amazing at some things aren’t you and then some things you find really quite tricky, so yeah there’s this disparity between…

R: Yeah, I think one thing that a lot of people don’t understand about dyspraxia is that not only can people have…its very common…it is common to have that spikey profile, but also that spikey profile can change from day to day

Mum: Yes

R: So what you could do one day doesn’t mean that you could do it the next day and then you might be able to do it again and then it all depends and so I think a lot of the misunderstandings are because people think well ok she did it yesterday or he did it yesterday so why can’t they do it – oh you’re just being difficult or you’re being lazy, why can’t you try harder?’ and it isn’t that at all and I just want to go to every school and go ‘oooh will you listen’ because it isn’t actually that you’re not trying in fact you’re probably trying really hard but just today it’s just not all coming together and I think there’s a lot of things like that that are missing, you know it’s all very well like I said having these professionals going “this is what dyspraxia is” but it’s all these other bits that erm really need to get erm…..a PhD is like I said really long boring horrible blurrh too many words [laughs]

Mum: have you ever read mine?

Esme: No I’ve looked at the pictures [giggles]

Mum: looked at the pictures excellent

R: Excellent, so what I’d like to do from the PhD is produce some kind of nice to look at and easier to you know easier to read, I don’t mean it like that, I just mean edited version that then I could sort of give to schools or have it on a website that people could download that would have things like that in it and have somethings like, you know the reason I said is there anything you’d like to tell a teacher is to have some kind of ‘this is what children are saying’ you know so erm, so following the PhD I will be making this much more….I can’t go round to ever school, but if we could have sort of something that gets people to understand just some of those issues, even if they don’t really understand dyspraxia you know as much as we’d like if they could understand some of those things and understand you now because you did it yesterday doesn’t mean you know that you can do it today and that doesn’t mean that you’re not trying. So yeah I think there’s a lot of those things that really are missing that would really help people and that maybe if they understood they would be more helpful to the students.

Mum: And I think teachers would say that it’s got to be short and sharp and to the point and have practical things they can do

R: Yeah exactly. And which is why they’re not going to read my PhD [laughs]

Mum: yeah they’re not going to read your PhD no [laughs]. Your form tutor last year, he actually requalified as a teacher so it was his first year teaching last year, and erm so he met with all of us beforehand, he had not really heard of dyspraxia at all but was keen for me to give him four main points and that was fine and I did say to him you know I’ve got quite a good book if you’d be interested? And he just said “no offense but no, I just don’t have time for that sort of thing”

R: Well that’s the thing yeah, they need a poster or something and the trouble is trying to condense it all, which part, cos you’re going to leave something out, it’s not easy to condense. I did give a talk recently they asked me to come and do an hours talk and it was load of erm teachers and SENCO’s and occupational therapists as well and so I give this whole talk on what dyspraxia is and how you can help in schools and what the issues are and you know when you sit there and talk to people and you think oh they’re just all snoozing and I just thought oh this is just…they're not interested….and I tried to make it really fun you know loads of graphics but afterwards everyone came up and said 'oh my god thank you that was really interesting' and I thought oh ok, maybe they won't read a book but maybe they will sit and listen to half an hour or an hour but of course it's getting them all together.

Mum: Yes

R: Yes we'll do something, we'll conquer one day [laughs]

Appendix Q: PhD-8 (C) Callum Interview transcript.

(R: = researcher Callum: = participant)

[participants name has been changed to protect anonymity and identifying names and/or features in the interview have also been changed and italicized to protect anonymity]

(Interview took place at participants home, participant was interviewed on his own)

R: Only I will hear it [turning on Dictaphone]

Callum: Feels weird [laughs]

R: Try and ignore it, only I am ever gonna hear that, as soon as I have typed up what we've said I am going to delete it.

Callum: I don't care about that…I dunno I'm just asking

R: yeah it takes a while to get used to it being there, I will type it up, change your name, anyone else's name that you mention and any identifying features, I will give you fictitious names erm…and any…so if you mention the name of your school or the street where you live or anything like that that could identify you I change it all anyway

Callum: No I don't care

R: and then that [points at Dictaphone] gets deleted this audio so no one hears that. So, you are one of currently one of 8 children who I am interviewing all of whom have dyspraxia, so they're all aged from 11 to 17 so no one is going to be able to identify what you've said other than if you read the PhD and everyone else's, which if you want to you can…you're more than welcome to read my PhD, but if you read them all…because there's only you and seven other people and at maximum there might be another couple of people, but you would be able to identify the things you’ve said erm but only you, no one else’s is gonna know that that is what Callum said.

Callum: Ok.

R: Ok, so I am doing interviews with children erm of secondary school age to find out about what it’s like to have dyspraxia.

Callum: Yeah

R: So, I will ask you questions and then give me as much information as you like and at any point if you don’t want to carry on then just tell me to stop and if you don’t want to answer anything then you can tell me to stop

Callum: Stop now [laughs] I’m joking [laughs]

R: [laughs] ok, so can you tell me when you were first aware that you had dyspraxia?

Callum: That’s what I guessed you were gonna say….erm…[tapping fingers on the table]…..erm from what I can remember I’d probably say about…….year 3…..

R: Year 3 so that’s……oh how old would you be in year 3

Callum: I don’t know how old I’d be…..Megan is in year 5….erm

R: who is Megan?

Callum: My little sister

R: Ah ok, and how old is she?

Callum: she’s 11….no 10…she’s 10…..so I was probably like…..

R: so that’s aged 10 is year 5, 9 is year 4, 8 would be year 3

Callum: 8 then

R: 8ish, so that was the first time you were aware that you had dyspraxia

Callum: Yeah

R: Did you know it was dyspraxia then or were you just aware that you…

Callum: I think my mum said something about it but I just knew I was really clumsy and everything and wasn't good at sports

R: Right ok, so that's the first year of juniors isn't it?

Callum: yeah.

R: so you were aware that you were clumsy and not very good at sports, were there other things you remember about dyspraxia or about…

Callum: What at that age?

R: Yeah.

Callum: erm well just really being made fun of for being bad at sports and….that's it really

R: Who made fun of you for being bad at sports?

Callum: Just kids at school, just like normal things, but other than that it didn't affect me that much until I got older

R: Right

Callum: Yeah

R: So what they were mean about you not being good at sports?

Callum: yeah.

R: In what way were you not good at sports?

Callum: well…I just couldn't….for example they play football at lunch and break and everything and I just wouldn't join in, or I wouldn't be allowed to join in just cos I wasn't good at it or whatever and they'd be like 'oh no I don't want him on my team, don't want him my team'

R: and what was that like if they didn't want you on their team?

Callum: er…..it's not the nicest thing in the world [nervous laughs] but I just go sit down somewhere

R: oh ok, so when they were playing football at lunchtimes ad you didn't want to join in cos…what you didn't…

Callum: well sometimes they just wouldn't let me join in

R: Right ok

Callum: and sometimes I would just think 'well they're probably not gonna let me join in what's the point'

R: so then what would you do?

Callum: I'd just go and sit down.

R: ok

Callum: For an hour

R: What on your own?

Callum: Yeah

R: And did no one come over and…

Callum: I'd sometimes come over and talk to erm…Henry and people like, people who were nice to me but briefly cos they'd go and play football as well

R: So would they come over to you?

Callum: Yeah yeah some people would come over to me occasionally but sometimes I'd just sit there and watch

R: ok, ok and so that was lunchtime and breaks?

Callum: Yeah

R: What was it like in class?

Callum: erm….Maths I just…I know it's got nothing to do with dyspraxia really but Maths I was just….no…..so PE wasn't good either obviously

R: Maths no?

Callum: Maths was just no [laughs]

R: Maths was no [laughs]

Callum: Maths was no [laughs]

R: Ok

Callum: Maths was no for a very long time, erm PE obviously cos of sports I just wasn't good at I didn't enjoy other than….erm dodge ball, gymnastics…cos it wasn't really gymnastics you would just climb stuff

R: So were you good at them or you enjoyed them?

Callum: I enjoyed gymnastics but I was still scared of heights I wouldn't do any of the high up stuff

R: Right and what would happen when you wouldn't do any of the high up stuff?

Callum: Oh I just wouldn't do them, I'd just I'd just go on the mats for most of it

R: and what did the teacher say?

Callum: Well they'd try and get me to go up and I'd be like "no"

R: ok, and were they nice to you?

Callum: blaah they were just like "why don't you want to go up?" and I'd just go to one side and be "I don't like heights" but yeah….they didn't really mind that much cos it was more just a everyone just have fun kind of thing it wasn't like 'we'll teach you this on this height' and everything

R: Did they try and get you to do something else?

Callum: Not really

R: So they just left you sitting on the mat

Callum: they'd be like "oh go do some forward rolls or something on the mat" which I couldn't really do either [laughs] honestly I would roll to the sides sometimes, I don't even know how that's physically possible but found a way

R: That's impressive, side rolls.

Callum: But yeah

R: Ok, so PE wasn’t great but you quite liked gymnastics and stuff, parts of it and the football wasn’t fantastic and Maths is no

Callum: Maths just [laughs]

R: Ok, what was it like getting around school like actual in the building?

Callum: Oh like going from point A to point B like walking around?

R: mmmm

Callum: Erm wasn’t that bad, I mean I’m clumsy in general so Id trip up occasionally but wasn’t that hard it was just kind of normal.

R: OK.

Callum: But yeah…

R: and what about teachers? Were they…how did you get on with teachers in primary school?

Callum: Well [laughs] year 3…start off with year 3…

R: Do you not remember much before year 3?

Callum: Oh no I remember some of it….I remember something really vividly like really properly, but it’s not going in…….

R: Ok

Callum: but erm we were drawing angels with Miss Edwards and Chris Dawson was like make your angel do a fart [laughs] and then he stole my photo and went up and showed Miss Edwards and I got like told off [laughs] and I was like oh….[laughs] it was like the most stupid thing

R: Oh no

Callum: I’d drawn like what was meant to be this little angel with a little like cloud coming out the back and Chris just went and snitched on me right away on purpose [laughs]

R: [laughs] ok, so that’s not going in…well delete that bit

Callum: well it can…..but it just doesn't apply I just thought it was funny that's the only thing I remember and Logan slamming my head against the thing

R: Ok so you remember Logan slamming your head against?

Callum: we had these bench things

R: What in the infants?

Callum: Yeah infants, round the back down near the gates there are wooden things and I think it was on there

R: Ah why did he do that?

Callum: he was just bullying me, I was with…I think I was with Chloe cos she was the only one that would talk to me…I think this was in year 1

R: Right

Callum: yeah it was in year 1 that's when I started erm and we were just playing cards…with playing cards…normal playing cards...erm and yeah he just came up to me and started picking on me and stuff

R: Do you remember what he was picking on you about?

Callum: I think it was actually because I was sitting alone playing cards…well not alone…just out of everything

R: mmmm

Callum: just cos it looked a bit weird but…

R: So he started on…picking on you?

Callum: Yeah until like year ….I can't even remember….quite a while, all the way up until I think year ….start of year 4 cos I remember we were friends during the rest of year 4 yeah…

R: mmmm blimey, so you remember that about infants?

Callum: Yeah I don't remember much more about infants I think all my teachers in infants were really good, I liked Miss Edwards a lot

R: What was it about her you liked?

Callum: She was just …erm….really friendly and she kind of…..obviously I didn't know properly what dyspraxia was then but she still kind of…I don't know she just managed to teacher me in a way which I got, like teach…I don't know how to put it in to words properly but just we would be doing something in class, I wouldn't get it, I'd ask her and she'd be able to explain it and then I'd get it like that [snaps his fingers]

R: Ok

Callum: it was like…I've had a couple of teachers like that throughout school

R: yeah, so she was able to change her way of explaining it so you could understand it?

Callum: Yeah, it took a couple of tries but then one time I'm just like [snaps fingers] and then yeah she kind of got it from there.

R: ok, ok, and she was just very friendly you said?

Callum: mmmm

R: Ok was she someone then you felt comfortable going up and saying I can't do this or I don't understand

Callum: Oh yeah I would…if I couldn't do it I would just say after that cos I just…it was just easy and I didn't feel like she'd humiliate me in the class or anything which obviously she didn't…but yep

R: OK, so do you remember at what age you were diagnosed with dyspraxia?

Callum: erm I remember going and doing like this coordination test where I had to walk up and down and stuff and balance but that's the only really thing…I don't…I knew my mum knew for quite a long time, I don't know when she figured it out like got me diagnosed but the only thing about my kind of diagnosis thing was doing that test and I don’t even know if that was to get diagnosed I think that was just a recap thing but that was all I remember about the whole…

R: Ok, and what was that like doing that test?

Callum: I think I just enjoyed it to be honest, I don’t remember being…I just remember laughing cos all it was ….I think my grandma was there as well

R: Right

Callum: But all it was was me tumbling about which is always funny

R: You tumbling about?

Callum: mmmm

R: That’s what you remember?

Callum: yeah, I think it was quite a god exp….I remember the people being nice actually

R: Right, ok

Callum: But

R: and making you walk up and down things and...

Callum: Yeah

R: Right ok, but you don’t remember what age?

Callum: No.

R: Was it in primary school?

Callum: erm no because in…no it probably was in primary school…in infant school I knew I was like...there was…I just thought I was really really clumsy

R: Right

Callum: and then in er primary school I just yeah I can’t remember when it was that my mum told me properly what it is I was just still thinking I was really just had bad coordination, clumsy and just wasn’t good at sports

R: Right

Callum: But yeah, I don’t particularly remember a certain date

R: No, no. Erm, so if you don’t remember a certain date...do you actually remember…so you remember actually going and having sort of the tests done, sort of the movement tests, but you don’t particularly remember what age you were?

Callum: No

R: Buy do you remember what it felt like when you were told this is what’s wrong with you, you’re not just clumsy?

Callum: Erm I think I actually found it a bit…..I don’t know what the word is…erm………I just found it kind of…I felt good about it knowing what it actually is cos it’s not anything super serious at all like I didn’t think I had some like mental problem or something, like I just thought I was clumsy so it was good to know that I’m not just clumsy but I have something I can blame it on [laughs]

R: [laughs] ok

Callum: Like I have an excuse, but erm no honestly I think I just felt kind of like relieved a little bit

R: mmmm

Callum: Just like ‘ok that’s cool, I know what it is’

R: Right ok, and did that help with things at school

Callum: No [laughs] cos I started telling people what it was they were like “oh no you’re just a spaz” and “oh no you’re making it up” or “oh you’ve got dyspraxia is that like Aids?”

R: Oh that’s helpful

Callum: Don’t put that it cos like it’s rude

R It’s not rude it’s what they said to you so…

Callum: Ok you can put it in, yeah no so it was just stuff like I kind of got picked on more so I just stopped telling people but [laughs] yeah

R: ok, do you think it helped….so that was you're friends I imagine…that were…well your friends I mean other children?

Callum: No it was just people at school wasn't like friends friends

R: yeah yeah I mean but that was children not teachers saying those things?

Callum: Yeah, oh yeah yeah yeah

R: Right good

Callum: Yeah if that was teachers that'd be kind of worrying

R: Well exactly yeah but I just wanted to make sure, erm so what do you think the teachers…do you think the teachers changed the way they were with you after you knew?

Callum: PE teachers actually…..I think only Mr Daniels was the PE teacher that actually kind of thought about it properly

R: And is that primary school or secondary school?

Callum: No secondary school

R: Right ok, so Mr Daniels you thought…so he was a secondary school PE teacher?

Callum: Yeah all the other secondary school PE teachers would just make me do what everyone else was doing but Mr Daniels would still get me involved but would find alternatives to kind of teach me the thing

R: Ok, so do you think he understood it a bit more?

Callum: Yeah he was definitely my favourite erm PE teacher

R: Ok, so do you think all the teachers at secondary school….we'll go back a bit to primary school in a minute but seeing as we're talking about PE teachers at secondary school do you think they all knew about your dyspraxia?

Callum: erm….what before like being told?

R: no, no, I mean do you think when they started to be your teacher in whatever year it was do you think they were aware you had dyspraxia?

Callum: I think some of them kind of knew there was something….I was either just struggling….I know some of them just felt like I was just…I think at one point people thought I was on drugs cos I was just so tired and I just couldn't understand it and so I would just sit there and like look spaced out cos I just couldn't understand it and I didn't want to ask anyone for help

R: ok, what age were you when that….?

Callum: That was like quite far into secondary school as well that was like in year…I think that was in year 10

R: ok

Callum: So…

R: so teachers thought you were on drugs?

Callum: yeah, I remember someone saying that and they were like "ah is he on drugs or something?" and I was like 'no firstly I'm just tired' I always have bags under my eyes like I could sleep like 12 hours a day they're just there for some reason and secondly like no I was…just I couldn't get it I couldn't understand it….if it was a teacher I got on with I would just ask for help straight away

R: Right

Callum: But otherwise I would just…or if it's something that doesn't interest me as well I find it very very hard to actually put effort into it unless it's helping someone else

R: Right ok

Callum: Like unless it's something that I really hate but if it's something someone else still wants to do I can really try and enjoy it but like History was…History was good but it was just like some parts of it like the great depression actually gave me the great depression [laughs] in the class honestly…

R: [laughs]

Callum: just for the class just for the lesson after that I was fine it was just somethings I was just falling asleep and that's why I think they thought either I wasn't sleeping or I was on drugs

R: ok and so is that because you were finding it difficult and it didn't interest you?

Callum: it's because I was finding it boring

R: yep

Callum: yeah and History I found really difficult so I swapped for PE

R: was that your GCSE's then that you swapped?

Callum: Yeah

R: Ok, erm so what teachers then….so Mr Daniels you thought he kind of…he tried to understand it and he tried to you know get you involved still but to do it in a way that you could do….were there any other teachers in any other subjects, primary or secondary actually, who you thought got you, you know or tried to understand?

Callum: Erm yeah Miss Lloyd definitely she was my Maths teacher

R: ah ok, what at secondary school?

Callum: Yeah, yeah no she was probably my favourite teacher overall

R: What, ever?

Callum: Yeah

R: Ok, what was….why was she the favourite teacher?

Callum: Well I had her from year 7 in Maths all the way up to year 11 other than year 8 I have had Miss Kent for half a year and Miss Lloyd for the other half of that year so I basically had her my whole time at secondary school and she was just really good like she would just explain everything perfectly I wouldn’t really have to ask, I just got it when she was teaching

R: Ok, so she just had a style of teaching that worked?

Callum: Yeah, it just worked, and then Mr Stevens was probably my second one cos he was just funny

R: and what did he teach you?

Callum: Ah he would do sometimes Geography sometimes History

R: Ok

Callum: So that was in year 7 and 8 possibly year 9

R: Sorry did you just he got you and he was funny or...

Callum: No he was funny

R: He was funny right

Callum: I didn’t really do any work in his lessons I only enjoyed them cos he would tell annoying people to shut up and get out and it was just funny cos he didn’t take anything from anyone but he was really nice as well

R: Ok, he was nice to you?

Callum: Oh he was nice to everyone but if you were messing around he would just jokingly be like “oh shut up” and then if they were being really annoying he would be like “ok get out” but he was just really relaxed and funny

R: Ah ok. So what makes a good teacher then?

Callum: Erm…

R: for you

Callum: for me probably top 5 things…..they've got to….like firstly….in no order but firstly they've just got to be funny because lessons can just drag on they've got to be able to….obviously you're there to learn but they've got to be able to kind of keep everyone kind of gripped to the lesson cos if it's just writing after writing everyone kinds of falls in to like a coma

R: [laughs]

Callum: so they kind of need to be able to crack out a couple of like not cringy jokes and just keep everyone a little bit awake. Erm and secondly I'd say they'd need to be willing to go the extra mile cos some teachers just really do not care about students full stop like I've come across teachers that'll either have fav…like one person that they actually only care about or they just won't care and they're just there….it's not even good money but they're just there for the work

R: Yeah

Callum: and I think if…cos there's some teachers that'll be like 'ok if you're struggling come and see me at this time I'll run you through it' or 'stay after class, if its last period come to me during form and do extra work with me or let me explain it at break' I think that's quite an important thing and it shows they kind of care cos they're not getting….even though their getting paid they're not like getting paid any extra to put that extra effort in they could just as easily be like 'alright bye' at the end of class. Er….also I'd say they've got to kind of understand the diversity between how people learn like not everyone in a class is gonna just do well if it's just write, copy, write, copy or just reading out a text book and answering questions cos that's just not how I do…that's just not how I learn and but obviously you've got to do that in most subjects which is far enough but some teachers will mix it in with practical work as well which is good.

R: ok.

Callum: I’m not gonna do five cos I can’t think of any others [laughs] but just things along those lines

R: No, ok

Callum: just general good human qualities [laughs]

R: ok and so you said that for you that you don’t learn that way where it’s just copying things and working form a text book and that sometimes throwing in some practical stuff helps you..

Callum: yeah

R: What would you say was your favourite subject?

Callum: Erm…that definitely changed…

R: Ok

Callum: Erm so…I can’t even remember what my…probably Art in infants just cos it’s… your just scribbling….erm it’s like a waste of an hour [laughs] no it was fun it just wasn’t really any work you just draw so it was cool

R: Right ok

Callum: Erm primary school, History in primary school was actually one of my favourites cos it was not anything boring it was all about Egyptians and stuff and like really …not controversial at that age but like cool, quirky stuff like that, it wasn’t anything about the World Wars or…which is still interesting but it was just more kid friendly stuff, so probably History…erm….yeah History in primary school. Secondary school…definitely started off with….I did enjoy PE sometimes in secondary school but it was…the people making fun were just like ten times worse

R: mmmm

Callum: Erm…favourite lesson…I’m not sure for the first couple of years…maybe French just cos it was funny and one of the teachers was really nice and we’d just chat about her social life for the whole lesson [laughs] but definitely GCSE's English language I actually loved with a passion like I would do…I would happily do creative writing every day, I probably should, like that's one thing I really enjoyed, that was the only exam where I was actually annoyed that the time had ended

R: Oh really!

Callum: I was still writing at the end of it

R: Ah and so that was creative writing

Callum: That was creative writing. English literature I hated I just found it so…I understand who it's like important for our society to look back at Shakespeare and stuff but it was just like…not in a selfish way like 'yeah you've made good stuff I wanna make my stuff now, I'd rather go and do something myself, like I'll respect everything you've done' like it's all….all Shakespeare stuff is entertaining, its hard but entertaining to read and definitely entertaining to watch but like annotating poems and stuff it was just….

R: Not your thing?

Callum: Not my thing. I much preferred like lessons, I think one of the best lessons I ever had at secondary school is when we had a double English language lesson and he literally said fill up as much space in your book and just write for two hours and I just loved it and I was like…everyone was just chatting and on their phones cos he went out for about half an hour, I was just like writing….

R: Do you remember what you were writing about?

Callum: Ah I cannot remember, I think I like wrote three short stories or something… it was just fun, like they haven't got to be good it was just like a kind of creative outlet which was good, but I really enjoyed language.

R: Ok

Callum: So that was fun

R: Did you ever do any of that kind of creative writing outside of school?

Callum: Erm I think at one point I was like I just wanna write stuff so I went on like my mums laptop and just write something, I used to just scribble stuff down, but yeah what else was I gonna say…the only GCSE that I did really well in was English language

R: and what did you get?

Callum: a ‘B’ which kind of goes back to what I say if I don’t enjoy it I won’t do well in it [laughs] as much as I try

R: ok

Callum: whereas English language I didn’t really revise for that just because I didn’t…firstly you can’t really revise for creative writing other than writing…

R: Yeah like practicing I suppose

Callum: yeah practicing it but I….that was like the only one I did well in because I enjoyed it. If all the other subjects I enjoyed as much as creative writing I’d be here with a bunch of B’s maybe a couple of A’s I really enjoyed creative writing

R: And how did you feel when you got that?

Callum: I was happy erm I was expecting….I wanted an A just because it was the one thing I liked but I wasn’t expecting an A, I was thinking around a B but obviously I was happy with that, I aimed for an A* but I didn’t expect it cos you can’t just aim for a C cos it’s not fun to have small ambitions but…yeah I kind of just did that that was really fun.

R: Ok and how were your other exams?

Callum: urggh erm they were not good I remember I would….ah like honestly I should have revised a lot more I wouldn’t even say I did revision I’d say I did like an hour max…..for GCSE

R: An hour a night or an hour….

Callum: in general, of proper like focused….I would sit there and stare blankly at the books occasionally but….

R: Why do you think that was?

Callum: Honestly it's just I didn't see it….I know it is a massive benefit to your future but I didn't see it that way and I still don't because there's already opportunities now…I'm hearing about people already at my age who don't…like no one's caring about your GCSE's so it's like some people do and for some routes it's a must….like it's definitely a must for A-levels and then through to uni but for people who aren't doing that they honestly they just need a kind of base level and as I said I just find it very hard to do stuff that I don't see worth my time like even though I do spend a lot of time like in bed and like on my phone I also value my time quite a lot like that's why I like to exercise a lot and like if I was better with money I'd be going out every day and having like loads of new experiences and stuff but….I don't know I mean I just wasn't ready…I just didn't prepare properly…

R: ok

Callum: But it's just cos I didn't want to….like I could have done a lot better but I just honestly did not want to, it wasn't like 'oh it's too hard' I probably said it was too hard but honestly could not have cared any less. I enjoyed food tech…but I didn't care about it cos I didn't want to be a chef or anything, cooking is something I really enjoy as well

R: mmmm

Callum: Like it's not even just the thought of you get to eat what you cook like you could just keep bringing me loads of food and giving me loads of different recipes Id enjoy cooking it cos it's a creative thing

R: ok, so you like creative thing, you like the creative writing you like…you said you like Art, you like cooking things like that, ok, and you said that even though you liked cooking you didn't really care about it cos you didn't want to be a cook

Callum: Yeah

R: so do you remember…..it might have changed now, it might not of, but do you remember at that sort of secondary school age, or even younger actually, do you remember what it was that you wanted to be?

Callum: Younger than secondary school I don't really think I had an idea

R: So you hadn't thought I want to be a….

Callum: No.

R: I don't know a fire engine, a bouncy ball [laughs]

Callum: [laughs] no other than crazy things that kids come out with like I wanna be a superhero and stuff

R: ok

Callum: but erm…secondary school….

R: Did you want to be a superhero?

Callum: Probably I think all kids wanna become like a superhero like obviously like you can't have super powers but you can still kind of be a superhero

R: But did you want to?

Callum: Er yeah I think I did

R: What were your super powers?

Callum: This is gonna get real depressing [laughs]

R: [laughs] no come on…

Callum: No it was…I remember in I think it was like year 4 cos I had this horrible teacher called Miss Bloomfield who was just like so verbally abusive and just horrible

R: Why was she verbally abusive?

Callum: Oh she was just put mainly me, other people occasionally, but mainly me she would just put me down when I wouldn't get something and she'd just snap at me for no reasons, she was just one of those teachers who had favourites and honestly did not care about most of the students

R: Right

Callum: then she got sacked and then has to clean football stadiums

R: I see. Do we know she cleans football stadiums?

Callum: Yeah, my er head teacher told me she's like a bin man at the local football club, well bin woman, but yeah so that's funny but erm…

R: So you had this teacher…

Callum: yeah anyway I had this teacher and I wanted to be able to go invisible so I could just like not have to deal with anyone which is kind of like clinically depressing but you know…

R: Clinically depressing did you say?

Callum: yeah

R: Ok

Callum: I just wanted to kind of escape everyone

R: Ok and that was primary school

Callum: that was primary school, yeah I didn't want that at….well I kind of just wanted to just disappear at secondary school but I didn't want to be a superhero

R: But it had changed from wanting to be a superhero with a special power of invisibility?

Callum: Yeah I mean, year 7 was probably one of the worst years of my life during school…

R: Why do you think that was?

Callum: Just because I went with people…I did know people that I went to secondary school with, I did know people that I went to secondary school with that I went to primary school with and yeah…

R: Sorry you knew people from….

Callum: I knew people from primary and then went to secondary school with them

R: ok

Callum: but they weren't my close close friends, I was really good…I was good friends with a boy called Joe but he left half way through year 8, but like I wasn't like super close like we didn't hang out during the day. I did meet someone called David Morris over the holiday before year 7 on a kind of secondary school preparation course thing

R: Right ok

Callum: So I started hanging out with him

R: What was the secondary school preparation course?

Callum: I can't remember what it was…

R: Was it at the school?

Callum: it wasn't at my secondary school it was at…I think it was the local private school, it's called the….something dyslexia foundation maybe yeah, yeah yeah it was, yeah so that kinds of just sorted that and tried to help you get ready for year 7

R: Ok and so you met him there...

Callum: I met him there and we got on and then erm started hanging around with him, his friend Olly and Will, and they were my kind of friends…they were like who I hung around with until year 9 where we had a massive falling out which I'm not going to go into detail but yeah erm during that time I joined the Royal Marine cadets when we moved house cos we lived very near to it

R: Ok, so that's outside of school?

Callum: that literally changed my life

R: ok

Callum: 100%

R: Why did that change your….so you would have been how old? So year 7….

Callum: That was around….I was 12 when I started and then 13 when I joined the Marine cadets

R: Right

Callum: Erm yeah no 100% that kind of changed my life definitely

R: Did you choose to take yourself there?

Callum: Oh no definitely I remember my nan and my mum really wanted me to go and do the police cadets which wasn't far but that didn't appeal to me, neither did erm the sea cadets cos I only thought it was sea cadets I didn't know it had a marines thing and even that there's an army cadets nearby as well literally five minutes away and that didn't appeal to me at the time either I was just like….I didn't know anything that I wanted to do I didn't really have many hobbies I would just kind of go on my iPod and just play games until….

R: Had you tried other things?

Callum: No I didn't really…like my family definitely tried to get me into trying loads of new stuff…I think they knew I didn't have a lot that I enjoyed but I was just quite lazy and I didn't….there wasn't really anything that I was passionate…I was not passionate about anything….

R: Was it that you were lazy or did you find some of these things quite difficult?

Callum: I found a lot of…I found like…so I'd try out all these sports clubs, like my mum tried to get me like…didn't force me at all cos obviously I just didn't have to go…but I went along she recommended me to go to I think football at school, I tried that out a couple of times…hated that, rugby…hated that but now I enjoy that just cos it's funny, erm badminton I actually enjoyed I think that's the one sport that I was relatively good at erm but I didn't join a club for long, the badminton club at school, I was only in that for a few months I think but that was fun….but erm

R: But there was something about this….?

Callum: Yeah, I think it was more a lot of the people were in the same kind of situation where I was, like I had a friend who was…Irish….I can't even remember his real name now but we called him Paddy cos he's Irish….

R: ah ok [laughs]

Callum: yeah he ended up stealing all our uniform and then moving back to Ireland which was funny but erm yeah so I kind of went through the little normal first things they teach you before you choose what part, where you wanna go to, erm so that was cool, he kind of came from a really really rough background, but erm he was really nice and everyone else there has kind of been through the bullying thing

R: Ok

Callum: And it's just a nice…it was a nice community cos you could just talk to everyone and then eventually as you go higher up like the discipline goes more and you eventually it's just honestly sculpt me so much

R: Ok.

Callum: like made me start to work a lot harder…obviously still only in things that I enjoy [laughs] but it still made me work a little bit harder it made me start to take care of myself like full stop, cos I wasn't…it made….yeah it kind of like…that and my family definitely just….especially my mum, definitely kind of sculpt me into who I am today, my dad wasn't a big impact to be honest at all, but it was just…yeah it was a place I could go….there was a time I was quite obsessed with it cos it was literally….it's like me with the gym now it was only twice a week and that was like the only time where I felt 100% like relaxed, like meditation Buddha.

R: Meditation Buddha?

Callum: Yeah I just felt perfect there, like whether we were running or having like buckets of water thrown at us and stuff or like doing…..well I couldn't even do a push up when I first joined…trying to do push ups and stuff…it was just…I don't know it was just more like you bond really quickly even though you're not in any bad situations like the forces at all, it's just a little club you just…..there's just still a small sense of adversity there like you're getting shouted at by the people to go and run down the road and you're all hating it but you look at each other and you smile and you're just like 'oh we can do this' and you do it. It's just a nice thing, you bond really quickly.

R: So….were people supportive of each other?

Callum: yeah definitely, there wasn't …I came across one person who was horrible in my unit for like the whole…god like three years I was there.

R: mmmmm

Callum: everyone was just so nice, weather you have any…everyone has different opinions but weather you don't get on at all, you're still…I don't know it's just like you're a family there.

R: mmmm, and you said that you couldn't do a push up when you were there, er when you started sorry, erm we're there other things that they do that you couldn't do? I don't know like marching or climbing or I don't know?

Callum: Oh marching [laughs] oh my god [laughs] I could do push ups before I could march, but that's like the first thing they teach you.

R: Cos it sounds like it's quite physical.

Callum: It's…when you think about it and explain it is the easiest thing, but when you actually try it, it is so hard cos you've actually got to be in time with everyone else, you're left foot has to touch the ground at exactly the same time as your right foot like all in line otherwise you start to do this thing called tick tocking, which is where…so you're meant to bring your left foot forward, and your right arm up [showing me as he speaks] and then alternate, but when you tick tock you're either out of time and it just ruins the whole thing or you're doing right arm right leg and you just look ridiculous, like it is so hard like…after a year everyone…people who have been there for four years who are like 17, 18, staff even get it, cos it's just…it's a weird thing to be in time with everyone, like someone messes up, you mess up….but for me that was so hard, I was known as like the tick tocker for like a good year, a good year [laughs]

R: [laughs] and how was that then, so because at school you said they wouldn't let you play football in primary school because…

Callum: no it was different cos they would laugh but it just felt different, it wasn't like 'oh you're so stupid you can't do it' they'd be like right…it wasn't…yeah you're making a fool of yourself but it wasn't…you didn't feel embarrassed, like I felt I could laugh at myself, I was like 'ah I'm such an idiot' but like in a jokey way…

R: and they'd laugh?

Callum: and they'd laugh with you, it wasn't like laughing at you like 'oh you're so dumb', it was just laughing…it was laughing at you cos you'd done something silly but it was laughing with you as well and then they'd be like 'oh this is how you do it'

R: ok.

Callum: and then you'd mess it up again [laughs]

R: [laughs]

Callum: and they'd be like 'alright teach you it again' [laughs] they would get fed up but they'd just keep teaching you it, they were really great people.

R: did they know that you had dyspraxia?

Callum: yeah actually, I told them…not I don't think they knew before I joined the marines part of it, when I told the marines during the marines part of it cos that's 90% practical and I just thought they should know, because otherwise I'd just be known as like the tick tocker for the rest of my time there.

R: Did you eventually get the marching?

Callum: oh yeah I got it, I went…I did loads of really high level events like erm [taps on the table] oh what was the name of it…erm Prince someone's…Philips retirement…not retirement but he was stepping down yeah…so we had to march in front and I was on the BBC and everything

R: ooooh!

Callum: I wasn't like interviewed but I did talk to him and he smelt so bad [laughs] but I did talk to him.

R: [laughs]

Callum: I remember talking to him, he was just like…oh it was just such a weird experience but erm…

R: That's quite a high profile thing

Callum: That is a high profile thing, like shaking his hand was very strange experience but it was…he's a nice guy…he's alright

R: [laughs]

Callum: no it was cool, I did a lot of stuff like that actually. Shooting a gun for the first time was probably the weirdest experience of my life!

R: Yeah!

Callum: That was at this thing called erm Catsea which is just a competition and you just you shoot at some targets, then they like stick you in a truck and you have some blank firing weapons…

R: I was going to say you're not doing real bullets [laughs]

Callum: No you're not doing it with live rounds [laughs] so you, I could, it would hurt you if I was like from here, cos like all the carbon would probably like scratch your face or something, but it's like not dangerous but you're all loaded up in this truck and you're driving along and it was really cool, it was like a mini…as military as it could get at like 13, 14 up to 18 but erm yeah it was cool you'd all jump out, you'd have to like make sure your weapons are working, you'd have to like crawl though…it was really realistic, they had this erm really expensive dummy and the lasers that the enemy would shoot would hit this thing on the dummy and would if the dummy's health went too low it died and you'd failed and then you'd get marked from there, and you'd have to go in , you had these lasers on the blank firing weapon, so it's the same blank firing weapons as the actual armed forces, but like just for this certain part you had lasers on it so you could take people's health, which is quite violent [laughs] but so I remember I had to run in and they like, they threw, we got to throw smoke grenades as well it was so cool

R: {laughs]

Callum: And they were like all red smoke coming up and I had to run in and pick up this dummy which was really heavy but it’s just like er…a…what’s the word?....manikin, but it’s got this big health thing on in and loads of laser points where it could get damaged, and I had to run and pick it up and get on the truck, had to fight off all the staff who were just like [laughs] just in regular clothes with these massive guns just like screaming at you which was quite funny, erm and then you’d all have to make sure everyone was on board and then you’d slap the back of the truck and the guy in the truck would drive you away and then you’d be rated, it was really cool experience. And just like sleeping in a tent, well it wasn’t even a tent, I remember we have these…you basically just get a sheet and a cord and you have to find two trees , if you can’t you and your mate just huddle under the tent things, but erm we found two trees, put the cord over, then put the sheet over that, have a roll mat, put that there, and two like…pin it down, but I like remember waking up and we couldn’t find our sheet

R: [laughs]

Callum: ours…the weather there, it was like a different world, a place called Crowborough, honestly it was really hot and sunny and where we went there it started snowing that weekend

R: wow

Callum: and then the next day when we did the camping thing it was like just mush and gross but erm yeah woke up and soaking wet, that had long gone, never found that

R: [laughs]

Callum: the cord went as well which was weird, cos that’s quite a heavy…that had flown of somewhere, woke up soaking wet then had to do like a 10 mile speed march which is just like walking and you have like er…weapon which has just had all the insides welded together so it's just like a metal toy basically, which is really heavy and you have to just walk that and that was really cool. And it was just, the main thing I enjoyed was just like the bond you get with everyone, cos it's just like you wake up, you're frezzy cold, you have your ration packs, you have some disgusting porridge which you don't actually eat, you just look at your mates soaking wet and you're like ohhhhh.

R: [laughs]

Callum: it was just funny, it was just a nice experience.

R: and did you make some good friends there?

Callum: Ah I made friends for life, like one of my friends Steven he's like in…doing his army training now but he's gonna, like his officer training like he's going to transfer into the navy in 3 months I think, but I hadn't spoken to him for like two months but he'd come down and visits me occasionally, and it is weird…he's like one of those friends where I promise you I could not speak to him for a year and I'd see him and it'd just be exactly the same, cos we still have that friendship, cos I do like message him all the time, but he just can't respond cos he's so busy he's doing all his training and he doesn't have his phone most of the time, so he's just like but it's one of those friendships you know is gonna last, because you just have that bond and nothings gonna break that and it's just weird.

R: mmmm so do you still go there?

Callum: No I stopped going, I say to focus on my GCSE's….but not to focus on my GCSE's at all…..

R: [laughs] ok, but that would have been when you were about 16?

Callum: Yeah, a lot of my friends had started to leave, my role model sadly passed away, he was the one who actually got me into…who taught me how to do one push up and then eventually coached me through it and taught me everything.

R: and was he a younger person or was he a leader?

Callum: no he was in his 50's

R: so he was one of the…

Callum: one of the leader's

R: leaders right yeah

Callum: just staff but erm yeah he was really cool, he was like every teenage boys role model, like ex SAS, big muscly guy, like all these cool stories, but erm….obviously can't tell us all of them cos it's just too violent but [laughs] but all his missions were erm declassified cos he was quite, cos he was 50 and he left when he was 30 so like 20 years later he could tell us everything legally so he was really cool cos he could tell us all these things. But that really really hit me hard and a lot, I don't think my family…cos I didn't talk about him a lot before that

R: Right

Callum: I didn't talk much about cadets cos I don't know why cos I really enjoyed it but that hit me

R: You said you were quite obsessive?

Callum: Yeah I was quite obsessive, I would talk more about joining the army than actually cadets

R: ok

Callum: I'd be like 'oh can I go cadets now?, can I miss dinner' like I'd miss dinner I don't care even though I was starving

R: right

Callum: cos I just didn't want to be late, but I was quite obsessive, but I wouldn't…I don't know Id talk more about what I'd want….like joining the army than actually like ‘oh at cadets we’d did this blah blah blah’ but I didn’t talk about him that much, which I don’t really thing other than the people at cadets actually erm understood like how much eh really meant to me.

R: mmmmm

Callum: cos he was like…I know like…I feel really bad saying this to like all the soldiers, but he was like all of them were actually like brothers to me, and I know that’s like what a lot of soldiers say

R: yeah

Callum: But I’ve experienced nothing at all anywhere near what they’ve like…so I can’t really say that but they were….he was like…..well my dad was really crap at the time and he’s just got worse, like I still see him but he was just like….I don’t know he wasn’t a parent in my eyes, my mum was like a parent and a best friend, my dad was just someone who was there and would just buy me a bunch of junk food and I could just place a load of video games for like 10 hours straight.

R: So were you parents together or were they separated?

Callum: No they split up when I was around 2 or maybe a little bit older, but that hasn’t really affected me

R: Ok so you saw him….yeah

Callum: cos I was so young, but I had to see him every weekend usually

R: and he’d buy you junk food and play video games [laughs]

Callum: yeah so it wasn’t the best most healthy relationship.

R: But this guy had had an impact?

Callum: Yeah he was like, basically, until me new stepdad came along he was basically like my dad figure.

R: mmmm

Callum: Cos I would talk to him about everything.

R: Ok and he helped you to learn how to do push ups and stuff?

Callum: oh yeah he was like oh….[seemed a little emotional] he was erm, yeah I remember I couldn't do one push up and no one would laugh but they were like 'oh come on you can do it' I could not do one push up, I would try, I would try every night and it took about a month for me to actually get one, and he got me…I set a goal from when I was around 13 and a half, set a goal to be 15and to be able to do 100 push ups in two minutes and he would…every night…every night that he was down cos he was also a doing…I have a feeling he was still doing something for the military cos like he would just disappear for like a month

R: {laughs]

: or like two weeks and he would come back and he'd have lots of cuts and bruises and we'd be like 'what happened?' and he'd be like 'I can't say' I was like 'ok I know you've had a fun weekend then' but yeah eh also did a lot of stunt man stuff, like he worked with Jack Whitehall on the Bad Education movie, he worked with Tom Cruise, he's in a lot of Tom Cruise's films, you don't see him but he's like the stunt man…

R: Yeah

Callum: Yeah he actually died doing, I think it was going to be a Tom Cruise film in China, which really annoyed me cos it's actually the company's fault who owned the helicopter cos they left the rope outside in the rain, it got rained it got damaged and that's why the rope actually snapped

R: Right ok

Callum: cos I read it up, but erm…..

R: But, so he helped you with the physical side of things?

Callum: yeah and that really helped with kind of my mental side of things as well, as obviously endorphins, but also it boosted my confidence a lot and like very night he would be like ‘come on, I wanna see you do as many as you physically can’ like until I, until you can’t get back up kind of thing every night, cos it only took like two minutes and he would time me and I’d just be like sweating after two minutes, but erm eventually I got 100 and I think the best that I ever did in two minutes was like 140

R: Wow. That is impressive

Callum: But now now I can’t do that cos I’ve just changed how I train but I’ve made sure that I can always do 100 in two minutes

R: But that’s impressive form not being able to do one

Callum: Yeah that’s that’s why I have quite a long, a massive bond with him, cos he like changed me so much, and helped me though, and that really boosted my confidence, eventually that helped with bullying cos I kind of stood up for myself quite a lot.

R: So you had been suffering….cos you mentioned a kid Logan in primary school and in secondary school did you suffer..?

Callum: Bullying was 10 times worse in secondary school.

R: Ok, and what was it verbal, physical…?

Callum: Year 7 wasn’t that physical, it was quite verbal, I’d made quite a lot of good friends in year 7 that I am still friends with now so Edward, Alan, Tom, I met Tom just before year 7 cos me and Joe and him and a girl called Kath all started getting the bus together just to get ready, but like I’ve been friends with Tom and I will be friends with Tom for the rest of my life, same with Edward. I’ve kind of lost touch with Alan just cos he’s been…like I’ve just not been the best friend like we’ve both not been talking to each other, like we’re still like if I see him I’ll still chat to him for hours but him and Alan, Tom, Edward and Jacob I know I’ll be friends with.

R: So you made some really good friends in year 7 but…

Callum: Some good friends yeah

R: But you had some bullying?

Callum: I had a lot...mainly pretty much just all verbal bullying in year 7, I’d get shoved occasionally and like pantsed and stuff and like….

R: Pantsed…what’s that?

Callum: Yeah just like pull your boxers down in the changing room or steal your towel or something, but that was only in year 7, erm yeah so I mean that wasn’t that bad it was just kind of regular teasing. Year 8 was like, kind of stepped it up a bit. Some guy stole my phone and my wallet at some point and slammed me against the wall, then wrote me a letter of apology [laughs]

R: [laughs] maybe the school made him write the letter?

Callum: yeah I was gonna say. But year 9, year 9 was quite bad, that’s where it got quite physical.

R: Right

Callum: and there is still so much that my family don’t know about that I will not say, but there was this one time, I think this was in year 10 where I was pinned down and I was repeatedly kicked in….yeah…..that area……

R: that area…right ok

Callum: but erm….

R: Do you know why they picked on you?

Callum: yeah, it was just cos I was just like, just that kid, the grey kind of guy in the equation, like I was the kind of person who just didn’t fit in and a lot of, in most places, I remember having to hang out with my uncle, like I was happy, like I was really happy with it, but I was hanging out with my uncle and his friends…

R: Your uncle?

Callum: Yeah my uncle.

R: Sorry, at secondary school? [clarifying]

Callum: yeah he's only 20, 21….he's really young, he's basically a brother.

R: Oh ok, so there's only a few years between you?

Callum: yeah

R: Ok

Callum: But erm he was really good and I even saw him getting bullied, like we would get bullied together which is why I think we get on so well, cos we got bullied together a little bit at school.

R: So you think its cos you didn't fit in?

Callum: Yeah, and he didn't fit in, he had his small group of friends and he was bullied throughout school as well. Obviously they took me in and they looked after me until I made a good enough circle of friends where I felt safe and everything. But yeah I mean it still went on, I was still being picked on a little just as I got into year 11 and I kind of said I'd had enough in year 10, and I actually broke someone's nose but no one knew about that, I told my mum that ages ago, I don't know is she remembers, but I didn't get in trouble cos they didn't say anything cos they're one of those 'I'm tough I'm not gonna snitch' and everything but so I started…I actually started…the bullying stopped cos I actually started defending myself.

R: Ok so you started standing up for yourself. Was that around the time er that you said you'd had enough and you were standing up for yourself……

Callum: Yeah that was only cos of the marines

R: I was gonna say

Callum: Cos I started to get fitter and get in to working out

R: Was that around that time that you were learning to do push ups and…

Callum: Yeah year 9 I started to like visibly as well appear a little bit stronger, I was stronger obviously from 1 to like over 100, but erm, people started to notice it as well like when you're getting changed people like being weird and like 'ooooh Mr muscles' and I'm like 'shut up'

R: [laughs]

Callum: But erm, yeah I was never Mr Muscles at all I was just like, that kid who has like a little bit of toned arms and like that skinny 6 pack, but like eventually I'd just had enough and like being, like the marines had just taught me like, to just kind of stand up for yourself and not let other people's opinions bring you down. Eventually that's why I just started fighting back and once Id defending myself or stood up for myself against everyone it just stopped.

R: ok.

Callum: Like it was that simple, I actually just had to hit them back and then they just kind of stop. Even if they'd still carry on beating me up after they were like alright 'he's had enough, he's gonna start going nuts' [laughs] or like yeah there was a couple of times where I hurt people, not intentionally, I don't want to hurt someone, but in self-defence, but erm yeah eventually it just stopped, like violence doesn't solve the answer but if there's like a group of people kind of shoving you about, you just got to

R: For years

Callum: yeah for years as well you've kind of just got to stand up for yourself, I don't want to hurt anyone but I did, not but just to get them enough so they move away and I could get out of there. Like I wasn't just stand there like 'oh let's fight' no I was just…

R: So you said enough to get them to move away so you could get out of there, so where they…

Callum: Enough to get them to move away so I could just move away, I wouldn't even run I'd just walk away

R: Right, so sometimes you were cornered?

Callum: Oh yeah, I was always cornered, like most of the time it was in the toilets, cos there's no cameras, that's why a lot of the time, sometimes you don't even mention it to a teacher and they still find out cos they can see on the cameras, sometimes the cameras are on, they're not even on a lot of the time at my school but erm yeah that's why it was usually like on the field or that's like dodgy parts of the school where there's no cameras or like where no one really goes and it was just like near there obviously cos like I wouldn't just go there by myself, but it was like around those kind of quiet areas of mainly in the toilets or hallways to be honest it was just like, yeah eventually I just had enough. And that's why, why I kind of think you need to do with bullying to be honest, like with cyber bullying like just turn it off, go off the internet, like I get its annoying, you can block people turn it off…same with like physical and verbal…block them out your life, that's all I did, that's like you've just kind of got to show them that you've had enough.

R: But you've learned to be like that haven't you?

Callum: yeah I was never like, I was not like that until I've joined the marine cadets, that's why I think it.…if I didn't join there I would not be anywhere like what I am now.

R: right ok.

Callum: I'd probably, I'd probably…I don't know what I'd be like but I would not be probably wouldn't be in to fitness or anything or

R: So you are now how old?

Callum: 17

R: and your…ok…and you say you're in to fitness

Callum: mmmm

R: ok, cos for someone with dyspraxia who finds, like you said, even playing football was difficult was….

Callum: heights was my biggest fear and now I'm begging my mum to let me go sky diving [laughs]

R: [laughs] ok, yeah but you put cadets being down to that sort of….

Callum: Most of it yeah, definitely my mum put me…let…tried to push me…she did push me quite a lot, not in a bad way, but like making you do things that she knows would benefit me and…

R: Right

Callum: Even though she didn't want me to…and still doesn't want me to join the army….she knew I enjoyed cadets and she would still support me with that, if there was trips she would pay for it no questions asked, I'd just have to say there's a trip, bam money, like no matter what really, and erm it was just really nice and I didn't appreciate it much at the time either…

R: What teenager does?!

Callum: Yeah exactly

R: [laughs] so what do you do now cos, so you did your GCSE's and you said you got a B in your English

Callum: English language, the rest were just below C's, which I'm ok with cos as I said it's just not what I'm made to do, I'm not made to be a studier guy, I'm made to like urrgghh yeah

R: yeah, so just didn't fit for you?

Callum: just not that, yeah it's just not what I want to do, so now I've just finished my, well I've basically just finished my erm fitness, nutrition and health course

R: ok, so did you stay at the…was there a 6th form at your school or did you choose to go somewhere else?

Callum: yeah there's a 6th form but I wouldn't, firstly wouldn't have got in but I might have, they did kind of say like they'd give me a spot just cos of kind like dyspraxia and dyscalculia and stuff, but again it's not for me, they could have offered….English language 5 times a week, like even though I enjoy it it's not something that I'm like that if I think about it I get like that buzz and…I'm passionate about it but I'm not extremely like that is not me, that is not Callum. And it's weird cos once I got out of school I really started to do things that scared me, like now I'm kind of making a goal to do something that scares me every day.

R: ok.

Callum: but like at work and stuff if there's someone that I think is pretty or something even if there's now like thing in my mind that she'd even looked at me or something….I've done it three times, I've just liked asked for their number of gone over and said hi, just like doing something that puts me out of my comfort zone which is not like dangerous but something that just makes me feel really really uncomfortable, cos like you just feel so much better after it, like now I would never of…I didn't go…I think I went to two parties until I was in year 10, now I can't get enough of them and it's not because there's alcohol, or there's people with drugs or anything, it's not that…I love just talking to new people now, I love big crowds of people now and talking to them all at once, it's weird. I used to have such bad social anxiety, I used to never know how to talk to anyone.

R: When do you think that changed?

Callum: I don't now and I don't necessarily think that s down to the marines, cos as I said everyone there…I wasn't really pushed, I just clicked with everyone so it wasn't like I was forcing myself to do something, I think it was more as I kind of grew up in year 10 and 11 and people slightly started to become more mature and they'd maybe consider being seen talking to me, I would talk to people then, I would ask like people in class to make myself…not more popular…like just….I didn't want to be more popular…I just wanted to be kind of accepted which now is bad cos I just think you should be happy with who you are and if no one likes that as long as you're not bringing anyone else down and not being horrible then they're not worth your time, but back then I'd had enough of the bullying, it had been my whole school life, I just had enough I wanted to just enjoy my last two years, which I enjoyed year 11

R: Yeah

Callum: like from the start pretty much, but erm yeah I don't know where that came from but I think eventually it was more the kind of having enough of being bullied, I also had enough of being a bit of an outcast, I wasn't like…I don't know why I'm making this out that I was some kind of massive victim, I wasn't, I was just like…

R: No you're just explain how it was

Callum: But yeah, no erm I just had enough, I wanted to get to know people cos these are people Id spent three years with, like weather I liked them or not I wanted to have some sort of memories with them, like that's three years of my life gone with people that I'm not gonna remember, I find that quite sad, so I wanted to get to know people so I would purposely go up to groups in my form that I don't usually talk to, it went well, like year 11 I was just a normal person which is good.

R: So do you think you became a bit more confident?

Callum: I definitely became a bit more confident

R: Because those kinds of things take confidence don't they?

Callum: and that was definitely due to the marines. Yeah they take confidence and a bit of stupidness, like just a bit of risk taking….

R: risk taking yeah but that takes confidence

Callum: again that takes confidence and a bit of courage but erm yeah I think mainly that came from the physical kind of side of things where I could see I'm like getting stronger, I'm feeling better, like mentally and that's because of the marines I just felt more confident cos I, I knew…I always knew that I had my mum that I could go and talk to and I was a bit stupid, I didn't talk to my mum about everything, not because I didn't feel that I could, I just…that's what I used to be like, I'd just bottle everything up and it was nothing against any of my family really I just….

R: What happened when you bottled things up?

Callum: I was just such a delightful child [sarcastically said]

R: [laughs]

Callum: would never burst out in anger or rages or anything, definitely didn't smash the door [sarcastically said]

R: Right

Callum: I was never like…..I would occasionally like shove my mum out the way, I wouldn't try and hurt her, I wouldn't shove shove or be violent cos I'd experienced….yeah well anyway another story….but I'd yeah I would take it out kind of verbally on everyone more

R: Right

Callum: I would occasionally like just barge my mum out the way if I was trying to like move out the conversation, I did smash the front door cos my brother was annoying me so much and everything was so hectic and I made a fist and I was like ‘ok Jack needs to move cos I’m not gonna want to hit him but I’m gonna hit something very hard, and then I smashed the front door, to smithereens…

R: rather than your brother

Callum: rather than my brother

R: Probably a good choice!

Callum: and I had to pay my mum back and then the next week they brought a new door which was annoying, but still….well it was relatively soon….it was probably like the next few months

R: ok, so you bottled things up…

Callum: I bottled things up and then it was outburst…

R: and you become frustrated and then outburst…

Callum: and I was really really bad.

R: Did that happen all through….was a lot of that to do with stuff that was going on at school do you think?

Callum: yeah definitely

R: Ok and so did you…you said you’ve got a brother and you’ve also mentioned a sister, are they older than you or younger than you?

Callum: Erm I’m the oldest so my brother Jack is 14 and Megan is 10 and Brody is 1 and a bit who’s my youngest sibling

R: ok and what was it like with…so your brother is only a few years younger than you and your sister erm….obviously you have a baby brother which is quite a big difference but what was it like having, particularly your brother but and your sister, what was it like sort of seeing what the differences were…if any?

R: Well it’s funny now cos I can see my brother Jack’s kind of going through what I went through, not necessarily the bullying ting but all the grumpy stages, so it’s quite funny now

R: [laughs]

Callum: Cos I'm not like anywhere near as bad as I am, I'll just snap occasionally, I can't be bothered to be annoying, but yeah its quite funny to see him going through exactly the same, but I can help him out with it now cos I know what he's going through, I can just be like 'mate sort yourself out' kind of thing.

R: what's it like with your siblings? Or would you just say its normal?

Callum: No it's really good I mean I don't spend as much time with them as I would like to, that's mainly…that is my fault obviously, it's no one else's, I have work and then I go to the gym like two hours a day and then like I'll just be…Ill either go out with friends or I'll be on my phone or watching YouTube or listening to podcasts and stuff, I should definitely spend more time with my family, but I do have a good relationship with all my family…other than my dad definitely…its nice…I love my siblings, I like having them around and everything…it's a nice experience.

R: mmmm so if we go back cos we've kind of we've skipped lots of things and then circled back and stuff...

Callum: yeah

R: No its really really good, erm but if we go back and sort of look at…cos you've said now you've become more confident and more physical and your stronger and things but when you were younger when you were first sort of …erm first had diagnosed dyspraxia what other things do you think going through school do you think that you struggled with? Things like handwriting and things people with dyspraxia struggle with…

Callum: ah handwriting I struggle with a long time, I still struggle with…my handwriting's not good now, its readable…well its better than readable it's just kind…people would say it's just a little bit messy

R: Right ok

Callum: Like but my handwriting used to be awful

R: yeah

Callum: I remember I had to type a lot I just found that a lot easier

R: Did you…was that in secondary school?

Callum: that was in secondary school yea

R: Did you have a laptop or anything to use at school?

Callum: Er I used it occasionally, I was meant to be using it more so I could use it in my exams, but eventually…that was only because my wrists would hurt like quite a lot, very easily as well, but somehow in the two hour lesson, I think I kind of blurred out the pain when I was just doing creative writing cos I just didn't think about it

R: Right so if you enjoyed something you could blur out the pain?

Callum: if I enjoyed something I just didn't notice and then afterwards I'd be like 'oh my god' but erm

R: Yeah, so your wrist hurt and your writing was…

Callum: very messy

R: Right, did you think you could….so if you used a laptop or anything like did you find that you could type quicker than you could write?

Callum: I could type quicker yeah 100% quicker than I could write, just because I could quicker initially and then it would just hurt and I would slow down so overall I could just type a lot quicker

R: ok

Callum: erm which was good but I'd also…I think the main reason I just didn't use the laptop as well cos everyone looks at you a bit weird and you're that kid who has the laptop in class, which in year 11 actually a lot of people, there was a few people every class who had a laptop so I still should have done it but I still felt insecure about that a little bit

R: Right ok

Callum: Which is bad but…

R: Well I…I was just about to say would you have used it if they'd made everyone be able to use laptops but then of course you would because…

Callum: Yeah, I'd feel weird using paper then [laughs]

R: yes exactly [laughs]

Callum: I know yeah I mean…

R: Ok so those kinds of things…so your wrists do hurt and…are there any other part that hurts?

Callum: My ankles were really bad actually I had to find… a lot of shoes were really uncomfortable….now I ...it's weird…now I just don't get any kind of joint pains really….occasionally like if I've gone too hard in the gym my knee will hurt for a couple of days…

R: That's probably different….

Callum: yes that's probably not due to dyspraxia [laughs] I don't think

R: but so you had joint pain?

Callum: I had joint pains for a while, still in year 11 actually, cos I had to have really supportive shoes, which I was bullied for…no I was just taken the mick out of…I wasn't bullied in year 11 I was just kind of teased, which is fine everyone can cope with that….but erm…no I mean I don't know like a switch just changed I just don't get it anymore. I can walk for like long long periods of time like it would just be the same as anyone else, my legs would just hurt that's it….I don't get joint pains.

R: and so walking now like you said you could walk for a long period of time but when you were younger…could you…

Callum: yeah my balance and everything was just really bad…

R: Right ok

Callum: I would trip up a lot, I would just…my joints would just hurt a lot anyway from walking erm I remember like I used to play on my iPod back when I used to live in the flat and I would play on it for quite a long time and I remember cos like I don't know how my wrists would hurt from it but my wrists would hurt cos you're kind of like [imitating holding an iPod] and just like my wrists would eventually hurt from playing my iPod which is kind of ridiculous but…

R: Ah a sign of using too much computers [laughs]

Callum: too much computers yeah when your joints are starting to hurt form playing video games you need to stop [laughs] yeah but yeah I mean now it's just I don't get any pain there at all, unless I like do something stupid, like so it's just normal now.

R: and what about…so we talked about who your favourite teachers were and what good teachers were and stuff but were there any particularly bad…you did tell me about one bad teacher at primary school, were there any particularly bad other bad teachers?

Callum: At secondary school?

R: yeah

Callum: Erm….I'm pretty sure there was, I'm just trying to remember, I blocked out…I've kind of cleared a lot of secondary school memories out of my head

R: mmmm

Callum: Just cos it wasn't fun but erm…

R: well its quite interesting cos you are the oldest one of people that I have interviewed, so like I've said I've interviewed children who are 11 and then varying ages up to you, so you're the first one that I have interviewed that is actually out of school erm and in their first year of erm college so you know the reason I've looked at that age range is cos compulsory education now is all the way up to 18 so I wanted to look at kind of that whole age so maybe your…your…its quite interesting cos you're able to look back but also you know maybe somethings like you say you blocked things out cos it was so bad but now things are different.

Callum: Yeah

R: Do you remember getting any help at school because of your dyspraxia?

Callum: yeah. There was erm a learning support thing and that was really helpful, everyone, all the people in there like all the teachers were so nice, like really really nice and helpful and even through GCSE's instead of taking an extra subject I did this things called learning support where you go there and do extra work you do all…basically it's just so you kind of have more free time at home and you can also there's people there just to help you in that period so you do coursework or homework there and they'd be just be there to help you and there was someone for each of us sometimes

R: ok

Callum: So that was really helpful

R: Ok, so was it a small group?

Callum: Yeah yeah very small, I think it was like 4 of us

R: Ok and di you have erm because some people can have erm education care and health plans they're called now, they used to be called statements….did you have one of those do you know?

Callum: er yeah I did. I didn’t understand much about it… [laughs] but I did have to have a kind of thing called an annual review

R: ok

Callum: but I think we had more meetings than annually it was just kind of scattered around, we’d have a couple of reviews a year, and that was quite helpful. I actually found that boosted my confidence a bit cos I like just thinking over everything and erm yeah that really helped, it was good.

R: ok. I’ve just noticed the time, you have to go don’t you?

Callum: yes I do have to go.

R: that’s fine, we’ve got loads of interesting things we’ve discussed and there are some other things that I would like to discuss ….

Callum: yeah I’d love to talk another day

R: yeah it would be good and actually I don’t think we’d need to talk for very long but actually it would be good to just ask another couple of bots at some point if that’s ok?

Callum: Yeah.

R: ok well I will be in contact. Thank you.

Appendix R: Participant biographies

Parental consent was sought for all participants, as they were all under the age of 18, prior to each interview. Inevitably this type of consent involved asking a few basic questions to establish if the participant was suitable for to this study. During these initial discussions some aspects of the child's details and therefore experiences were divulged by the parent. In order to provide a context for the study a brief biography of each participant is provided based on information that their parents provided when initial contact was made and information they provided during the interviews. It is acknowledged that these biographies are very subjective in nature.

Mark

> "I guess dyspraxia is a bit like dyslexia, you might have
> a few struggles but yeah you're still a normal person
> and everything"
>
> Page 56 line18-19

Mark is a 16 year old boy from the South East of England, he has one younger brother. He attends mainstream secondary school and at the time of our interview he was in year 11 doing his GCSE's. Mark does not have an Education Care and Health Plan (ECHP) or any other diagnosis. When Mark was 9 he was referred by his primary school to a physio department where he was assessed and had an intense 8 week physio program delivered. Mark attended the interview alone, his parents and his 13 year old younger brother arrived with him but waited in a different room and Mark was happy with this.

During the interview Mark appeared to be very shy and did not make much eye contact. In fact he often avoided eye contact which was very interesting. He was happy to answer any question I gave him, however gave very closed answers and often 'answered' questions with nods and noises. Whilst he may have spoken the least, or at least given the least detailed answers, I felt that there was a lot of information gained in what he did not reveal linguistically but could be interpreted via his body language and eye movements throughout the interview.

Rhys

Rhys is a 16 year old boy, with one younger brother, from the South West of England, he was a cathedral chorister for 5 years and at the time of our interview he was on a “massive” music and choral scholarship to a small independent school. Before the interview Rhys’ mother and I spoke via email messages and then on the telephone. She told me that Rhys was diagnosed with dyspraxia and suspected Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) and that his difficulties mainly lay in his handwriting and processing skills. He was part of army cadets at his school, although less keen on it than his younger brother who has joined a similar sea cadets group near their home.

Rhys used a laptop at school for note taking, homework and exams and this is helping a lot according to his mum. He had moved down an academic year as his birthday is at the end of August and so he is now the oldest in the year rather than the very youngest which his mum says has made a huge difference in her opinion to his confidence and he is often top in the class now. She states that the school he attends has lots of pupils with dyspraxia and dyslexia and so they are “used to ‘quirky’ pupils”.

Rhys attended the interview with his mum and his younger brother (aged 10). We met in a large café. His brother sat nearby to us but concentrated on reading his book. Part way through the interview his younger brother was collected by a family friend. Rhys was a lovely, chatty young man, very articulate, confident and happy to talk with me, his mum was involved in the discussions and often acted as a prompt to Rhys.

Rhys moved schools a lot in his primary years and so retook year 9 when he moved school again as he said he did not want the stress of going straight into GCSE’s. Plus he was one of the youngest in his year so by retaking a year it meant he was one of the oldest. This seemed to have a positive effect on him. At his current school he boards one day a week in order that he can also attend his Choirstry sessions which he really enjoys. He finds boarding useful as he focuses on getting his work done in an evening session at the school. Rhys has lots of experience in different extra curricula activities, including swimming, Choirstry, fencing, working on a farm, karate.

Rhys was born with a condition which meant his skull was not properly formed and was missing a section at the top – this made things precarious for him as he had no protection if he fell and knocked his head – his mother was very anxious about this but Rhys was a confident climber from a very young age. He had an operation when he was 6 to fix it.

Rhys’s mum spoke about how Rhys had scars on his arm due to picking at his arm and Rhys looked a little uneasy when she spoke about this but did appear to want me to know. Following the interview Rhys’s mum sent me a video clip of Rhys performing to show how laid back he was.

Isla

Isla is an 11 year old girl from the South West of England and is an only child. She attends a mainstream secondary school. During my initial conversations with Isla’s mum she told me that Isla was diagnosed about 18 months before our interview as having mild dyspraxia. She had an IEP at primary school and got extra time in her exams. She explained that Isla did not want anyone to know about her dyspraxia and does not want to talk about it but did say she wanted to talk to me and take part in my study.

She told me Isla had settled in to secondary school mostly with “only one big wobble”. Isla has orthodontics and physiotherapy outside of school at a place which has done an assessment and report for Isla’s school. Isla’s mum has noticed a decline in her posture since starting secondary school. Isla’s dad feels like he has dyspraxia and Islas mum says she feels like she has become a pushy parent.

Isla attended the interview with her mum and dad, we meet in a local library to her and it was relative quiet where we sat. Isla seemed very happy to talk, sat next to me on a sofa with her parents sat opposite and seemed very relaxed.

Isla is in year 7 and has gone from a small primary school which had only 85 children, to a secondary school with over 850 children. In addition the secondary school is an hour and 10 mins away from her home. She needed a change when going to secondary school so was quite happy that none of her friends went to the school she did – she was the only one from her school to go so she knew no one and therefore got a fresh start.

Alice

Alice was a 13 year old girl who lives in the South East of England and has one younger brother aged 10. At the time of the interview she was in year 9 at a mainstream secondary school. A teacher in year 3 had suggested that she may have dyspraxia and in year 4 she attended Occupational Therapy sessions during her lunchtime and was diagnosed in year 5 at the age of 10.

Alice was very relaxed, very confident and happy to speak with me seeming keen to tell me about her experiences. I interviewed her at home and her mum was in, but came in and out of the room, so was only present some of the time. Alice was inquisitive and asked questions about the research and aspects of the information sheet I had given her.

Alice seemed to me to be a very hard working lovely young lady who took pride in her work. She seemed frustrated with the teachers at school, especially when they did not listen to her when she said she could not do something and when they do not appreciate the effort she has made. This seemed like a really big thing for Alice, the lack of appreciation, she does not want anything over the top but to have it recognized how much effort she has put in and that she tried really hard is important to her and mostly this is lacking.

Zara

Zara was a 14 year old girl from the South Coast of England and has a 10 year old sister. She attends a mainstream secondary school where she is recognized as a “high achiever” despite having dyspraxia and she was diagnosed when she was 6. Zara wanted to have her interview via Skype but did look happy and comfortable to talk with me. Her mum was with her during the entire interview.

Zara seemed in some way to describe herself as confident – she explained that when she started secondary school she signed up for lots of clubs in order to make more friends, this is quite a confident thing to do. However she then describeed how she uses her love of creative writing to create her own world in stories, possibly as a form of escape into a world where people are nicer.

At one point in the interview Zara became quite emotional, this appeared to come out of nowhere when she was talking about the support she received from the learning support team and what support they gave her emotionally. She was being prompted by her mum but seemed to want to tell me about it even though it gave her a sudden rush of emotion talking about it.

> “Zara: emotional yeah, and they used to take me to see the emotional support person
> Mum: Which I think is a manifestation of frustration …
> Zara: Stress
> Mum: And which, as far as exams go, you’d get extremely stressed [inaudible] and ah, sometimes you used to get upset in class and you can’t sort of stop being upset.
> Zara: No.
> Mum: [sort of nervous laugh]
> Zara: So, I’d see them and I’d sort of calm down, breathe …
> Mum: [sort of nervous laughs]
> R: And what do they, when you go to see them when you were stressed and upset, what is it that they do, that helps you to calm down and breathe?
> Zara: erm, I don’t really know [nervous laugh]
> R: you don’t have to know [reassuring]
> Mum: I think they’re very sympathetic, aren’t they? I think they get to … breathe to take you mind of it and to try and put that to one side.
> R: oh have I made you upset?
> Zara: No it’s fine [crying]
> R: Oh I’m sorry!
> Mum: It’s alright no, she gets like this, it’s alright, I’ll get you some tissues anyway …”
>
> Page 251 Line 5 – 26

Zara explains that there was support for her emotionally when at school which seemed to provide her a space where she was understood and accepted and which provided strategies to help her cope i.e. breathing techniques. It may be that talking about it reminded her of those feelings and it also may be that talking about it reminded her that some people did understand and were nice.

I felt that Zara wanted her mum to be present with her during the interview and that it offered her some kind of support. Zara got emotional a couple of times during the interview. One time was when we were discussing learning support and how they would take her there if she got emotional at school and she was saying they helped at learning support and she would feel better. However when

I asked her what it was about learning support that helped she got upset. She also got upset when we spoke about her sister when she was telling me how her sister can do anything and is very sporty. It seems that this resonated with a feeling of loss for her maybe, identifying the difference between her and her sister, with her sister being able to achieving something she wants to and cant.

Toby

Toby was a 12 year old boy who lives in Midlands in England and has a brother. Toby's dyspraxia includes significant verbal dyspraxia which made his ability to verbally communicate very difficult. The interview was conducted via Skype at his request and he had his mum with him. Toby has no Education, Care and Health Plan (ECHP) and his IEP stopped when he left primary school and transferred to secondary school which seems shocking considering the extent of his verbal dyspraxia. His mum said that the IEP in primary school looked good on paper but was rarely acted upon. She reports that she feels the teachers rarely understand, however he has one teaching assistant who really tries and has looked up lots of information and wants to train other teachers.

Toby really seemed to feel angry when teachers' did not help him and did not understand. He desperately wanted people to understand. Toby finds it exceptionally difficult to communicate verbally and as a result his mother was integral to his interview process as she was able to translate a lot for Toby when he found it difficult to pronounce things. She also was able to 'voice' some of his experiences when he would not have been able to. Toby was interviewed via skype at his request, he was happy and keen to speak with me and be part of the study.

Whilst Toby found it difficult to speak, particularly in detail and full sentences, often his mum would tell something and Toby would confirm;

> R: in year 2 yeah. And so as well as the difficulties with speaking you said you did have other difficulties with dyspraxia do you know what they were?
> Mum: doing buttons up wasn't it?
> Toby: Buttons
>
> Page 285 Line 8 – 11

There was a real sense that she acted as his translator and that she knew his experiences and feelings well, his body language throughout the interview as well indicated that his mum knew what he wanted to say. Whilst it may on the surface seem as if most of this interview was not directly Toby's experience, I truly believe it was, indeed it is important to appreciate how dyspraxia plays out for different people and his experience (verbal dyspraxia) is one which the other participants had not experienced and as such his interview allowed an insight in to an area which had not been explored and the interview process allowed for his mode of communication to be shown. We could have tried the interview via email however this would have led to a much different interview due to the process of sending and waiting for replies to each other. Toby went to a small village school where there were just two classes in the school and 64 children, so in his class there were children of all ages and all year groups from reception to year 6. He then went to a secondary school with 1200 children in. Toby mentioned he struggled with exhaustion and the school day structure was not helping as their lunchtime had been reduced to only half an hour and he said he needed more breaks. Toby was clear what helps, he likes someone who explains, interprets and is kind and teaches him things.

Toby had friends from football and judo who went to his secondary school so found it easier to transition and make new friends as he had some already.

Additionally his older brother went to the school and so his older brother and his friends spoke to Toby – sibling support seems important here. Toby's main emotion seems to be anger and frustration. Anger at the lack of support and understanding, he really wants to learn. It must be so frustrating and therefore anger inducing, if you want to say things but are not able to clearly formulate words in a way that you can make yourself understood. Toby's speech was slow and laboured when he could say things but often he would be trying to say things and working so obviously hard to formulate the words however he still could not say them in a way I could understand, his mum then interpreted, this must be so frustrating.

Toby gets very tired when he gets in from school and is not motivated to do homework and so his parents have to help him a lot. He does football and judo a couple of nights a week and is motivated by these. The judo teacher is really understanding and supportive – maybe this is why he is motivated? He says he struggles with his hands but does not really struggle to kick a ball, he says it's things like holding a racket that makes his hands difficult in sports. He seemed to think friendships were good and did not have trouble making friends when he went to school and when he transferred to secondary school. He gets angry when teachers tell him off for not trying as he is trying, but often gets shouted at for not trying or for not having written much. His mum says he used to say he hates his dyspraxia.

Esme

Esme was a 13½ year old girl who lived in East of England and had a sister. The interview was held at a pub/restaurant and her mum was present. Esme seemed a little under confident at first, and her mum gave a lot of information and prompts to start with. She seemed very shy and it took Esme a little while to get warmed up, at first she did not really answer questions;

> R: That's fine, you might not remember. Do you, how do you feel about your dyspraxia?
>
> Esme: [Shrugs shoulders]
>
> R: Not fussed about it? No, Ok. What about, what kinds of things do you think dyspraxia makes difficult for you?
>
> [Long pause]
>
> R: or maybe they didn't make, maybe there's nothing that made difficult for you.
>
> Esme: I don't know.
>
> R: No that's fine. How about, what about erm, you say that you enjoy secondary school, what about primary school? Shall we start at primary school and go through to secondary school from there? Did you enjoy primary school?
>
> Esme: Yeah.
>
> R: Was yours quite a small primary school?
>
> Mum: You're going to have to do some of the talking.
>
> Page 314 Line 17 – Page 315 Line 6

Esme went to two primary schools due to moving, the second being her favourite and also the smaller of the two even though she was only there for 6 months. The family moved in order to be close to the right kind of secondary school for Esme. They lived in quite a rural area and as her mum said there was only one school in the catchment area and they'd be hard pushed to get a place elsewhere. Esme had no favourite lessons, but disliked PE. She had spatial difficulties in that she found finding her way around at first hard, but her friendships helped her overcome that. Mum explained Esme had a student information sheet at secondary school which appeared to be similar to an IEP, she asked Esme if it was ok to show me it and I had a quick look.

Esme did not want to tell me about her first primary school at the beginning of the interview and looked very upset about it. Later towards the end of the interview the topic came up again and so I asked if she wanted to tell me then or not. She said that she did want to tell me, however needed her mum to prompt her as she did not know where or how to start.

A little further into the interview when telling me about a really supportive teacher Esme's mum asked her if she wanted to tell me about another teacher who it seemed was not as supportive. Esme did but said she did not know where to start, this was useful as it allowed me to begin with small questions which were easy to answer such as what was his name, in a process to give her a starter.

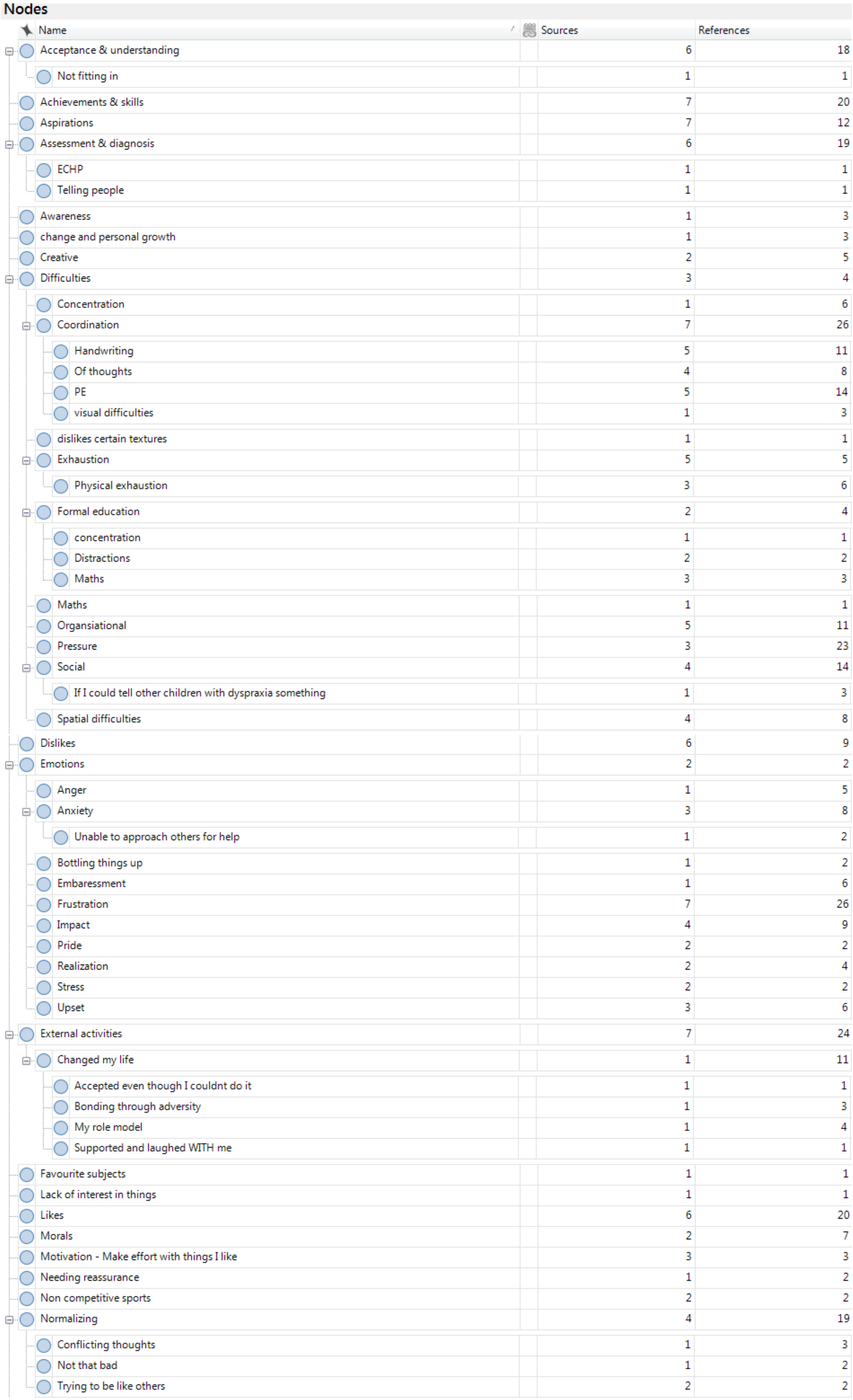
Callum

Callum was a 17 year old boy from the South East of England, he had two younger brothers (aged 14 and 1) and a younger sister (aged 10). Callum attended mainstream school and was at a Further Education college at the time of our interview. Callum had a diagnosis of dyspraxia and dyscalculia from the age of 10 and had an Education, Care and Health Plan (ECHP). Callum was interviewed at his home and did not choose to have anyone present with him.

He experienced bullying throughout his primary and secondary school and had quite difficult experiences with many teachers, especially in primary school, however also had some teachers he felt understood him and who helped him. Despite his negative experiences in formal education he had very positive experiences outside of school taking part in cadets.

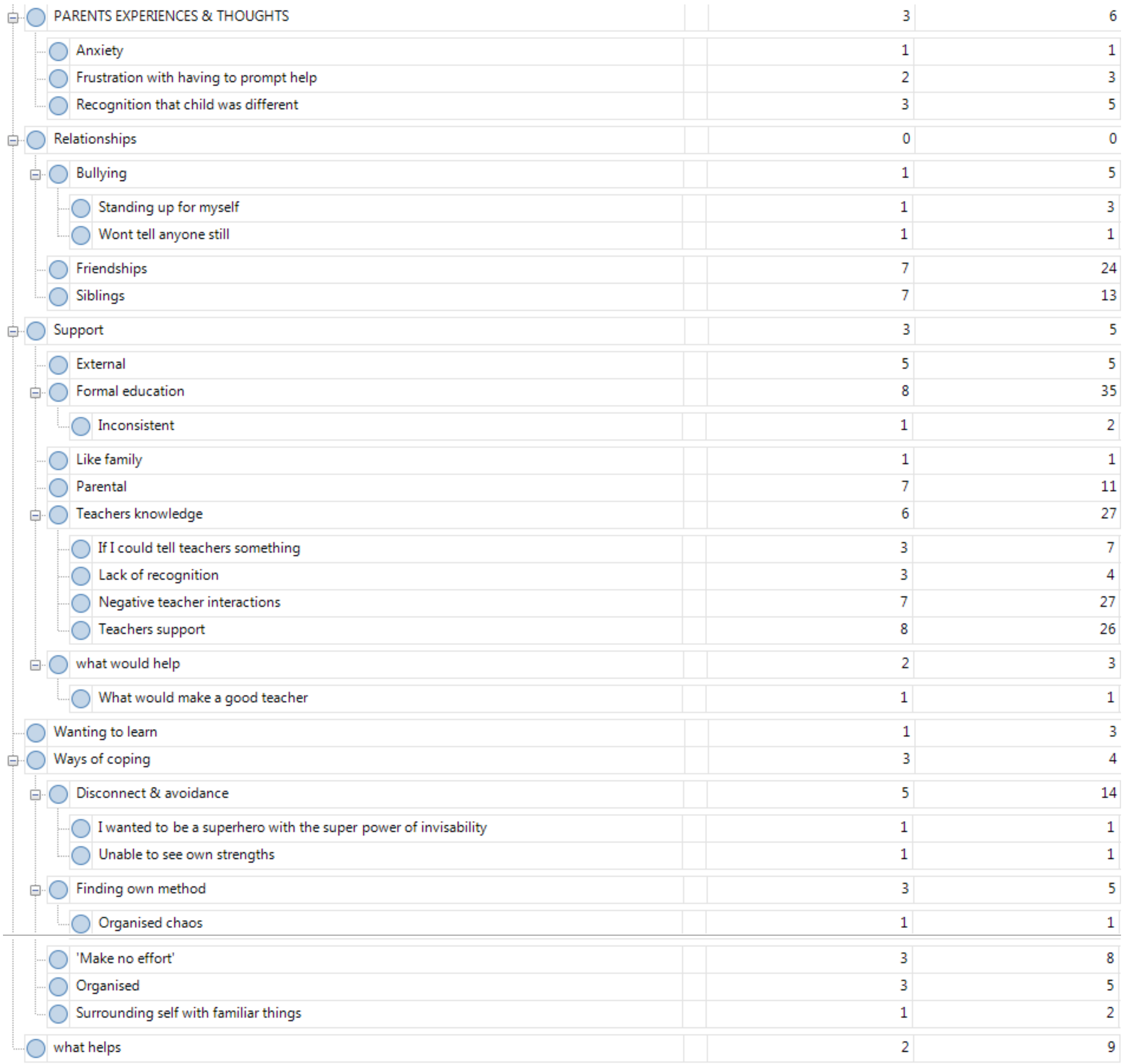
He was very confident talking about his experiences and is the oldest of the participants and as such this may have gone some way to explain his emotional articulation and his apparent awareness of things more than some of the younger people.

Appendix S: Extract from analytical process



Nodes

Name	Sources	References
Acceptance & understanding	6	18
Not fitting in	1	1
Achievements & skills	7	20
Aspirations	7	12
Assessment & diagnosis	6	19
ECHP	1	1
Telling people	1	1
Awareness	1	3
change and personal growth	1	3
Creative	2	5
Difficulties	3	4
Concentration	1	6
Coordination	7	26
Handwriting	5	11
Of thoughts	4	8
PE	5	14
visual difficulties	1	3
dislikes certain textures	1	1
Exhaustion	5	5
Physical exhaustion	3	6
Formal education	2	4
concentration	1	1
Distractions	2	2
Maths	3	3
Maths	1	1
Organsiational	5	11
Pressure	3	23
Social	4	14
If I could tell other children with dyspraxia something	1	3
Spatial difficulties	4	8
Dislikes	6	9
Emotions	2	2
Anger	1	5
Anxiety	3	8
Unable to approach others for help	1	2
Bottling things up	1	2
Embaressment	1	6
Frustration	7	26
Impact	4	9
Pride	2	2
Realization	2	4
Stress	2	2
Upset	3	6
External activities	7	24
Changed my life	1	11
Accepted even though I couldnt do it	1	1
Bonding through adversity	1	3
My role model	1	4
Supported and laughed WITH me	1	1
Favourite subjects	1	1
Lack of interest in things	1	1
Likes	6	20
Morals	2	7
Motivation - Make effort with things I like	3	3
Needing reassurance	1	2
Non competitive sports	2	2
Normalizing	4	19
Conflicting thoughts	1	3
Not that bad	1	2
Trying to be like others	2	2



PARENTS EXPERIENCES & THOUGHTS	3	6
Anxiety	1	1
Frustration with having to prompt help	2	3
Recognition that child was different	3	5
Relationships	0	0
Bullying	1	5
Standing up for myself	1	3
Wont tell anyone still	1	1
Friendships	7	24
Siblings	7	13
Support	3	5
External	5	5
Formal education	8	35
Inconsistent	1	2
Like family	1	1
Parental	7	11
Teachers knowledge	6	27
If I could tell teachers something	3	7
Lack of recognition	3	4
Negative teacher interactions	7	27
Teachers support	8	26
what would help	2	3
What would make a good teacher	1	1
Wanting to learn	1	3
Ways of coping	3	4
Disconnect & avoidance	5	14
I wanted to be a superhero with the super power of invisability	1	1
Unable to see own strengths	1	1
Finding own method	3	5
Organised chaos	1	1
'Make no effort'	3	8
Organised	3	5
Surrounding self with familiar things	1	2
what helps	2	9

Appendix T: Extract’s from research diary

Interviews in public places – especially busy café’s mean that some parts were inaudible on the recording – thankfully mostly only the mum who was there and she was not the focus of the interview, but none the less it detracted from the meaning at times. It is a fine balance of giving the participant a choice of location and ensuring that the recording can pick up!

Having parents there – not sure how much of it was the participants direct choice or informed by the parents desire to be there -and the child possibly not having a feeling either way. I think it brings useful elements having the parent there in that at times it’s the parent who prompts the child which offers a deeper exploration of things or brings up new things the child may otherwise not have mentioned – in fact this is mostly what happened. There is the concern that the child may be a little more guarded about what they say at times possibly although this is impossible to know. I certainly feel for PhD1 had he of had his parent there he may have been a little more open maybe???

At time some parents appeared to dominate the conversations and in one case appeared to want to put her experiences of ‘possibly being dyspraxic’ across and cutting off her son when he was telling me things and changing it to her view ie he was saying about washing and being messy and she was indicating that this was an inconvenience on her rather than letting him tell his story

I am aware that I was open and talked about my son having dyspraxia at times – I feel that this helped at times to make the child feel at ease by feeling like I understood and at times helped to convey some of his stories a little but I am equally aware that this personal involvement may have impacted the way I was with them in the interview process – this need not be a bad thing though.

I am on reflection aware that at times I didn’t take ques and follow up on things that my participants mentioned which when transcribing I realized it would have been interesting to follow up on. This is the nature of the style of research – allowing the participant to lead and guide the interview process.

Given the time it would be lovely to follow up with the participants again for a second interview a few years later with more direct questions informed by the first interview – that is for something beyond the PhD however but would make interesting insights into the developmental trajectory as my research does appear to have differing issues at differing ages – it would be interesting to see if those changes occur for the individual’s .