Educational Psychologists' Views Around the Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability – Do Educational Psychologists Have a Role to Play in Working Towards Inclusive Education?

Alice Zaniolo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

April 2021

Abstract

In the attempt to fill identified gaps in the literature, this research explored the views of 12 educational psychologists (EPs) around the inclusive education (IE) of students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in the UK. Considering the current debates within the British socio-political context and legislative background, as well as the call for EPs to work more systemically and inclusively, this study addressed how EPs construct their views and professional experiences of inclusion and perceive their role in promoting inclusive practices in the future.

The research paradigm followed a relativist ontology and a social constructionist epistemology, which are linked to a social model of disability. The study adopted a qualitative methodology: EPs' views were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed verbatim and analysed through Thematic Analysis (TA). The findings were analysed inductively and interpreted by referring to the existing literature and relevant psychological theories. A reflexive approach was maintained throughout the research and issues of trustworthiness were addressed.

Despite some variability in definitions and models of inclusion, reflective of wider controversies in defining IE, the findings highlight a strong EP commitment to inclusion, underpinned by social justice, children's rights, and valuing diversity. From the participants' perspective, inclusion underpins most of EP practice, both at the individual and systems level. Several barriers to IE were identified, some of which concern the EP role. These led to the identification of areas for professional development, involving EPs' sense of agency and positioning, as well as strengths related to EP practice in promoting inclusion, as EPs can play an important part in advocating for children and young people (CYP) and empowering the systems around them.

Implications for practice were built in a framework, involving professional developments around the EP practice at both the individual and systems levels, as well as around EPs' professional identity. EPs are in a unique position to foster the development of inclusive practices and this study has the potential to increase the professional awareness and self-confidence that are required to challenge existing systemic barriers to IE.

Student declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

This research required ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee (UREC) and confirmation of approval is provided within this thesis.

Alice Zaniolo

April 2021

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
AEP	Association of Educational Psychologists
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CYP	Children and Young People
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychologist Service
IE	Inclusive Education
LA	Local Authority
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, transgender, Queer or Questioning
NASP	National Association of School Psychologists
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
RQ	Research question
SEMH	Social and Emotional Mental Health
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
TA	Thematic Analysis
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

UEL	University of East London
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
VIG	Video Interactive Guidance

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the area of focus of the thesis, which concerns the educational inclusion of CYP with SEND. First, IE is defined. Secondly, the background to the research is provided, by addressing the international and national contexts and key legislation, as well as the main challenges to IE. Consequently, the role of the EP as pertaining to IE is explored. This is followed by a reflexive section addressing the researcher's position. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

1.2. Defining IE

IE is one of the most complex, multifaceted, and controversial issues which educational professionals and policymakers worldwide are confronted with (Duhaney, 2012; Farrell, 2004; Hick et al., 2009; Hodkinson, 2019; Mitchell, 2005). One of the factors contributing to making the inclusion problematic is the lack of clarity around its definition (Anderson et al., 2020; Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Farrell, 2004; Hick et al., 2009; Kershner, 2016; Mitchell, 2005; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018), which, in turn, translates into different and sometimes contradictory interpretations and implementations of inclusive practices (Anderson et al., 2020; Kershner, 2016; Mitchell, 2005).

Boyle and Anderson (2020) gave a broad definition of IE, stating that it "is about providing the most optimum learning opportunity to all children, irrespective of the context in which this is provided" (pp. 2-3). Moreover, as Mitchell (2005) and Topping (2012) pointed out, IE concerns a range of sources of potential disadvantage or marginalisation, such as disability, socio-economic circumstances, gender, sexual preference, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic heritage, and religion, as well as the "complex inter-relationships that exist among these factors" (Mitchell, 2005, p. 2).

However, this thesis addresses the educational inclusion of CYP with SEND, and therefore a narrower focus is necessary, to gain a deeper understanding of the current context, narratives and practices around inclusion and SEND.

1.2.1 IE and SEND

This section aims to clarify the notion of IE in relation to SEND. First, a definition of SEND is provided, followed by an exploration of some defining features of IE in this context.

Under Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014, "a child or young person has a Special Educational Need (SEN) when he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her" (p.19). Moreover, a child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most of their peers or have a disability which prevents them from accessing facilities such as those generally provided for CYP of the same age in mainstream schools. In the UK, the acronyms SEN and SEND are currently used interchangeably (Hodkinson, 2019). However, to avoid possible confusion for the reader, only the most recent acronym, SEND, is used in this thesis.

With regards to students with SEND, one of the recurring features of IE is the emphasis on the access to appropriate support, in order to minimise barriers to participation and learning (Ainscow & César, 2006; Mitchell, 2005; Shyman, 2015). Whether this support is to be offered within mainstream classrooms or specialist provisions is an issue which generates heated debates (Farrell, 2004; Hellawell, 2018; Warnock, 2010).

As opposed to integration, a term used up to the 1990s to refer exclusively to the physical placement of students with SEND in mainstream schools (Farrell, 2004; Hick et al., 2009; Lambert & Fredrickson, 2015; Mitchell, 2005), inclusion goes beyond matters of placement and provision to incorporate a set of values and assumptions. Amongst these are the celebration of diversity and the reduction of discrimination, the active participation of all students in the learning experience, their sense of belonging to the school community, and the reduction of barriers to learning and participation (Farrell, 2004; Lambert & Fredrickson, 2015; Mitchell, 2005; Waitoller, 2020).

1.3 Background to the Research

IE is necessarily embedded in a number of contexts, from the classroom, through the school, family, local community and the broader society, which can be understood as mutually influencing systems (Mitchell, 2005). These, in turn, are influenced by cultural values and beliefs, as well as legislative, economic, and historical factors (Rose, 2010). The next sections provide further insight on the broader context around IE, at both a national and international level.

1.3.1 International Context: Key Legislation and Approaches

IE officially entered the international arena in 1994, when the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994) yielded a *Framework for Action* to promote the access to education for all children, within their local schools, and regardless of their ability. Despite the Salamanca Statement being recognised as "the most significant international document that has ever appeared in the field of special education" (Ainscow & César, 2006, p. 231), debates on the definition of inclusion and equity in education and on how to pursue them are still ongoing 25 years after its publication (UNESCO, 2020b).

A further significant step was taken in 2006, when IE was given the legal status of fundamental human right through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) (United Nations [UN], 2006). However, some authors claim that IE does not represent a moral right, as its pursuit within mainstream settings can be detrimental for the learning of other students, and might go against parental rights to choose the most appropriate educational setting for their children (Gordon, 2013).

Others celebrated the CRPD (UN, 2006) as a further essential step towards a paradigm shift from a medical to a social model of disability (Hodkinson, 2019). The former postulates disability as loss of normal function and positions the disabled person as a passive receiver of services and aids aimed at 'curing' them or 'normalising' them (Clough & Corbett, 2000; Rieser, 2012), while the latter refuses the assumption that the individual's needs are disabling (Gordon, 2013), and situates the problem within the "disabling barriers created by society itself" (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 34).

These different models translate into three different approaches to education. The approach promoted by the social model of disability and the human rights movement represented in the CRPD (UN, 2006) is a fully inclusive approach to education, whereby all students with SEND are to be educated in the same setting as their peers and it is the education providers' responsibility to minimise barriers to their learning and participation (Gordon, 2013; Hodkinson, 2019; Rieser, 2012).

Based on the medical model, the approach of segregated education relies on specialist provisions (either specialist 'units' within mainstream schools or special schools), often differentiated on the basis of different types and levels of needs (Gordon, 2013; Hodkinson, 2019; Rieser, 2012). Also based on the medical model, the integrative approach (which focuses on integration rather than inclusion) allows some students with SEND (usually those with less severe needs) to attend mainstream education, provided that they are able to cope with its demands (Gordon, 2013; Lambert & Fredrickson, 2015; Rieser, 2012).

Despite the international legislation of the past 25 years clearly advocating for a social and human right model of disability and promoting IE, current school-level data highlight persistent exclusion and segregation of pupils with SEND worldwide (UNESCO, 2020a). However, there is great variability in how the international legislation has been translated into national and local policies and practices. As Mittler (2005) points out, "inevitably, each government will interpret such international guidance in the light of its own history, traditions, values and structures, to the point where the original policy may become unrecognizable" (p. 33).

1.3.2 National Context and Key Legislation

Within the British context, one example of how the international legislation has been adapted, is given by the fact that, in ratifying the CRPD (UN, 2006), the United Kingdom (UK) issued an interpretative declaration stating that a choice between mainstream schools and specialist provisions will continue to be offered to parents of students with SEND (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2009).

Moreover, it has been argued that the current British legislation around SEND aims to avoid discrimination and increase inclusion (Department for Education, 2014a, 2014b; Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014), yet it fails to take concrete steps into making inclusion a legal imperative and a matter of basic human

rights rather than needs (Hodkinson, 2019; Sayers, 2018). An example of this is the "conditional promotion of mainstream education" (Sayers, 2018, p. 623) set out in the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014), which promotes the inclusion of children with SEND unless it is "incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources" (p.172).

Therefore, despite introducing a number of welcomed changes to the previous SEND legislation, such as extending the age range to 25-year-olds, explicitly adopting a person-centred approach which places children and families at the centre of the process, and emphasising the need for early interventions on preparing for adulthood, the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014) leaves the implementation of IE open to interpretation.

Similarly, another pillar of the SEND legislation, the Equality Act 2010, has been criticised for leaving important matters related to its implementation open to interpretation. The Act has the merit of making harassment, victimisation, and direct and indirect discrimination of students with disability unlawful. However, it states that schools are to make 'reasonable adjustments' to meet the needs of disabled people, failing to provide clear directives in terms of what constitutes such adjustments in practice (Hodkinson, 2019).

Things are further complicated by differences in the legislation and its implementation between Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, and Wales (Black, 2019). Moreover, the education system is fragmented in different types of school provision (e.g., faith schools, private schools, academies, etc.), which answer to different local governing bodies. Additionally, Local Authorities (LAs) are given considerable autonomy and decision-making power in terms of provision (Mitchell, 2005). They have been responsible for the identification and provision of students with SEND, and they determine how many special school places to maintain, and which students will access them, being therefore in charge of the implementation of the inclusion agenda at the local level (Dyson, 2005). This results in a "patchwork of provision" (Dyson, 2005, p. 67) and remarkable local variability in terms of inclusive practices, as demonstrated by a recent study which analysed data from 150 LAs in England. For example, the results show considerable variation in terms of exclusion

rates for pupils with SEND, ranging from less than 10% in many LAs, to over 50% in others (Mime, 2019).

Furthermore, there seem to be competing agendas within the current legislation, namely the inclusion agenda and the 'standards agenda' (which focuses on educational outcomes) (Ainscow et al., 2006; Lunt & Norwich, 2009), resulting in increasing pressure on school staff and an educational environment that celebrates high achievement over valuing diversity and that is ultimately hostile to the thriving of students with SEND (Glazzard, 2013; Hellawell, 2018; Hutchings, 2017; Norwich, 2017). As a consequence, there seems to be a discrepancy between ideology and implementation of IE, as reported by studies investigating professionals' views on inclusion (Duhaney, 2012; Hutchings, 2017; Lauchlan & Greig, 2015; Palikara et al., 2018).

This discrepancy is understood by some critics by positioning the British value system within neoliberalism (Anderson & Boyle, 2020; Waitoller, 2020), a form of cultural, economic and political ideology which values market-oriented policies, promotes the increase of productivity and capital, and privileges top-down approaches to decision-making to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Waitoller, 2020). As a consequence, the British education system has moved towards a market model of education, which emphasises educational outcomes as accountability measures (Anderson & Boyle, 2020; Slee & Allan, 2001; Waitoller, 2020), to the point of schools being compared to 'exam factories' (Hutchings, 2017). Within this system, schools are pushed to compete with each other towards the pursuit of 'excellence' and 'high-standards' and are given flexibility in terms of selecting the students they enrol, while parents are given the freedom to choose schools based on students' results (Blackmore, 2000; Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2005). This, in turn, is considered by some as a barrier to IE (Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Slee & Allan, 2001), as students with SEND might be perceived as "non-marketable commodities" (Blackmore, 2000, p. 382).

Despite the fact that significant progress has been made since IE was incorporated in the socio-political and legal landscape, some authors argue that, in the UK, there has not been any significant progress over the past decade (Boyle & Anderson, 2020). The numbers of pupils with SEND who are excluded from the education

system are still worryingly higher than is the case for their mainstream peers (Hodkinson, 2019), the number of special schools is on the rise, as are the pupils who attend these settings (Boyle & Anderson, 2020), and it has been argued that "overall, CYP with SEND have not significantly benefitted from the introduction of the [latest] legislation" (Hodkinson, 2019, p. 146).

The next section provides an exploration of additional challenges to IE, as well as an exploration of key themes around its effectiveness.

1.3.3 Challenges and Effectiveness of IE

In addition to the aforementioned systemic challenges linked to the lack of clarity around the definition of IE and its implementation, and to the contradictions stemming from competing egalitarian and neo-liberal ideologies[1], Anderson et al. (2020) identified issues around responsibility as another key factor contributing to making IE "an enigma of wicked[2] proportions" (p. 1). It is argued that governments have placed the responsibility for the implementation of IE entirely on schools, in a top-down fashion, without addressing the need for systemic socio-political and economic reforms for meaningful change to happen (Anderson et al., 2020; Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Mitchell, 2005).

Other authors highlighted additional challenges to IE, such as a lack of measures to ensure compliance with policies promoting inclusive practices, lack of training, skills, and support for staff, conservative traditions among teachers, lack of resources, inadequate educational infrastructures (especially in rural areas), and large class sizes (Duhaney, 2012; Mitchell, 2005; Topping, 2012).

Another aspect that positions IE as a 'wicked problem' is the fact that variation in terminology, differences in implementation, and methodological issues render evaluating its effectiveness challenging (Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Lindsay, 2007). An exhaustive examination of the evidence base of the effectiveness of IE goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but, overall, there seems to be contradicting evidence

---

[1] Egalitarianism is an ideology based on equity and social justice and promotes the equal treatment of all individuals (Arneson, 2013). Neo-liberalism is an ideology based on liberal and capitalist ideals and promotes economic prosperity (Vallier, 2021).
[2] In the original source, the authors explain that this refers to the concept of 'wicked problem', which was introduced by Rittel and Webber (1973) to describe unique and ill-defined problems for which no definitive formulation or solution can be provided.

around this topic. For example, a literature review addressing the 2001-2005 timeframe found a paucity of methodologically sound studies, providing insufficient evidence for the benefits of inclusion in terms of positive educational outcomes (Lindsay, 2007).

More recent studies, which report academic and social benefits of inclusive practices, tend to be small scale and specific to local contexts (Boyle & Anderson, 2020). For example, Lauchlan and Fadda (2012) found many empirical studies documenting positive attitudes towards inclusion from teachers, students, and parents, as well as benefits in terms of learning and social skills. However, these studies, published mainly in Italian, were related to the Italian context, where a fully inclusive system has been in place since the early 1970s, therefore making any generalisation to the British integrative education system difficult. Finally, one aspect where the evidence base seems to be stronger is the overall higher cost-effectiveness of IE, compared to that of special schools (Crowther et al., 1998, in Duhaney, 2012; Mitchell, 2005; Muskens, 2013; Odom & Parrish, 2001; Topping, 2012).

1.3.4 The Role of the EP

Three dimensions have been identified as the foundations of a model to promote IE, namely producing inclusive polices, creating inclusive cultures and developing inclusive practises (T. Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Considering the discrepancies and dilemmas dominating the British socio-political and legislative scenario, investigating stakeholders' views seems therefore particularly relevant in the attempt to foster IE. This thesis aims to contribute to this knowledge base by exploring EPs' views and practices around inclusion.

It has been argued that EPs are in a unique position to support the development of inclusive practices because of factors situated within their professional role, and the values and ethical principles which underpin it. The British Psychological Society's (BPS') (2017) practice guidelines state that EPs have a professional duty to work towards the social inclusion of their clients, for example by making adjustments to encourage their active participation in society, promoting equality and opportunity, and challenging social conditions that contribute to exclusion and stigmatisation. More recently, the BPS' Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP)

(2019) provided guidance on how to promote IE, which included encouraging EPs to "move away from individually orientated 'deficit model' approaches… towards collaborative solutions, drawing upon the resources of families, teachers, professional agencies and the community" (p. 8).

The call to move from a within-child perspective to a more systemic way of working has been endorsed by many EPs in the past two decades, both in the UK and internationally (Eckersley & Deppeler, 2013; Engelbrecht, 2004; Farrell, 2006; Farrell & Venables, 2009; Forlin, 2010; Fox, 2015; Lomofsky & Green, 2004; Muthukrisha & Baez, 2002; Rose, 2010; Van der Aalsvoort & Elliott, 2007). Underlying the current change in the EPs' practice is a shift in the model of disability adopted by the profession. Historically, this was a medical model, which situated the problem within the child and translated into individual casework and IQ testing, which, in turn, resulted in segregated outcomes for many students with SEND (Farrell, 2006; Farrell & Venables, 2009; Kershner, 2016). In the last decades, and despite the current SEND legislation still focusing on individuals' deficits, many EPs have shifted to a social model of disability, which emphasises the need to address environmental and systemic factors (Fox, 2015), and therefore translates into more systemic, consultative and preventative ways of working.

This shift has been particularly endorsed by the Critical Educational Psychology and the Critical Disability Studies movements, which aim to tackle the psychologization and medicalisation of disability, challenge neoliberal education, foster the importance of social engagement in education, and promote co-production in EP practice and research (Goodley & Billington, 2017). The move towards a social model of disability is also promoted by those suggesting that EPs should incorporate social justice advocacy within their role (Briggs, 2013). This involves working in partnership with CYP and their families to ensure their voices are heard and that their views and rights are central in the decision-making processes that lead to an equitable access to education (Fox, 2015; Lansdown et al., 2014). It also involves working at a system level to identify and challenge policies and practices that perpetuate injustice and promoting positive change through self-reflection and reflective dialogues (Briggs, 2013; Lansdown et al., 2014).

Speight and Vera (2009) described three forms of advocacy: empowering others to advocate for themselves, advocating with institutions and policy makers on behalf of children and families, and advocating indirectly through the training and education of those professionals who work with CYP. It has been argued that EPs are well-placed to act at all these levels (Bartolo, 2010; Briggs, 2013; Speight & Vera, 2009), due to their psychological understanding of child development, family functioning, and system dynamics, as well as their professional skills in interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and working with complex systems.

However, research highlights a potential contradiction between what Argyris and Schön (1974) named 'espoused theory' and 'theory in use', as, despite the calls to work more systemically and inclusively, EPs' practice still seems to revolve mainly around individual assessments of CYP with SEND and recommendations for educational provision (Farrell, 2006; Farrell & Venables, 2009). As highlighted by Ashton and Roberts (2006) and Farrell and Venables (2009), this seems to reflect a mismatch between teachers' and LAs' expectations of the EP role and what professional organisations (AEP, 1999, in Farrell & Venables, 2009; DECP, 2002, 2019) and most EPs (Annan & Priestley, 2012) think their role should be. This could be due to pressures from LAs and schools, which are themselves under pressure to adhere to statutory requirements of assessment and placement of pupils with SEND, following the introduction of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. It might also be that EPs fear losing their distinctive role, namely being the professionals who could carry out assessment of children with learning difficulties, a role which historically led to the establishment of the profession in the first place (Farrell, 2006, 2010; Farrell & Venables, 2009). However, more than ten years have passed since these publications and it is possible that these tensions have loosened due to further developments of the EP role and practice. Up-to-date data on EPs' practice would therefore be helpful to better appreciate recent developments in the EP role and how these relate to fostering IE.

Considering the aforementioned barriers to inclusion and since this is a time of change for the EP profession, it seems highly relevant to explore EPs' current views and experiences around the IE of students with SEND. The view that "inclusive education is achieved in dialogue with others" (Kershner, 2016, p. 114) is fully

endorsed in this thesis, and it is the researcher's belief that EPs have a role to play in promoting critical thinking and approaches around IE. This is closely linked to the researcher's personal story and position, which will be addressed in the next section.

1.4 Position of the Researcher

The researcher acknowledges that her values, beliefs, and past experiences have inevitably affected the processes and outcomes of this research. As highlighted by Fox et al. (2007), "the beliefs of researchers affect the world that they research. Conversely, the world that they research affects their thoughts and beliefs" (p. 186).

Social justice, equality and inclusion have been fundamental values in the researcher's upbringing and adult life. She pursued a career in educational psychology with the intent to help CYP thrive and succeed, and developed relevant professional experience in her home country, Italy, before moving to the UK and enrolling on the professional doctorate course. Her personal and professional experience of the Italian education system, which, as mentioned above, has endorsed a fully inclusive model since the 1970s, as well as her professional experiences in less inclusive systems (in Switzerland and Luxembourg), have shaped her views around the benefits and challenges of IE, and strengthened her belief that the former make the challenging road towards implementing more inclusive practices one worth pursuing.

Despite being aware of the British integrative education system, her direct experiences of how this actually works, and its effects in practice (for example, in terms of the high numbers of exclusions and practices such as ability grouping within the classroom) made her feel deeply uncomfortable and ultimately question her choice to leave her country. At the same time being immersed in the values and principles promoted within her doctoral training at the University of East London (UEL), helped her reflect on the role that EPs can play in challenging inequalities and promoting positive change. Her initial resistant and judgemental reaction gradually made way for reflection, and a deep desire to better understand the socio-political background of the educational inequalities in the UK, as well as the perceptions of those involved, started to take root within her.

It is the researcher's strong belief that, to be able to promote meaningful change, it is important to listen to those whose experiences might differ from our own and to proactively seek reflective dialogues with others. Exploring the professional views of more experienced EPs in the UK seemed particularly important in supporting the researcher's reflections around her professional position towards IE and the role she might be able to play in her future practice. In a way, she was hoping that this research journey could help her process her feelings of frustration and therefore perform a cathartic function.

At the beginning of the research process, she was hoping to find out that there are EPs who feel equally frustrated with the outcomes of the current system, and who are developing effective practices to tackle discrimination in education. At the same time, she was afraid of realising that the EP profession in the UK is dominated by connivance with the status quo and a belief that the 'promoting excellence in education' agenda should be the major driving force when thinking about SEND.

The researcher is aware that these beliefs and aspirations could potentially act as biases at different stages of the research. As this work is embedded in a social-constructionist paradigm, a degree of co-production between the researcher and the participants is not only seen as inevitable, but also welcomed. As stated before, it is through dialogue and shared narratives that meaning is constructed. However, to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher strives to make her assumptions and decisions explicit at all stages of the research and to keep engaging in a reflexive process around the potential effects of her own position.

1.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter one introduced key definitions of IE and described the national and international context in which IE takes place. Key challenges to its implementation were addressed, as well as issues around its effectiveness. The chapter then moved on to outlining the EP role as related to IE and concluded with a reflexive section on the researcher's position.

Chapter two provides a critical review of the research literature available on EPs' views and experiences around IE, as well as a brief description of the theoretical framework for the research and an outline of the research purpose and questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter addresses the available literature on EPs' views, attitudes, and experiences around IE for learners with SEND. In order to achieve the "best evidence synthesis" (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 102), the researcher conducted a systematic search and review of the international literature on the topic. In the attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of the available knowledge base, this type of review includes multiple study types, as opposed to systematic literature reviews, which are traditionally limited to rigorous quantitative studies, such as randomised controlled trials (RCTs). While systematic literature reviews allow for greater generalisability of the evidence drawn from the review, a systematic search and review appeared to be the most suitable type of approach to address the targeted topic. This is because individual perspectives and attitudes are historically explored through a variety of research designs, ranging from qualitative and mixed-methods studies to quantitative ones.

After describing the method utilised for the systematic search, a critique of the identified literature is presented. A critical interpretive analysis was conducted to critically synthesise a range of evidence types, with the final goal of providing a comprehensive theorisation of the available evidence. This approach allows potential methodological issues in the included studies to be addressed, "without necessarily excluding the contribution that flawed studies might make" (Booth et al., 2016, p. 258). The critical interpretative analysis is followed by a discussion of the main limitations and gaps of the selected literature. Finally, the theoretical framework for this research is addressed, and the research purpose and questions are outlined, before providing a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Details of Systematic Search

In order to gain a better understanding of EPs' views and experiences around IE, the international literature on the topic was systematically investigated. The search method for the literature review was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Statement (Moher et al., 2009). After some preliminary searches and explorations of key words, the following

databases within EBSCO Host were systematically searched on 24.09.2020: Academic Search Complete, British Education Index, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, Education Research Complete, ERIC, and PsycINFO.

In the attempt to target the search on the views and experiences around IE within the EP profession, key terms such as 'educational psychology*' and 'school psychology*' were limited to the title field. These were used in combination with other key words, which were searched for among all fields, such as 'role*', 'practice*', 'view*', 'experience*', and 'attitude*', as well as key words related to educational inclusion.

The inclusion criteria applied involved articles published in peer-reviewed journals within the last 20 years, from January 2000 to September 2020. Only studies published in English were included in the review. 277 studies were yielded for review, of which 108 remained after removing duplicates. Three additional peer-reviewed papers were identified through snowballing and additional searches on Google Scholar. A total of 111 records were therefore screened for review.

As this research is focused on EPs' views on the inclusion of pupils with SEND, papers addressing the inclusion of other groups of students (e.g., pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and students who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning [LGBTQ+]) and on other stakeholders other than EPs (e.g., members of school staff, parents and students) were excluded. This is because different groups of individuals construct their views on IE from their particular viewpoints, values and life experiences. Therefore, the researcher identified that, to reach a deep understanding of EPs' contribution to the inclusion discourse and their professional practices around the IE of learners with SEND, a narrow focus on this professional group was required. Similarly, investigating the views on the inclusion of different characteristics of children might involve a different set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and experiences, and should therefore be addressed separately. Publications not including any form of research or study (e.g., opinion papers and editorials) have been considered in other chapters of this thesis but have not been included in the literature review.

Appendix A provides detailed information on the key terms utilised in the systematic search and their respective field of search, as well as on the databases utilised and the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied.

At the end of the screening phase, 18 articles were identified for full-text assessment of eligibility. This was conducted through the use of the CASP Qualitative Studies Checklist (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2019) and Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence framework. As a result, six further articles were excluded, because no information on the methodology adopted in the studies was provided, thus rendering any attempt to critically evaluating the findings impossible. Therefore, 12 papers were finally included in the critical analysis.

Most of the identified studies are based on a qualitative methodology, although some quantitative and mixed-method studies are also included. The flow chart presented in Appendix B outlines the phases of the systematic search, while Appendix C provides a summary of the selected studies' main characteristics, as well as a brief critical evaluation.

2.3 Critical Interpretive Analysis of Identified Studies

The findings presented in the identified studies were analysed thematically (Grant and Booth, 2009). This involved summarising all the findings presented within the papers in a dedicated table and colour-coding them based on tentative themes. Subsequently, the researcher went through the findings section of each paper to check that all the findings were captured by the tentative themes, applying the same colour-coding approach used in the table. Evidence of this process has been provided in Appendix D.

The findings were summarised in the following four themes, which have been used as a framework for the critical interpretive analysis:

- EPs' views on inclusion: values and attitudes
- EPs' views on their role: EP practice and inclusion
- EPs' views on challenges and barriers to inclusion
- EPs' views on the impact of inclusion on students with SEND and their peers

2.3.1 EPs' Views on Inclusion: Values and Attitudes

Among the studies investigating EPs' views on inclusion, most findings convey an overall positive attitude towards IE (Hardman & Worthington, 2000; Masten et al., 2003; Toye et al., 2019), with some participants expressing concerns around the

increasing exclusion of pupils with SEND from mainstream school (Evans & Lunt, 2002).

However, some EPs considered full inclusion "theoretical and not practical" (Nkoma & Hay, 2018, p. 857), stating that specialist provisions might be more appropriate to meet the needs of some students. For example, a British study found that, overall, EPs' preferred placement for children with SEND was mainstream school with support, but special schools were the first choice for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, while mainstream units were preferred for students with hearing and visual impairments, and severe learning difficulties (Hardman & Worthington, 2000). In line with these findings, another British study found that Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) considered pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities difficult to include (Evans & Lunt, 2002), compared to pupils with other types of needs, such as physical difficulties, speech and language difficulties, and specific learning difficulties. However, while the EPs from Hardman's and Worthington's (2000) study agreed that CYP presenting with SEMH issues were to receive support within mainstream settings, the PEPs participating in (Evans' and Lunt's (2002) research believed that these students were the most difficult to include in mainstream schools.

It is interesting to notice that the focus on the ideal placement to be preferred for children with different types of needs rests upon a medical view of SEND, as the judgements were based purely on diagnostic labels. This might be reflective of the kind of discourse which was dominating at the time these two articles were published, which dates back to almost 20 years ago. Furthermore, most of the more recent studies included in this review seem to take a different stance towards inclusion, whereby EPs' views tend to focus more on their professional role and the systemic factors involved in IE (Hamre et al., 2018; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019; Nkoma & Hay, 2018; Szulevicz & Tanggaard, 2014), rather than on within-child factors.

The literature on the values and theoretical models underpinning EPs' attitudes and beliefs towards inclusion is scarce, but there are some findings pointing towards EPs valuing advocating for children with learning disabilities and their parents (Cowan et al., 2007), and drawing on previous experiences involving child-centred approaches,

anti-oppressive practices and a commitment to reconstructing the educational psychology movement to inform their current EP practice (Hick, 2005). Interestingly, despite the focus on the students' type of individual needs, which can be traced back to a realist and positivist worldview, the EPs from Hardman's and Worthington's (2000) research indicated adopting a constructivist perspective. This was exemplified by the belief that "children construct their world as a result of their experience" (p.359) and that they learn through social interaction and exploration. The participants also favoured a behaviourist approach, which translated into the use of practices involving positive reinforcement, imitation, and instructions.

Finally, a recent quantitative study conducted in the UK investigated education professionals' attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Toye et al., 2019). It was found that, compared to teachers, support staff, and school managers, EPs have greater knowledge of ADHD, less stigma, and a more positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with ADHD. Furthermore, this research seems to tentatively suggest that greater knowledge of the condition is associated with lower stigma, which in turns predicts more positive attitudes towards mainstream inclusion. These results led the authors to recommend that EPs provide school staff with training around ADHD, in the attempt to develop more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with ADHD.

2.3.2 EPs' Views on Their Role: EP Practice and Inclusion

The aforementioned parallel between EPs working towards inclusion and shifting from a within-child perspective towards a systemic approach has been reaffirmed in the literature identified in this review (Cowan et al., 2007; Davies et al., 2008; Hamre et al., 2018; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019; Nkoma & Hay, 2018; Szulevicz & Tanggaard, 2014). For example, the study conducted by Evans and Lunt in 2002, indicated that, overall, most schools were practicing 'weak' forms of inclusion, where the needs of the pupils were assessed and catered for on an individual basis and from outside agencies, with little to no adaptations implemented by the mainstream setting. The EP role, therefore, seemed to be bounded to a 'within-child' model, with little scope for systemic work. More recent studies, however, seem to capture this shift in

perspective, identifying a consultative and systemic way of working as the way forward in promoting IE.

For instance, Kjær and Dannesboe (2019) explicitly framed the move towards consultative work as an answer to the inclusion agenda. The EPs participating in their study described the shift in their role in terms of moving from positioning and being positioned as the expert, towards taking up a facilitator role, which relies on consultation to empower staff through reflection and emotion management. A number of the selected studies investigated EPs' perceptions around this new role, highlighting that it is perceived as involving, on one hand, offering school staff emotional containment and practical support, and, on the other, providing them with challenging thoughts and questions in order to facilitate a shift in their thinking about the inclusion of children with SEND (Cowan et al., 2007; Hick, 2005; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019; Nkoma & Hay, 2018).

Some studies also found that school psychologists felt that their consultation skills allowed them to empower not only school staff, but also parents. This was achieved, for example, by raising parents' awareness around inclusion (Nkoma & Hay, 2018), and by educating them around the implications of the legislation around inclusion, so that they could make informed decisions regarding their children's education (Cowan et al., 2007).

Moreover, working towards inclusive practice seems to provide EPs with the opportunity to advocate for children with SEND and their families, for example by eliciting pupils' views and ensuring their voice is taken into account (Hick, 2005), and by acting on behalf of the parents within the context of special education programming (which involves decisions around curriculum differentiation, teaching strategies, and targeted interventions) (Cowan et al., 2007). Indeed, it also gives EPs the opportunity to be more involved in educational programming, for example through increased knowledge of the curriculum and greater direct involvement in interventions (Cowan et al., 2007).

With regards to EPs' involvement in interventions, an American study investigated school psychologists' perceptions towards the use and the effectiveness of instructional adaptations within mainstream settings (Masten et al., 2003). The responses to the Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (AEI) (Schumm & Vaughn, 1991)

indicated that 'providing reinforcement and encouragement' and 'monitoring students' understanding of directions and assigned tasks' were rated as the most effective and used strategies. By contrast, strategies involving direct work with the child received low ratings, potentially because more importance was being given to consultation (e.g., 'communicating with special education teachers' was another highly used strategy). Moreover, the results showed that school psychologists seemed to attribute great importance to teaching strategies and environmental adaptations, rather than using alternative materials and evaluation procedures (e.g., 'adapting classroom management strategies that are effective with mainstreamed students' was another highly used strategy, while 'adapting grades or scoring criterion' was rated as the least effective and used strategy). Surprisingly, helping students to deal with feelings was not seen as a priority, indicating that school psychologists seemed to focus mainly on students' learning rather than their emotional wellbeing. Finally, the significant difference between ratings of effectiveness and use of most strategies indicates that school psychologists perceived these strategies as effective but used them less often, with the authors hypothesising this might be because of concerns around how these strategies might be received by educators. However, it is important to notice that the small sample size of this study makes these findings difficult to be generalised to the whole profession.

2.3.3 EPs' Views on Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion

Working systemically and inclusively may involve a new set of challenges for EPs. These barriers can occur at the training level, at the EPS/LA level, at the school and family level, and at the wider societal level.

As far as training is concerned, only one study carried out in Zimbabwe addressed EPs' perceptions around training on their professional role and responsibilities in IE. The author found that TEPs' and EPs' views indicated inadequate training and supervision and difficulties accessing the location of relevant conferences (Nkoma, 2018). The participants also reported negative feelings towards the internship following the master's programme, the shortage of supervisors, which often results in having to pay for private supervision, the continuing professional development point system, and the lack of degree programmes in Master of Science in educational

psychology. While some of these barriers might not be relevant to the British context, this study raises crucial questions around the impact of EPs' training programme, continuing professional development and supervision on EP's perceived competence in developing inclusive practices. Therefore, it would be important to explore whether EPs in the UK might perceive that their training programme adequately prepares them to take on professional responsibilities in promoting IE, and whether they feel adequately supported in their practice, for example through supervision, once they are fully qualified.

Looking at the EPS/LA level, a British study found that EPs were facing difficulties in handling the pressure of meeting casework-related deadlines and performance indicators, while also trying to make capacity for systems work (Davies et al., 2008). Moreover, EPs reported finding it hard to persuade their LAs to prioritise this type of work during the allocation of EP time (Davies et al., 2008). This might also be related to the lack of national and local policies on IE, which, in turn, translates into a lack of guidance and practice frameworks for EPs' work around improving IE (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Nkoma, 2018).

Another area of challenge can be found in the collaboration with other professionals. For example, in Denmark, Hamre et al. (2018) identified difficulties in working collaboratively with child psychiatrists, due to a perceived psychiatric dominance in the collaboration, which seems to characterise the Danish context. This resulted in EPs experiencing tensions between working within a medical system while trying to adopt a social model of disability in their practice. Moreover, EPs seemed to be uncomfortable having to mediate the diagnostic knowledge in the educational settings, because of the perceived stigmatising and prescriptive functions of the medical diagnosis. The authors claimed that these challenges are partly to be attributed to a strong diagnosis culture and to weak professional self-confidence among EPs in Denmark. It could be argued that a lack of professional confidence might have been also underlying school psychologists' reluctance to utilise some of the strategies they rated as highly effective for the inclusion of children with SEND, as found in Masten's et al.'s (2003) study.

Difficulties in working collaboratively with other professionals also relate to the school context, especially in terms of EPs facing resistance and hostility when negotiating

their role with school staff (Davies et al., 2008; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019). In particular, some teachers seemed to expect the EP to provide expert guidance on individual children and appeared to be reluctant to acknowledge the potential of the move to a consultative and systemic way of working (Davies et al., 2008; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019). Some EPs reported that this resulted in having to deal with extensive emotion management in their meetings with school staff, in order to handle teachers' frustration and their own emotional responses to the tension arising from the renegotiation of their role (Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019). Other EPs reported perceiving a lack of experience in the role of the facilitator as an additional barrier, claiming that they would have wanted more support with understanding and developing the skills needed to take up this role (Davies et al., 2008). This finding seems to be in line with the aforementioned studies identifying lack of professional confidence in challenging the medical model of disability and working systemically with schools and families (Hamre et al., 2018; Masten et al., 2003), as well as with the findings around the perceived inadequateness of the EP training (Nkoma, 2018).

Other challenges identified by EPs as playing a crucial role at the school level are seen in inaccessible school environments and lack of budgeting for the building of appropriate infrastructures, large class sizes, lack of support and training for staff, and negative student and teacher attitudes (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Nkoma & Hay, 2018). Furthermore, curriculum and examination systems are believed by EPs to put staff under the pressure of having to meet achievement targets for the majority of students, with negative effects on the inclusion of children with SEND (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Nkoma & Hay, 2018).

Moreover, other systemic factors have been recognised as affecting inclusive practices in school. For example, EPs felt that parental choices and tribunal decisions might lead to indicating specialist provisions as the preferred placement for students with SEND (Evans & Lunt, 2002). Additionally, looking at the wider societal level, some EPs stated that the social marginalisation of pupils with SEND negatively affects their educational inclusion, suggesting that a change in 'culture' is required (Evans & Lunt, 2002).

Finally, a lack of funding has been seen by EPs in different countries as hugely affecting inclusion (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Nkoma & Hay, 2018; Szulevicz &

Tanggaard, 2014). However, considering that special schools are less cost-effective than mainstream schools, Szulevicz and Tanggaard (2014) argued that budget limitations can also represent an opportunity to re-organise and improve the mainstream learning environments for all students, therefore making the financial imperatives a way to propel inclusion. Moreover, considering the current context of financial austerity and cutbacks, Kjær and Dannesboe (2019) framed the move away from individual casework and towards consultative work as a cost-effective answer to the inclusion agenda.

2.3.4 EPs' Views on the Impact of Inclusion on Students with SEND and Their Peers

EPs' perceived impact of IE on students with SEND and their peers was explored by Cowan et al. (2007). The authors identified "unanticipated changes" (p. 172) in the lives of the students in terms of pupils with SEND resisting the return to the general education classroom, enhanced relationships between students with SEND and their peers, and a decrease in bullying. Moreover, this study has the merit of emphasising EPs' reflections around students with SEND's right to advocate for themselves. For example, participants reflected on the fact that, unexpectedly, some students preferred to be grouped with other students with SEND, and on the fact that pupils disliked teachers providing them with the correct answers, as opposed to making adaptations in order for them to achieve their learning targets independently. Therefore, this study serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of ensuring that students' voices are heard and placed at the centre of EPs' practice, in order to make IE truly meaningful for CYP.

2.4 Limitations and Gaps in the Literature

The identified studies shed some light on the views and practices of EPs around IE. In particular, the work of Hamre et al. (2018), Nkoma (2018), Nkoma and Hay (2018), and Szulevicz and Tanggaard (2014) have the merit of being rooted in well-defined epistemological positions and sound methodologies, both of which are clearly reported in the papers.

However, when looking at the UK-based literature, such methodological rigour is not evident, as, in four out of five papers, information on the epistemological

assumptions and the research methods are either lacking or missing altogether. Moreover, these studies are dated (three of them being between 15 and 20 years old) and it would therefore be relevant to understand whether the current EPs' views on inclusion have shifted, especially since the introduction of the SEND legislation in 2014.

Concerns around methodological appropriateness are not limited to the British literature, as most of the papers identified for this review failed to report key methodological information, making a critical evaluation of the evidence difficult. For example, only a minority of the selected articles clearly stated how participants were recruited and whether ethical issues were addressed, most studies did not report any information on data analysis, and none of them addressed reflexivity. Therefore, the evidence discussed above should, overall, be considered with extreme caution.

Furthermore, while acknowledging some relevant challenges, the literature highlights minimal strengths and positive practices of EPs working towards inclusion. Sharing these views could contribute to develop a more positive narrative around IE, as well as help the profession develop greater self-confidence when advocating for children with SEND and negotiating systemic work with schools and LAs.

In addition, with the exception of Nkoma (2018) briefly touching on TEPs' and EPs' perceived solutions to the issues around the training programme in Zimbabwe, none of the identified studies highlights ways forward for EPs to make a valuable contribution to the development of inclusive schools. Therefore, it would be relevant for the profession to share current views and ideas on the EP role in the future of IE.

Similarly, only one study in the USA (Cowan et al., 2007) investigated EPs' views on the perceived impact of inclusion on children with SEND and their peers. It could be argued that, in order to fulfil their role in empowering students and their families, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014), EPs' practice should be guided by reflections on the students' views around how they construct IE and their preferred inclusive practices.

Finally, considering that EPs do not operate in a vacuum (Lunt, 1997), but rather position themselves "in a moral and value-laden world" (Fox, 2015, p. 383), more studies exploring the EPs' values and theoretical models underpinning their views and practice around inclusion would be welcome.

In conclusion, despite the pivotal role EPs are called to play in supporting children with SEND and making their schools more inclusive, the understanding of the way they construct inclusion and how they perceive their practice in the current economic and political context and in the near future is still limited. The present research project aims to contribute to fill this knowledge gap.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

At this stage in the thesis, IE is broadly defined as featuring a system which enables pupils to fully participate in learning and social experiences by reducing environmental and cultural barriers. This definition is underpinned by the social model of disability, which, as described in chapter one, situates the causes of disability in the attitudes, values and beliefs operating within the society rather than in the individuals themselves (Hodkinson, 2019).

The underlying theoretical framework draws from Bronfenbrenner's theory on the 'Ecology of human development' (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), which he defined as

> the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life span, between a growing organism and the changing immediate environments in which it lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded (p.514).

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) conceptualisation of the child's ecological environments results, from a topological point of view, in a nested arrangement of mutually influencing systems, starting with the microsystem (which comprises the specific and time-bound sets of interactions between the child and their immediate settings). This is located within a mesosytem (which refers to the interrelation between the child and their major settings, such as the interactions between the child and their peer group), which, in turn, is nested in an exosystem (including structures such as the neighbourhood, the government etc.). The overarching system, or macrosystem, incorporates the culture and subcultures of which all the other systems are concrete manifestations (e.g., the economic, educational, legal, and political systems). Moreover, the "place or priority children and those responsible for their care have in

such macrosystems is of special importance in determining how a child and his or her caretaker are treated and interact with each other in different types of settings" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). Finally, a fifth element, the chronosystem, was subsequently added to incorporate the impact of change and continuity processes over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

In this view, IE can be situated at the macrosystem level. Therefore, exploring society's constructs of inclusion seems particularly relevant, as the views on children with SEND and the priority attributed to their education inevitably affect their interactions with the world and, ultimately, their development. The choice to focus on EPs' views of IE is motivated by the fact that many EPs position themselves as facilitators of change and promoters of social justice (Bartolo, 2010; Briggs, 2013; Fox, 2015; Goodley & Billington, 2017; Lansdown et al., 2014). Moreover, they are in a privileged position to influence not only the allocation of resources and provision for students with SEND, but also and above all, to work at a system level, for example by collaborating with school staff in devising new polices and developing inclusive school cultures.

2.6 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this exploratory research was to develop the understanding of EPs' views around school inclusion of students with SEND in the British context.

This research project attempted to answer the following research questions (RQs):

- What are EPs' views on IE?
- What are EPs' experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice?
- What are EP's views on their role in promoting inclusive practice in the future?

2.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter two builds on the background outlined in chapter one by providing a critical review of the international research around EPs' views and experiences of IE. The methodology for the review is described and the relevant literature is critically analysed by referring to four main themes, namely EPs' views on inclusion, EPs' views on their role, EPs' perceptions of challenges and barriers to inclusion, and EPs' views on the impact of inclusion on students with SEND and their peers. The

chapter also outlines the theoretical framework for the research. It then ends by stating the research purpose and questions.

Chapter three will address the methodology of the research, including an outline of the ontological and epistemological position adopted by the research, the research design, method, and procedure, the approach to data analysis, as well as key considerations around trustworthiness and ethical issues.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter sets out the research paradigm and methodology used in the current research, in order to answer the RQs presented at the end of chapter two. First, an outline of the ontological and epistemological stances taken by the researcher is provided. This is followed by a section addressing the research design, including a description of the data collection method. Subsequently, a section on the participants provides details on the sampling method, the recruitment process, and the profile of the participants. Then, the data analysis method and procedures are addressed, before ending the chapter with key considerations around trustworthiness and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm can be defined as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 56). With regards to research paradigms, these provide a framework for conducting research (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and encompass four main aspects, namely ontology, epistemology, methodology and ethics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The next paragraphs will address the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the current research, while methodology and ethics will be discussed in the following sections of the chapter.

3.2.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

Scientific research has been defined as "a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data" (Nunan, 1992, p. 3).

Traditionally, scientific research has been based on a modernist rationalistic paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), also defined as technical rationality by Schön (1983), underpinned by the assumption that there is a tangible reality 'out there', which can be objectively known through the rigorous application of the scientific method (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Key features of the modernist paradigm have been identified in its determinacy (there is an objective truth than can be known through expert knowledge), rationality (there can be no alternative and contradictory explanations), impersonality (related to objectivity), valuing of predictions (related to the possibility to generalise results and control events), and being value-free and non-reflexive (Moore, 2005).

However, the objectivity claims and the methodological rigour on which this paradigm rests upon have been seen by many authors within the postmodernist movement as inadequate to address the complexities of human experiences and social interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Moore, 2005). In line with this position, this research project is underpinned by postmodernist assumptions and, more specifically, by a relativist ontology and a social constructionist epistemology.

In open contraposition to the realist ontology typical of modernism, based on the belief in an objective and measurable reality (Lincoln et al., 2011), a relativist ontology posits that there is no single objectifiable and knowable reality or 'truth', but rather multiple realities (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Corcoran, 2017). These realities "exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27, in Lincoln et al., 2011).

Similarly, in contraposition to the dominant empiricist paradigm of the modern scientific method, the social constructionist epistemology stemming from the postmodernist approach challenges the idea of seeking general truths (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Moore, 2005; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Social constructionism argues that our knowledge of the world is co-constructed by people through daily interactions and is therefore socially constructed and historically and culturally specific (Burr, 2015; Moore, 2005).

Moreover, social constructionists see language "as one of the principal means by which we construct our social and psychological worlds" (Burr, 2015, p. 10).

Language gives meaning and structure to our experiences of the world, including our internal states, and is therefore seen as a form of action and thus given a performative role (Burr, 2015; Corcoran, 2017; Moore, 2005). Considering that our experiences are never fixed but rather co-constructed in everchanging social interactions, and that language provides content and structure to our thought, it follows that social change is also possible through language (Burr, 2015).

As "the process of understanding… is the result of an active cooperative enterprise of persons in relationships" (Gergen, 1985, p. 267), the researcher is not positioned as an expert holding an objective stance as separate from the 'object' being studied, but rather as an equal participant engaged with a collaborative meaning-making process and whose role is that of facilitating the construction of a contextually relevant truth, which cannot be generalised to other contexts (Moore, 2005).

3.2.1.1 Social Constructionism, Disability, and Inclusion. Assuming that "the terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people" (Gergen, 2009), it could be argued that a social model of disability can be positioned within the social constructionist framework, as disability is not considered an individual or medical matter, but rather a socially constructed and socially maintained one (Burr, 2015).

Furthermore, as proposed by authors within the Disability Studies and Critical Educational Psychology movements (Goodley & Billington, 2017), the construction of disability largely depends on a set of cultural and historical values and norms that often serve the interests of dominant groups in society and is therefore also a matter of power relations (Burr, 2015; Jones, 1996). As stated by Jones (1996), "much of what is believed about disability results from meanings attached by those who are not disabled" (p. 350). Moreover, "the body's 'deficiencies' only show up as such when persons are constrained to live in environments designed to suit the needs and activities of others" (Burr, 2015, p.46).

By adopting a social constructionist stance, this research addresses EPs' constructions around inclusion of CYP with SEND and around their own role in promoting inclusive practices. It is the researcher's belief that, by changing the way we talk about inclusion, we could change the way we think about it and this, in turn, could lead to changes in inclusive practices and cultures. Exploring the views of EPs,

as potential agent of social change and advocate for CYP, could provide a step forward in this direction.

3.3 Research Design

Research designs are "types of inquiry… that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 49). Given the research purpose and questions, and in line with the research paradigm outlined above, this research project adopted a qualitative and exploratory research design.

This choice is based on the assumption that "qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 41). It is therefore a situated and interpretative activity, which seeks to generate a better understanding of a phenomenon through the naturalistic exploration of the meaning people bring to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). As a result, qualitative methods deal with data in the form of language and expressions of experiences, by identifying and analysing patterns (Levitt et al., 2018).

The focus of this qualitative research is on the views of EPs around IE in the British context. Cultural, socio-economic, historical, and legislative aspects have also been explored through the participants' perspective, as these inevitably influence the way EPs make sense of their views and professional experiences around IE.

3.3.1 Data Collection Techniques

Semi-structured interviewing was the chosen technique for this research, as it is deemed to be most suitable when the interviewer is closely involved with the research process (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and when the interview explores "understandings, perceptions and constructions of things that participants have some kind of personal stake in" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 81).

Semi-structured interviews enable the collection of rich and in-depth data, while allowing considerable flexibility in the wording of the questions and the order in which they are asked (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Robson & McCartan, 2016). These characteristics fit well within the epistemological position adopted in this research, as a flexible conversational approach seemed the best way to enable the researcher to co-construct meaning with the participants.

The interviews were planned to last for about 30-40 minutes, although most of them lasted between 40 and 60 minutes (no time limits were given to the participants). All interviews were audio-recorded using a voice recorder and a tablet, the latter serving as a backup device. Detailed notes were also taken to record aspects such as researcher-participant dynamics (including the potential impact of cultural differences and power dynamics) and reflections on the researcher's emotional responses and thoughts. These were recorded in the researcher's reflective diary.

The construction of the interview questions was informed by the identified gaps in the literature discussed in chapter two, as well as by McNamara's (n.d.) General Guidelines for Conducting Research Interviews. Prior to data collection, the interview questions were informally piloted with an experienced EP. This allowed the researcher to make relevant adjustments to the wording of some of the interview questions. A draft of the interview questions is provided in Appendix E, while Appendix F details the interview structure.

Mirroring the defining features of semi-structured interviewing (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Willig, 2013), the order and the wording of the questions varied slightly among interviews, to allow a conversational flow and flexible approach. However, all the pre-defined questions were covered in each interview, to ensure consistency. Moreover, the researcher engaged in the meaning-making process by giving the participants opportunities to clarify or expand on their answers. At the end of each interview, a debrief letter (Appendix G) was also sent to every participant.

   3.3.1.1 Interview Setting. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the consequent safety measures implemented nationally at the time of data collection, the interviews were conducted remotely through phone calls and videoconference. The choice between these two options was based on the participants' preference. One participant decided to be interviewed over the phone, while the others opted for the use of videoconference platforms (either Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Due to technical problems, in one of the interviews the participant had their camera turned off.

Remote interviewing allowed the researcher to reach EPs from a wide range of geographical areas across the country in a cost effective and time efficient way. While some researchers raised concerns with regards to establishing a relationship

with the participants over the phone (Block & Erskine, 2012; James & Busher, 2012), there is general consensus in affirming that synchronous (in real time) interviews over the internet allow for similar authenticity of interaction as conventional face-to-face interviews (Janghorban et al., 2014; Sullivan, 2012).

3.4 Participants

Within a social constructionist paradigm, participants are positioned as "social actors who embody and operationalise socio-cultural practices" (Willig, 2013, p. 37). Therefore, the aim of this research was to gather rich and in-depth data on the participants' construction of inclusion, rather than select a representative sample to generalise the findings to a known population. Accordingly, a purposive sample of qualified EPs was recruited.

The participants had to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). No other exclusion or inclusion criteria were adopted, in the attempt to recruit a diverse group of EPs in terms of gender, ethnical background, years of experience and geographical location. Basic data on these factors were gathered at the beginning of the interview, in order to account for the diversity within the participants' perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.4.1 Recruitment of the Participants

The participants were recruited through convenience sampling, snowballing and friendship pyramiding (Braun & Clarke, 2013), by circulating an invitation letter for participants on EPNET (an online forum on topics related to educational psychology, which is open to EPs, as well as other professionals and the general public) and among the professional contacts of the researcher.

The invitation letter circulated on EPNET and the participant information sheet sent to those who expressed an interest in participating in the project (see Appendix H) clarified that the involvement in the research consisted of participating in an individual interview lasting for about 30-40 minutes and provided information on confidentiality and on how the findings will be disseminated. No compensation was offered for participation.

As well as being grounded in feasibility considerations, the decision around the number of participants to be involved in the study was informed by relevant literature,

which suggests recruiting between 10 and 20 participants for research designs involving similar research methods as those utilised in this research project (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

A total of 16 EPs expressed interest in participating in the research project. However, three of them did not return the consent form and did not reply to the researcher's follow up email. Additionally, a potential participant was excluded from the research, as, despite being registered with the HCPC, they did not have any professional experience in the UK and were currently practicing in Asia. As this condition had not previously been anticipated by the researcher and was not clarified in the invitation letter, the researcher discussed the decision to exclude this potential participant with her Director of Studies and consequently communicated it to the potential participant, ensuring that appropriate clarifications were provided. Therefore, a total of 12 participants took part in this research.

3.4.2 Profile of the Participants

As shown in Table 1, this research involved 12 qualified EPs, nine of whom identified as female, and three as male. The participants' ethnical background is predominantly White British, with one participant identifying as White non-European, two as Black-Caribbean and one as Chinese. At the time of data collection, the participants were working in different geographical locations across England, with the majority of them practicing in the London area. The years of professional experience as a qualified EP also vary, ranging from less than a year to over forty. With regards to the breadth of professional experiences, half of the participants shared that they have only worked for one EPS, two have worked in two different services and four worked in a variety of contexts, including private practice.

Table 1

Profile of the Participants

Variable	Characteristics	Total
Gender	Female	9
	Male	3
Ethnicity	White British	8
	White non-European	1
	Black Caribbean	2
	Chinese	1
Geographical location	London	6
	London and Kent	1
	Essex	1
	West Midlands	1
	East Midlands	1
	South Yorkshire	1
	Nottinghamshire	1
Years of experience as a qualified EP	Less than one year	4
	Between two and five years	3
	Between five and ten years	1
	Between twenty and thirty years	2
	Between thirty and forty	1
	More than forty	1

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Characteristics	Total
Breadth of professional experience	Worked in one EP service	6
	Worked in two EP services	2
	Worked in a range of services, including private practice	4

3.5 Research Procedures

Ethical approval was granted for this research on 23rd March 2020 (see Appendix I). The research followed a phased process, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2

Research Procedures and Timeline

Date	Phase of research
March – April 2020	Ethical approval and research registration.
May 2020	Pilot interview.
May 2020 – July 2020	Recruitment of participants and arrangement of online interviews.
May 2020 – August 2020	Data collection: interviews with the participants and debriefing.
June 2020 – December 2020	Data sort: transcriptions of interviews and anonymising data.
September 2020 – April 2021	Data analysis and thesis write-up.

An audit trail was kept throughout, which included:

- Recruitment log: of EPs who expressed an interest in participating in the research, those who sent signed informed consent, agreed dates for the interviews, and online platforms used for the interview meetings.
- Data collection log: notes of interviews completed, debrief letters sent, and participants' expression of interest in receiving a summary of the research findings.
- Researcher's reflective diary: diary entries were methodically kept in chronological order. These included notes on the researcher's ideas, key decisions, reflections, feelings, and observations, as well as minutes from the tutorials with the researcher's Director of Studies, references of relevant papers, and extracts from useful resources.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected through the interviews were analysed using TA, which is "a method for systematically identifying, organising , and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

TA was the chosen method for this research because most of its strengths were deemed to fit well with the aims and underpinnings of this project. First, its flexibility in terms of not being tied to specific theoretical frameworks or methods of data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2013) allowed the researcher to analyse her data without having to subscribe to any pre-set theoretical stance. Moreover, TA is compatible with a constructionist perspective, such as the one adopted in this research project, as TA "examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 9). Secondly, it is accessible to researchers with limited experience of qualitative research methods (Braun & Clarke, 2013), which is the case for the researcher of this project, who only had previous experiences of quantitative approaches. Thirdly, it is described as "relatively easy and quick to learn, and to do" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 180), which matched the researcher's need to devise a research plan that realistically fit with the doctoral programme's timeframes.

TA also presents some potential disadvantages. For example, it does not allow for an analysis of the continuity and discrepancies within the participants' stories, as the focus is on identifying patterns across the data set. As a result, some of the participants' voices might get lost, especially when dealing with large data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This issue will be further addressed in paragraph 3.6.1.3.

At an operational level, as outlined in Braun and Clarke's seminal paper (2006), the recursive process of TA entails the identification of codes, which are defined as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63, in Braun & Clarke, 2006). These, in turn, are clustered into interconnected themes. The TA process is articulated in six phases, which are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

Phases of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

	Phases	Description of process
1	Familiarise self with the data	Immersion in the data through repeated and active reading. Note taking of initial ideas in the form of 'memos'.
2	Generating initial codes	Coding of relevant elements of the data set. Each item can be coded multiple times, if relevant.
3	Searching for themes	Combining codes to form potential overarching themes (and sub-themes) and gathering all extracts of data relevant to each theme. Visual representations such as thematic maps can be useful.
4	Reviewing themes	Refinement of identified themes. Themes are checked at the level of the coded data extracts and at the level of the entire data set.
5	Defining and naming themes	Further refinement, considering each theme separately and in relation to the others. Generation of clear names and definitions for each theme.
6	Producing the report	Selection of meaningful extracts linked to the main themes, which illustrate the broader story of the data collected. Relation of the analysis back to the research questions and relevant literature.

An inductive approach was used throughout the analysis, meaning that theoretical ideas were derived from the participants' accounts and not imposed a-priori by the

researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2020; Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, data analysis is a process that requires interpretation of the data and, as a consequence, it is impossible for the researcher not to bring some of their theoretical constructs to the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2020) highlighted the need for the researcher to reflect on the impact of their theoretical background and belief system on the research process, by maintaining a reflexive approach throughout the study, and to make their assumptions explicit, as emphasised by the fact that they have recently named their approach "*reflexive* TA" (p. 3).

3.6.1 The Analytic Process

      3.6.1.1 Phase 1 – Familiarise Self With the Data. First, the recordings were transcribed verbatim through the use of Otter.ai (Liang & Fu, 2016), a dedicated software which provides transcriptions of audio files. The first drafts of the transcriptions generated by the software were subsequently checked and inaccuracies were corrected by the researcher. This involved listening to the recordings and re-reading the transcripts multiple times, which allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data. In the transcription phase the researcher followed the guidelines and transcription notation system provided by Braun and Clarke (2013). Additional readings of the transcripts while taking notes on initial ideas completed this first phase. A sample of one of the transcripts is included in Appendix J.

      3.6.1.2 Phase 2 – Generating Initial Codes. After considering the option of using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, the researcher decided to go through the process of generating codes and identifying themes manually. This decision was based on the consideration that relying on data analysis software might detract from the active role of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2018). Moreover, it was the researcher's belief that carrying out the analysis manually would have allowed her to fully immerse herself in the data, which in turn would have helped her to better interpret the participants' constructions around IE.

In this phase, the researcher created ad-hoc coding tables for each interview, which included the original transcript on the left column and the identified codes in the right column, as exemplified in Appendix K. Codes were generated keeping the RQs in

mind and identifying aspects of the data which related to them. This approach to coding, where the researcher identifies "*anything* and *everything* of interest or relevance" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 206) to answering the RQs within the whole dataset, is called 'complete coding' (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, in the attempt to reflect the participants' original constructions and meanings, the researcher utilised data-derived codes (also known as semantic codes), which keep interpretation to a minimum by summarising the explicit content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this initial stage, assistance was provided by the researcher's Director of Studies, who reviewed the coding of the first interview and provided relevant suggestions.

3.6.1.3 Phase 3 – Searching for Themes. Codes from every transcript were colour-coded, organised into tables, printed, and cut out. The researcher tried to minimise the threat to the continuity in the participants' stories (see section 3.6) by conducting a comprehensive coding process, colour-coding the codes for each participant, and keeping them in the order in which they were generated, while systematically sorting them into initial tentative themes. In this way, the researcher was prompted to keep in mind the narrative from which those codes originated, therefore ensuring that the voice of the participants did not get lost in the large amount of data generated through the interviews.

Considering the large amount of data, the researcher decided to organise the codes around initial tentative themes, which were reflective of the explicit content of the interview questions (e.g., definitions, values, training, professional experiences, views on future practice). The printed codes organised around these tentative themes were then displayed in the researcher's home, which allowed the researcher to have a comprehensive view of her data and to start looking for deeper patterns.

Physically allocating codes into themes helped the researcher to make sense of the data and create meaningful links between the participants' constructions. This is reflective of the researcher's own thinking style, as she feels more creative and reflective when she can physically engage with visual representations of the matter she is dealing with. Appendix L provides a picture of some candidate themes related to RQ 3, which were generated in this phase.

3.6.1.4 Phase 4 – Reviewing Themes. In this phase, the initial themes were reviewed and refined. The themes were checked at the level of the code and at the level of the data set, which in some cases meant that some codes were amended. For example, the researcher realised that some codes needed to be split in two codes, as they conveyed two distinct messages that belonged to two different themes.

Gradually, some of the initial themes developed into candidate themes, while others were discarded, and new ones were generated to cover new patterns of meaning. This was not merely based on frequency of codes, but rather on their relevance in terms of answering the RQs. This phase allowed the researcher to make initial links between the themes, and to start to organise them hierarchically.

3.6.1.5 Phase 5 – Defining and Naming Themes. In this phase, the themes were organised into master themes, themes, and subthemes through the creation of thematic maps. This involved changing some of the initial themes' names, as well as creating some additional themes and incorporating others into pre-existing ones. This process was assisted by several consultations between the researcher and her Director of Studies, who provided relevant suggestions. Appendix M shows a picture of the re-defined themes for RQ 3.

3.6.1.6 Phase 6 – Producing the Report. This final stage involves the presentation of the findings, which is addressed in the following chapter. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013), this phase needs to provide sufficient evidence to justify the links between the data and the researcher's understanding and interpretation of it. Therefore, in reporting the findings, the researcher included direct quotes and qualitative data extracts from a range of the participants' accounts.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The validity and reliability criteria typically utilised in quantitative research are deemed inappropriate for assessing the quality and rigour of qualitative studies, and, since an alternative approach was first introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1985, as cited in Morse, 2018), several authors have recommended referring to trustworthiness instead (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Trustworthiness can be addressed in different ways. In this research project, the

researcher referred to Yardley's (2000, 2008) principles of sensitivity to the context, commitment and rigour, coherence and transparency, and impact and importance.

In the attempt to ensure sensitivity to the context, the researcher made relevant links to the existing literature explicit, and strived to be sensitive to the socio-cultural context and the perspective of the participants (Yardley, 2008, 2008). For example, the researcher provided the participants with control over their preferred interview setting. Moreover, the researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews based on open-ended questions, to encourage the interviewees to freely share their views.

At the recruitment level, commitment and rigour were addressed by selecting a sample as diverse as possible (Yardley, 2000, 2008), in terms of gender, ethical background, geographical areas, and years of experience. Furthermore, at the data analysis level, the researcher committed to a rigorous application of analytical methods (Yardley, 2000, 2008), by following Braun's and Clarke's (2006, 2012, 2013, 2018, 2020) guidelines for conducting high-quality TA. This was supervised by the researcher's Director of Studies through reviews and discussions around the coding process, the identification of themes and the construction of the thematic maps.

Coherence and transparency were ensured by making the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this research explicit, and by providing a thorough description of the context, participants and circumstances of the study, so that the reader can assess the transferability of the research to different contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). With regards to data analysis, all the steps undertaken in the TA were documented in the researcher's reflective diary and have been detailed in the current chapter. Furthermore, the researcher committed to searching for and providing documentation of data which did not fit the identified themes or patterns, also referred to as negative cases (Mays & Pope, 2000; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Yardley, 2008). For example, dedicated themes were created to capture relevant views of the participants, even though these were related to only one of the participants or were in open contrast with the perspectives expressed by the majority of the participants. Moreover, the researcher provided an audit trail, which is defined as "evidence linking the raw data to the final report … [to] allow the auditor to retrace all the stages of the analysis" (Yardley, 2008, p. 243). Additionally, to demonstrate

the fit between the data and the researcher's interpretation, the reporting of the findings were grounded in examples of the data (including both quotes and interview extracts) (Willig, 2013).

Finally, transparency has been addressed by engaging in a reflexive process throughout the research process. Considering that, within a social constructionist paradigm, meaning is co-constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the participants, it follows that it is crucial for the researcher to reflect on their own role in the construction of the data and in its interpretation (Burr, 2015). Therefore, reflexivity can be defined as the "continual evaluation of subjective responses, intersubjective dynamics, and the research project itself" (Finlay, 2002, p. 532). In this research project, the researcher has engaged in reflexivity through supervision and tutorials with her Director of Studies and peer supervision with fellow researchers, as well as by keeping a reflective diary. The researcher's reflective practice has been supported by the reflexive questions provided by Fox et al. (2007), which are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4

Reflexive questions (adapted from Fox et al., 2007)

Phase	Questions
Pre-research stage	Why is this research topic important to me? What are my assumptions about what I will find? What theories do I have to make sense of this area? What would I rather not find out?
Research design and data collection	Why did I choose this research design? What did I hope to get from it? In an ideal world, would this research design have been different? How?
Data analysis	How was the data collection affected by the relationship with the participants? How did these interviews make me feel? Which interviews were different?
Writing-up	Who am I writing this report for? Who do I hope will not read it? To whom is it dedicated (metaphorically)?

The criterion of impact and importance refers to the theoretical and practical utility of the research, as well as to its socio-cultural impact. Considerations around these issues will be incorporated in the discussion presented in chapter five.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The principles and ethical standards outlined in the BPS'(2014; 2018) Code of Human Research ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct, in the HCPC's (2016) Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and in the UEL's (2015) Code of Practice for Research Ethics were adhered to at all stages of this research.

The researcher upheld the principle of respect of the rights and dignity of the participants by avoiding deception and seeking the participants' informed consent prior to data collection. Appendix N reports the form used to gather the participants' consent. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were further reminded of their rights and additional verbal consent was sought before audio recording the interview. Moreover, all audio and written materials were anonymised and safely stored using encryption and password access, in accordance to the Data Protection Act 2014 and the University of East London's (UEL's) (2019) Data Management Policy. This was clarified in the invitation letter, as well as at the beginning of each interview. The letter also included relevant information on the participants' right to withdraw at any time and with no further consequences, and on their right to have their data destroyed up to three weeks from the day of the interview.

The researcher adhered to the principle of responsibility by safeguarding participants' wellbeing (beneficence) and minimising any risk of harm (non-maleficence) (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Walker et al., 2005). As part of the ethics application process, the researcher conducted a risk assessment to consider potential issues around the participant's safety, as well as her own safety and well-being. At the end of each interview, the researcher ensured that the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and express potential concerns, as well as being offered to receive a summary of the findings at a later stage. As mentioned above, following the interview, each participant also received a debrief letter, which provided a reminder around confidentiality and their right to withdraw, as well as relevant contact details in case the participants wanted to discuss any concerns arising after the interview. Additionally, the researcher was reflexive about potential power imbalances and equality issues in her relationships with the participants, ensuring that her research and practice adhered to the principles of fairness and justice. For example, the researcher adopted an open and non-judgemental stance

towards the participants' views, gave them control over the medium for the interview, and allowed them time and flexibility to express their thoughts and ideas. The researcher was also mindful of differences related to ethnical background, age, gender, and professional status, and reflected on these aspects in her reflective diary.

Furthermore, the researcher upheld the principles of integrity and competence, by applying principles of attuned interactions (Kennedy, 2011) she learnt during her studies, in establishing a positive relationship with the participants and by being aware of her own limits and consequently seeking support when needed. Moreover, the researcher committed to avoiding plagiarism and applying honesty, trustworthiness and fairness in her analysis and interpretation of the data.

Finally, special considerations were given to establishing ethical online research practices. As the Internet technology has been rapidly evolving, detailed frameworks for online ethical practices are still being developed (James & Busher, 2012). This seems to be even more the case in recent times, due to the developments related to the response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The researcher relied on the UEL's ethical application process and strived to consider additional aspects reported in the literature. For example, James and Busher (2012) discussed some implications related to public/private spaces. The importance of respecting private spaces during online interviews seemed even more relevant considering that most of the interviews took place during the first Coronavirus national lockdown, when most of the participants were attending the online interviews from their own homes. The researcher tried to be mindful of these issues, for example by offering the participants the option to customise their background and by inviting them to turn off their camera and take a break from the interview when they needed to attend to private matters related to childcare or home management.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the research paradigm adopted in this project, as well as the research design and methods utilised. After explaining the relativist and constructionist ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this research, this chapter described the procedures utilised in the data collection process, which entailed the use of semi-structured interviews. It also provided information on the

recruitment process and on the profile of the participants, as well as on the research procedures and timelines. A dedicated section of the chapter addressed the data analysis process, which was based on reflexive TA, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012, 2013, 2018, 2020). Finally, issues around trustworthiness and ethical considerations were addressed. The next chapter will present the findings related to the three RQs of this research project.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings from the current study, organised around the three RQs, and summarised following the thematic maps produced in the TA. Figure 1 reproduces the identified master themes for each research question. Subsequently, a narrative of the themes is provided. This is based on brief quotes from the participants' interviews, as the researcher has chosen to explore the themes through the participants' own words (when possible), rather than through her own interpretation. The chapter ends with a summary of the key findings. Further discussion and interpretation of the data is provided in chapter five.

Figure 1[3]

RQs and Related Master Themes
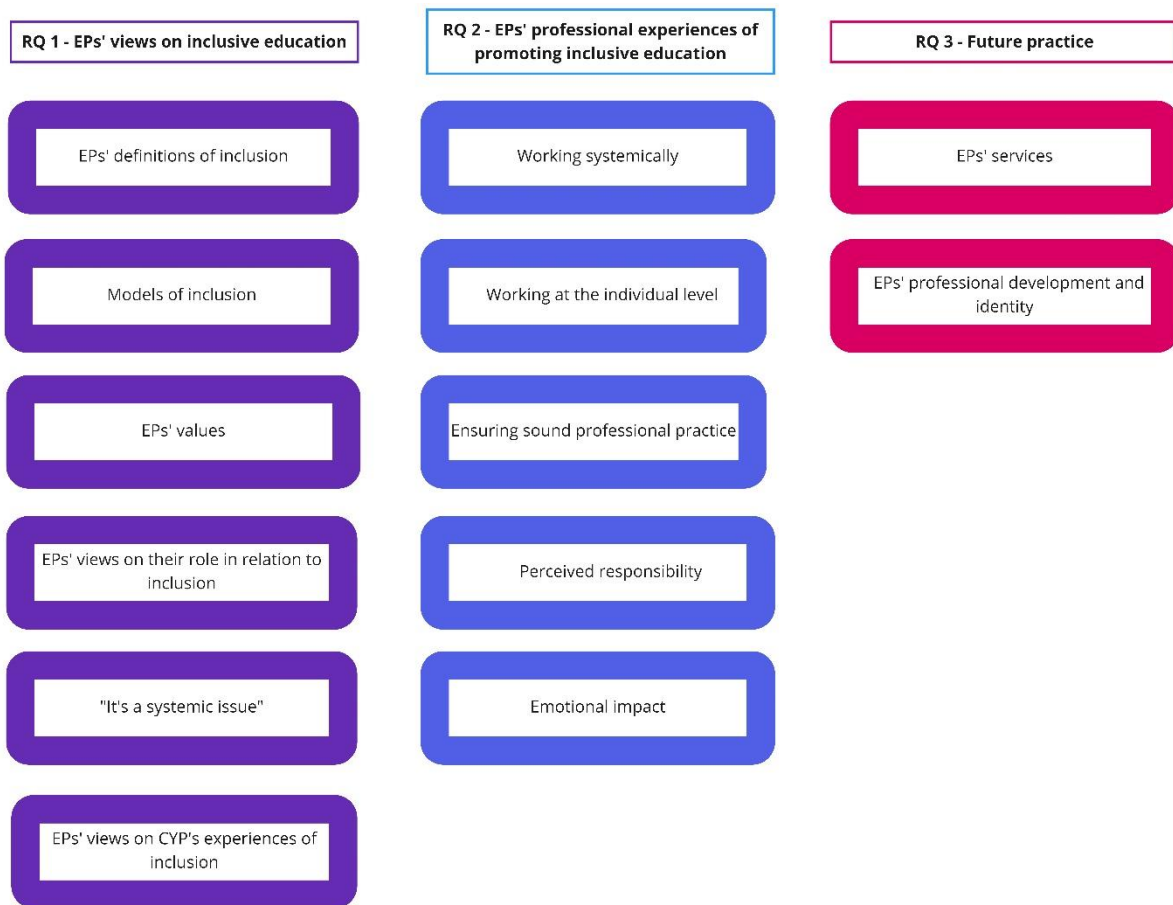
4.2 Findings Related to RQ 1

This section reports the findings around EPs' views on IE, as related to RQ 1. Figure 2 answers RQ 1 (What are EPs' views on IE?) and represents its related master themes: *EPs' definitions of inclusion*, *Models of inclusion*, *EPs' values, EPs' views on their role in relation to inclusion*, *"It's a systemic issue"*, and *EPs' views on CYP's experiences of inclusion*. Each master theme comprises several themes and subthemes, which will be explored in the following sections.

---

[3] To enhance readability, all Figures reported in this thesis are available at the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QZhFMUkT5OQ11iikVs8PLyESkQ06z68-?usp=sharing

Figure 2

Master Themes Related to RQ 1
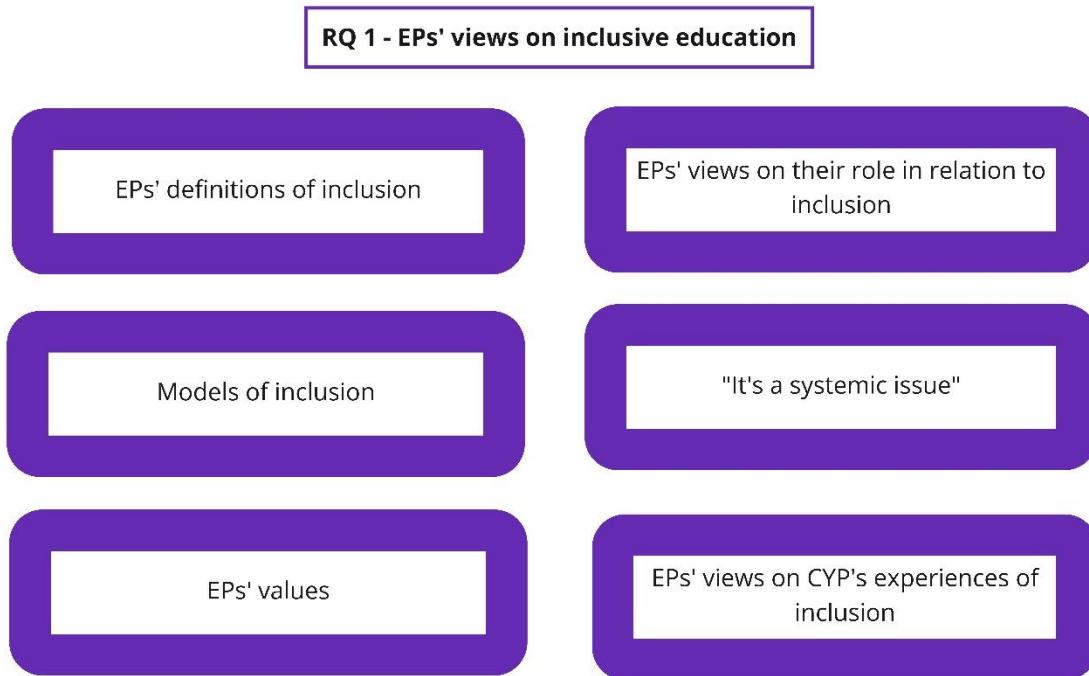
4.2.1 EPs' Definitions of Inclusion

In the attempt to define IE, the participants shared their views on some relevant features of inclusion, which are captured in the themes and subthemes reported in Figure 3. These include participants' considerations around key features of inclusion, such as processes, values, and attitudes ("*It's about processes, values and attitudes*"), as well as on the lack of a clear definition (*Lack of clarity*). Other themes revolve around inclusion relating to all children (*Universal*), meeting their needs (*"Needs are met"*), providing support so that barriers can be overcome (*Support and overcoming barriers*), and ensuring that pupils can fully participate in their learning and school experiences (*Accessing learning, reaching potential and participation*). These themes and their related subthemes are explored in detail below.

Figure 3

RQ 1, Master Theme 1: EPs' Definitions of Inclusion
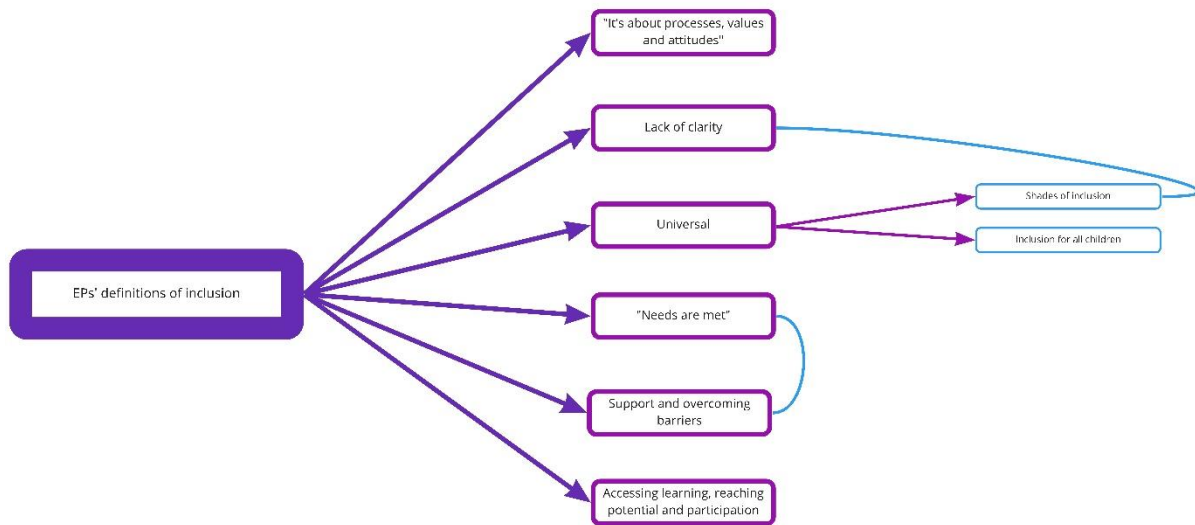
4.2.1.1 "It's all About Processes Values and Attitudes". IE has been defined by some of the participants as being "a value system" and "a way of thinking", which relates to "attitudes, processes and systems within the organisation".

4.2.1.2 Lack of Clarity. This theme relates to inclusion being "conceptualised" differently "in different places" and to concerns about the lack of collective understanding around the exact meaning of the word inclusion. EP3 shared that "inclusion needs to be ever evolving and changing". This "variety in perspective about what inclusion is" might be the reason why inclusion has been defined as "a buzzword" by one of the participants.

4.2.1.3 Universal. This theme includes two subthemes, namely *Inclusion for all children* and *Shades of inclusion*. The first comprises EPs' views related to education being "available and accessible to all, regardless of any disability or special educational need". This ultimately means that "no one gets forgotten" and that IE should grant "equality of access to education for all children".

The *Shades of inclusion* subtheme consists of a single code related to EP 1's view that IE should not be "to the detriment of any of the other students". This subtheme is linked to the *Lack of clarity* theme, as it highlights some contradicting views about the universality of the right to IE.

4.2.1.4 "Needs are Met". Most participants shared the view that the defining component of IE is that it ensures that students' needs (concerning both learning and SEMH) are well understood and met. This involves "making the young person feel safe, understood and listened to", ensuring that CYP experience a strong sense of belonging, as well as "providing opportunities for children that are appropriate for them as individuals".

4.2.1.5 Support and Overcoming Barriers. This theme is closely linked to the previous one (*"Needs are met"*), in that the participants shared that appropriate support is necessary to meet CYP's needs. This includes adopting a personalised and person-centred approach, as well as providing "reasonable adjustments" and differentiation, "interventions", access to resources and facilities (e.g., sensory rooms), structured routines, and emphasis on relational approaches to meet CYP's emotional needs. Some participants highlighted the need to be aware of and overcome any perceived barrier, so that the students can have a positive educational experience.

4.2.1.6 Accessing Learning, Reaching Potential and Participation. Another defining component of IE is that it enables students to access their learning, fully participate and contribute to the school life, and ultimately reach their potential. CYP with SEND are "valued members of the class" and are offered opportunities to bring their contribution and exert choice and control.

4.2.2 Models of Inclusion

This master theme includes the participants' views on different models of inclusion, namely *Full inclusion in mainstream settings*, *Integrated model*, and *Segregated model*. The *It's all about choice* theme encapsulates the views of some participants around having opportunities to choose among these models. All these themes were characterised by polarised views either in favour or against the models, as exemplified by the interconnections between the 'polarised views' subthemes displayed in Figure 4. This master theme also includes the *Comparisons with other countries* theme, which addresses inclusion within educational contexts outside of England. All five themes and related subthemes are explored in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 4

RQ 1, Master Theme 2: Models of Inclusion
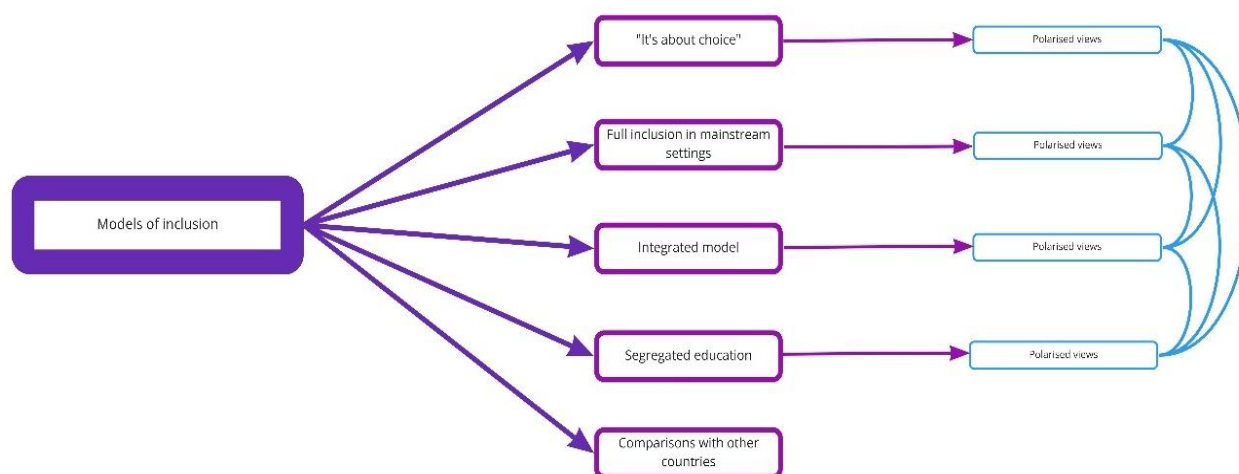
4.2.2.1 "It's About Choice". Two of the participants shared that full inclusion is possible regardless of whether the pupil attends a mainstream school, a specialist unit within a mainstream school or a special school, with one participant pointing out that this is a choice for parents to make, while the other stated that inclusion relates to the type of education considered to be in the child's "best interests", "appropriate for them", and reflective of the student's wishes. Opposite views were expressed by EP 5, who views these options as a "dangerous continuum", which is "geared heavily to the medical model" and therefore not conducive to IE.

4.2.2.2 Full Inclusion in Mainstream Settings. Most of the participants reported positive views about CYP with SEND being educated within mainstream settings, with some emphasising that the absence of specialist provisions within the local area favours more IE practices. However, two EPs expressed concerns about the fully inclusive model, stating that the needs of all CYP cannot realistically be met within mainstream schools and that there is a risk for CYP with SEND to have "alienating and isolating experiences", ending up being "just tagged-ons" to the rest of the class.

4.2.2.3 Integrated Model. Two EPs believe that, for some students, specialist units within mainstream settings might be beneficial. For example, EP 4 shared

having positive experiences in working jointly with staff from the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provision and mainstream classes in one secondary school, as this model allowed a consistent approach in supporting the students with ASD. On the other hand, two EPs consider this model as not conducive to IE, as, in their view, students tend to have a segregated educational experience within the specialist units.

4.2.2.4 Segregated Education. Two EPs shared the view that special schools are beneficial for some CYP, especially those with "significant medical and learning needs", because these settings can provide a greater "focus on relationships, acceptance and belonging", as well as specialised professionals and resources, which are not available within mainstream schools. However, most EPs expressed strong negative views about this model: in addition to referring to research evidence demonstrating that special schools are not beneficial for students with SEND, they mentioned that segregated education is not helpful for typically developing students, due to the missed opportunity of learning from their peers with SEND. Moreover, two of the participants commented on the fact that the presence of special schools fosters the belief that "these places are special, and children will do better in them", which acts as a barrier to IE. Another polarised view against special schools relates to the belief that this model is underpinned by a medicalised discourse around SEND, which are seen as "deficits" that need to be "fixed" or "cured".

4.2.2.5 Comparisons With Other Countries. In their reflections on different models of inclusion, the participants made several comparisons to educational systems in other countries. Ghana was cited as an example of those countries which are "still following an old Eurocentric approach to education", while countries such as Italy and Canada were mentioned because of their "cutting edge full inclusion" models. Scotland was also referred to for its absence of permanent exclusions.

4.2.3 EPs' Values

This master theme concerns the participants' views on the values underpinning IE and on its relevance. As shown in Figure 5, it comprises two themes, namely *"Inclusion is everything"* and *Principles underpinning inclusive education*, each including three subthemes. These express the participants' views around inclusion

being crucial for EP practice, as well as for CYP and the wider society. Moreover, the participants' constructions of inclusion are underpinned by children's rights, key ethical principles (e.g., social justice), and a commitment to celebrate diversity. The participants' accounts are further explored in the sections below.

Figure 5

RQ 1, Master Theme 3: EPs' Values
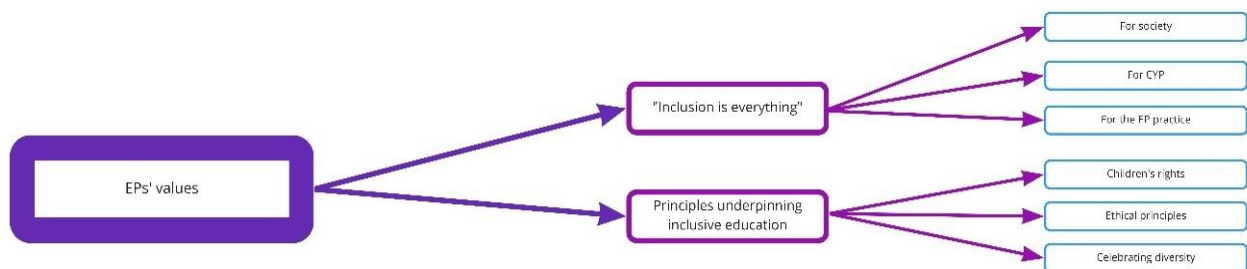
4.2.3.1 "Inclusion is Everything". This theme encompasses participants' comments around the importance of IE. The expression "inclusion is everything" was used multiple times during the interviews, alongside similar statements indicating that IE is regarded as extremely important by EPs. The following three subthemes further exemplify the relevance of IE with regards to society, CYP, and the EP role.

With regards to the first subtheme, many of the participants referred to the benefits of IE at the society level in terms of conveying a message of "cohesion and community" and diversity, as inclusion leads to a "richer society and richer education system". One of the participants also mentioned economic benefits, as children who benefit from IE will become "effective members of society… [who] contribute to the economy".

As far as the second subtheme is concerned, all participants commented on the benefits of IE for CYP. These include benefits for students with SEND (e.g., "feeling valued", "sense of belonging", "self-identity", "sense of control", independence, learning, "friendships", and emotional well-being), as well as benefits for their peers, in terms of understanding and celebrating diversity. Some EPs also referred to IE enabling students with SEND to achieve "a meaningful existence" and the "best

opportunities in life". It was also mentioned that inclusive schools better equip students for adult life as they constitute a diverse system which is more representative of the working contexts in our society. As stated by EP 3, "you don't generally have specialist environments when you leave school".

With regards to the third subtheme, most participants discussed the relevance of inclusion for EP practice, placing it "at the foundation of essentially all of our work". Promoting inclusion is seen as one of the main reasons why the EP profession was established and why "people are drawn to [it]". This translates into inclusion being "part of our day-to-day work" and "always at the forefront".

4.2.3.2 Principles Underpinning Inclusive Education. The participants' views around IE's underpinnings have been summarised into three subthemes. The first concerns *Children's rights*, such as the "civil right not to be segregated" and "the right to be educated with their mainstream peers in their local area".

The second involves *Ethical values*. As one EP pointed out, inclusion can be seen as a "value in itself", with another participant stating that inclusion is "on top of [their] list in terms of [own] values". Many participants mentioned equity, equality, respect, and social justice as the foundational ethical principles of IE. One participant also added that inclusion is about "beneficence and non-maleficence", as well as "autonomy and building capacity".

The third subtheme, *Celebrating diversity*, encompasses "acknowledging and accepting differences", "owning [diversity] and coming out", "valuing people holistically for who they are", and celebrating "unique skills, qualities and resources".

4.2.4 EPs' Views on Their Role in Relation to Inclusion

As shown in Figure 6, this master theme includes two main themes. The first focuses on EPs' views on their *Professional toolbox, as* related to inclusive practices, and includes three subthemes, namely *Positioning*, *Skills*, and *Knowledge*. The second addresses EPs' views on the *Impact of previous experiences* in relation to promoting IE and encompasses three subthemes, namely *Personal experiences and "social*

GRACES"[4], *Pre-training professional experiences*, and *Training*. These are addressed in more detail in the following sections.

Figure 6

RQ 1, Master Theme 4: EPs' Views on Their Role in Relation to Inclusion
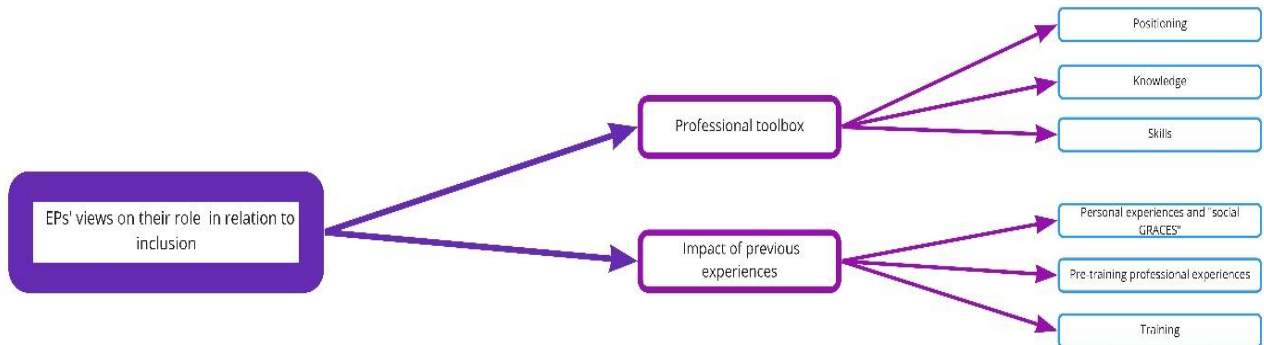
4.2.4.1 Professional Toolbox. With regards to *Positioning*, some of the participants indicated the desire to move away from taking an "expert position" and operate as "community psychologists, not special educational needs psychologists". EP 4 stated that the "EP role has started to shift now", as "our role is not just the assessor" as it was previously perceived. Others emphasised that EPs are well placed to promote inclusion, as they possess "the experience and the knowledge from the training to impact systems".

Many participants made explicit reference to EPs' *Knowledge* base throughout the interviews, mentioning "good knowledge around context and school systems", as well as knowledge derived from research evidence and the theoretical knowledge related to educational psychology. With regards to the latter, some EPs mentioned being particularly knowledgeable about some areas of needs (e.g., ASD), while others referred to specific theoretical frameworks (e.g., "Bronfenbrenner's Eco-

---

[4] The researcher believes that the participant referred to Burnham's (2012) conceptualisation of different areas of social difference, namely Gender, Geography, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Education, Employment, Sexuality, Sexual orientation, Spirituality, as this has become a relatively common acronym in the educational psychology field.

systemic model" and "Positive Psychology") and therapeutic approaches (e.g., "Narrative Therapy" and "Emotion Coaching").

Specific references were made also to the *Skills* which enable EPs to promote IE, with many participants stating that they support CYP's inclusion in "various different ways". These mainly concern "using consultation skills", which involves "listening", being "empathic", and bringing innovative, creative, and critical thinking into the discussion. Other participants mentioned skills related to therapeutic work, although EP 2 expressed concerns around EPs "currently doing an awful lot of mental health" and addressing issues such as attachment in their practice, as they believe that "we've got clinical psychologists who can do that better".

4.2.4.2 Impact of Previous Experiences. This theme addresses EPs' views on the impact of previous experiences on their practice as related to promoting IE, which have been summarised into three subthemes, namely *Personal experiences and "social GRACES"*, *Pre-training professional experiences*, and *Training*.

With regards to the first subtheme, EPs mentioned a range of personal experiences and individual circumstances which had an impact on how they view IE. These include their own experiences of education and of encountering people with diverse abilities, as well as relevant experiences of close relatives. For example, EP 3 reflected on the impact of their own physical disability on their school experience, their values and views, and their practice as an EP, while EP 9 shared that coming from a particularly multicultural and inclusive country has "shaped [their] understanding of inclusion" and made them "more critical", as "it's easier for [them] to step outside of the cultural norms of this country". Other participants reflected on how aspects of their own identity related to the social GRACES (Burnham, 2012) affect their views around IE. For example, EP 7 stated that "because I'm from a minority group I'm more likely to ask questions about that", while EP 12 reported that their "set of views might be white, middle-class and not reflective of people's reality".

Pre-training professional experiences have also been reported to shape EPs' views and practices around IE. For example, EP 10 shared that having been involved with supporting CYP with SEND both in mainstream school and residential special school before training to become an EP has made them appreciate what special schools can offer, which has resulted in feeling "two-minded" about inclusion within

mainstream schools. Additionally, most participants shared having previous experiences as either a teacher or teaching assistant.

Many EPs also reflected on the "massive impact" of the *Training* they undertook to qualify as an EP. Most shared positive views around how the training programme prepared them to promote IE, for example by facilitating reflections around values, the impact of their stance, the philosophy behind inclusion, as well as by teaching organisational change approaches and providing relevant placement opportunities. However, EP 5 voiced some concerns around the training effectively preparing EPs to promote inclusion and "dealing with inclusion like it's a value neutral area when it's not". Similarly, EP 3 shared that they only came to know about "disability studies" and the "psychosocial models" through their doctoral research, which they perceive as a "big gap" within the training programme. Moreover, EP 7 felt that the old training course was not appropriate, as "there's only so much to cover in one year".

4.2.5 "It's a Systemic Issue"

When exploring the factors influencing IE, many participants stated that inclusion "is a systemic issue". This master theme encompasses all the identified factors, which are categorised into four themes, namely *Social climate and attitudes*, *Legislation and policies*, *School realities*, and *EPs can be "part of the problem"*. These, in turn, have been summarised in several subthemes, some of which are closely interconnected, as shown in Figure 7. The following paragraphs address each theme and explore the related subthemes.

Figure 7

RQ 1, Master Theme 5: "It's a Systemic Issue"
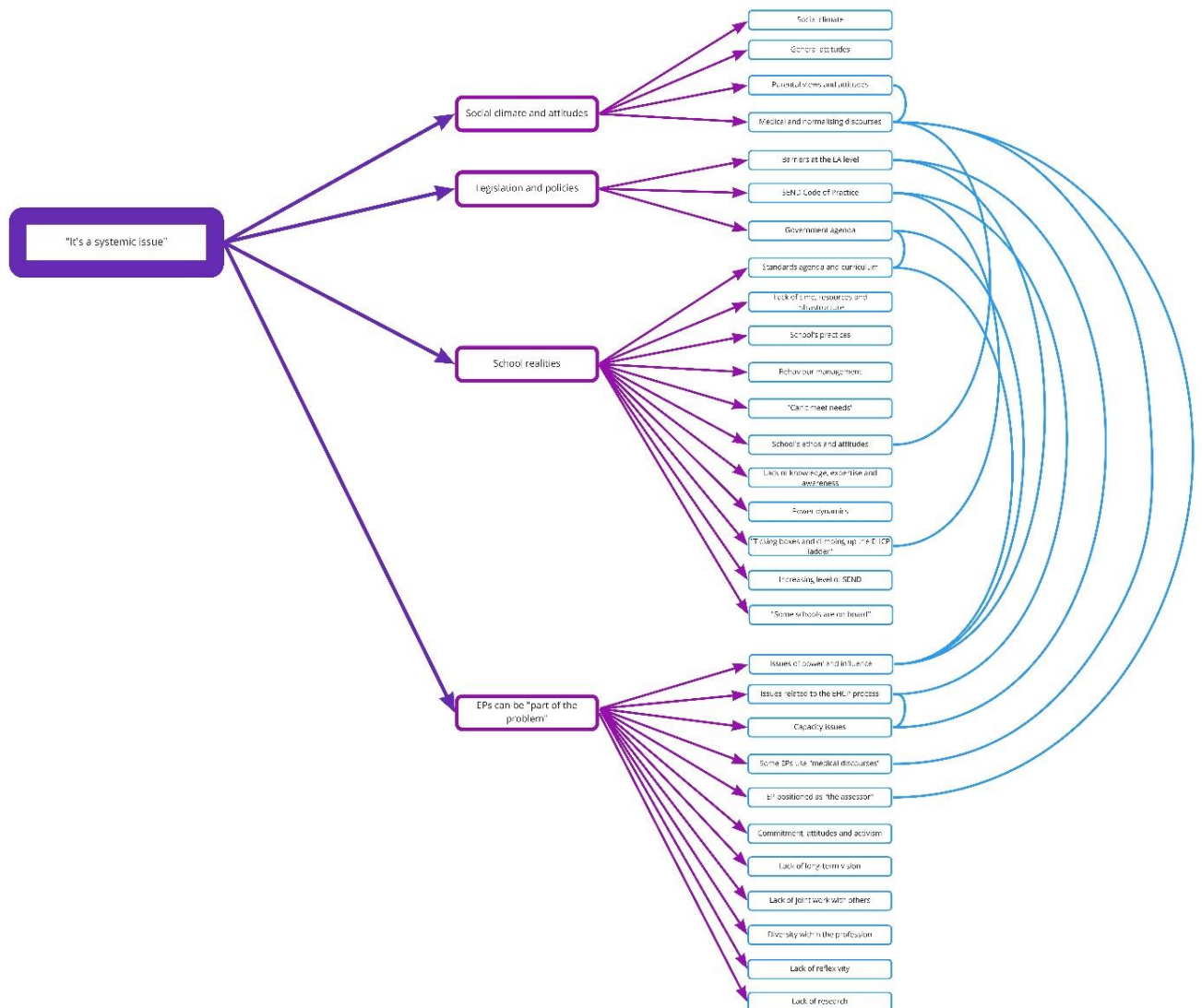
4.2.5.1 Social Climate and Attitudes. This theme includes four subthemes concerning issues related to the *Social climate*, *General attitudes*, *Parents' views*, and *Medical and normalising discourses*.

Some of the participants reflected on the impact of the general *Social climate* on IE, as "it's not a neutral landscape, it's heavily loaded". It was pointed out that the "society's atmosphere influences how we view people with different backgrounds, different needs, different experiences". EP 9 stated that the "general social climate around individualism, competitiveness, kind of neoliberal values… contribute… to the white education system and to exclusion and elitism". They also addressed a

number of other societal and cultural factors, namely the "culture of assimilation" and its focus on British values rather than multiculturalism, "the constructions of discourses around the rights of the other children", with "children with needs [being] positioned as a threat to… other people's learning", "the survival of the fittest [being] embraced as a cultural construct", and the fact that "it's in the culture to… stratify different levels of society and be okay with that".

General attitudes were seen as a "major barrier" to IE. These might include "racist attitudes and disablist attitudes", as well as attitudes in favour of exclusion and segregation. Two of the participants shared the view that nowadays "negative attitudes are better disguised", while another reflected on the "impact of powerful experiences of [people's] own inclusion".

Some participants considered *Parental views and attitudes* as an additional potential barrier to IE. Reasons for this included parents being "resistant to diagnoses or understanding of their child's needs", wanting their children to be educated in specialist settings or requesting individualised support (outside of the classroom), "want[ing] their child to be in the mainstream classroom with no support", and parents of typically developing children "questioning the presence of a child with SEND in their children's classroom". Some participants expressed concerns also around parents feeling "as though their views are not heard or included", being "after the green American miracle cures", and mainly hearing messages "from the medical world about what is best for their child, [which] are skewed towards the medical model".

Finally, the *Medical and normalising discourses* subtheme refers to a critical view of the medical model of SEND, which was seen by several EPs as not conducive to inclusive practices, and of normalising narratives, which ultimately push CYP with SEND to hide their differences to "try to fit in". In their views," those discourses lead to exclusionary practices", as "needs are often pathologised and therefore they need a specialist treatment". The system is perceived as "very skewed towards treatment, diagnosis, fixing, and the special place that that child should go", in line with the predominant "strong culture of normativeness", which revolves around "meeting the norm, teaching to the norm, being normal" and goes against a "holistic understanding" of the student's needs.

4.2.5.2 Legislation and Policies. This theme encompasses critical factors affecting IE in relation to three subthemes: *Barriers at the LA level*, *SEND Code of Practice*, and *Government agenda*.

With regards to the first, a major obstacle to inclusion was identified in LAs' positions towards IE and their expectations around EP practice. For example, EP 9 shared that they "worked for a LA that basically insisted that [they] quantified needs", while EP 12 reflected that a "fixed mindset" around the EP role within the LA can lead to lack of "opportunities to work in different ways and be preventative". They further explained that there seems to be a mismatch between the role EPs are trained for and LAs' expectations, which makes it "really difficult when what seems to be the LA's value system is can you write another three statutory assessments really quickly? And can you make us some more money?". Other participants highlighted that "financial constraints on behalf of the LA" are one of the biggest barriers to IE, as, for example, they result in "not enough stuff going on therapeutically", "support and projects such as TAMHS [being] no longer there", EPs no longer being able to act as "child advocates", and issues of equal access to information for all parents (e.g., due to the use of a "computer programme to collect information for EHCPs", which families might not have the technology or the knowledge to engage with). Some EPs also shared that there is great variability amongst different organisations and that "the make-up of the LA" and the geographical location (e.g., "working in a deprived area") might affect inclusive practices.

The *SEND Code of Practice* (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014) was also seen as a key influencing factor, as it "should ideally promote inclusion". In practice, however, the statutory process is perceived as being often "used as a tool for exclusion, rather than inclusion", with EHCPs described as "a gateway" to special education. Moreover, EPs were critical of the statutory process in that it is perceived to involve "sending a document about the child to a school saying: can this child go to your school? Can you meet their needs?", and in that it "becomes a battlefield to get the things that the child needs, especially additional therapies…very often only sourced by the tribunal route".

At the government level, barriers were seen in austerity measures and government priorities, which have changed in recent years from having "a big agenda for

inclusion" to "going back to exclusion is a good idea" and the "government promoting more specialist provisions". This results in the fact that "one of the biggest challenges is trying to promote something that's sort of slipped off the agenda", which ultimately "makes our jobs tough". "Political narratives about achievements and behaviour management" were also seen as a barrier to IE.

    4.2.5.3 School Realities. This theme includes 11 subthemes involving EPs' views on how different school realities affect IE.

The first subtheme, *Standards agenda and curriculum*, is closely linked to the *Government agenda* subtheme, in that government's priorities and legislation are perceived as imposing a "strong discourse around ranking children against one another and using different testing mechanisms". The participants acknowledged that "schools are under pressure", because of "league tables, Ofsted", and the overall focus on "accountability [and] high academic achievement", which "makes it so much harder to bring about positive change for the most vulnerable". Some of the participants were also critical of the current curriculum, which is perceived as "rigid", not giving enough time to consolidation, not "pitched at the right level", and not promoting the celebration of diversity and multiculturalism.

Other barriers were seen in schools' lack of time and resources, which results in limited capacity to support children with a high level of need and limited access to EPs' services. Although seen as "a lesser problem", one participant also indicated the lack of adequate infrastructure as a barrier to IE, especially for CYP with physical disabilities.

The third subtheme, *School's practices*, involves issues related to lack of flexibility in teaching, use of one-to-one support (which is "stifling if they don't need it"), inappropriate differentiation, difficulties related to the student-teacher relationship, and exclusionary practices ("this child goes to these intervention groups and spends a lot of time out of the classroom").

Several participants expressed concerns related to "exclusion numbers right through the ceiling in England", and shared critical views of punitive behavioural systems and policies, which seem to be widely implemented, especially in secondary schools. Some EPs reported being particularly favourable of restorative justice approaches as an alternative to exclusionary practices.

Most participants shared that schools are increasingly reporting "feeling unable to meet the child's needs", with some EPs being particularly critical of the current system, which enables schools "to select [students] off". Two participants reported direct experiences of children being refused because of toileting needs, which EP 3 found unacceptable and not representative of how the wider societal system functions ("no way a place of work or place of employment can do that").

The sixth subtheme involves EP's views around *School's ethos and attitudes*. Although one participant acknowledged that "some of the headteachers are… wide open to new ideas", most of the participants believe that schools are not prioritising inclusive practices, but rather focusing on "cognitive development and achievement" and thinking "about within-child deficits". Some EPs reported negative teacher attitudes towards including CYP with SEND, mentioning issues related to "stigma", "resistance", "fixed way of thinking", and lack of commitment.

Schools' *Lack of knowledge, expertise, and awareness* was also seen as a barrier to IE. Accounts from the participants revolved around schools not knowing what to do, feeling helpless, not being aware of the legislation, and not being able to cope with students' SEMH needs. Two EPs also questioned whether teacher training adequately prepares staff to promote inclusive practices. EP 2, who generally offered different views than other participants, expressed particularly negative views on teachers stating that they "aren't very good at working with parents", and that "some teachers aren't particularly bright, aren't educated, aren't particularly anything".

A minority of EPs addressed issues of power within schools, stating that headteachers and senior leadership teams can make the difference in promoting IE. Some reported situations where Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos') and teachers' "aspirations for the children… are curtailed by headteachers".

Three EPs shared concerns about the statutory process being used "as a way to get more money", with "schools try[ing] to climb up the ladder towards EHCPs". Concerns were also expressed around inclusion being viewed by schools as a "tick box", with EP 3 stating that the "view of needing a certain amount of SEND in your school is not inclusive, it's quite wrong".

Another perceived barrier was seen by some of the participants within the "increasing levels of SEN in schools", which makes it harder for schools to implement inclusive practices.

Finally, the *"Some schools are on board"* subtheme encompasses the participants' comments about inclusive practices implemented by some schools. These include the willingness to "try to do a good job", "having clear policies on what they should do to support children with SEN", having "lots of circle times in school" and "school assemblies about being inclusive and everybody treating each other fairly", implementing TEACCH programs and offering access to sensory rooms to all children.

4.2.5.4 EPs Can Be "Part of the Problem". This theme comprises 11 subthemes, which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first is related to *Issues of power and influence*. Many participants mentioned difficulties concerning having little power to influence schools' decisions. For example, EP 6 shared that they were recently involved in a Team Around the Child meeting, which was "called after having decided to exclude the child". Moreover, EP 3 highlighted that EPs "are really influenced by the curriculum and school system but not necessarily in the way that we… agree with" and that "schools have a different agenda" compared to EPs. Other identified issues revolved around being "positioned as part of a LA" and not having the power to influence the LA. For example, EP 12 talked about EPs' research competences being "ignored within the LA", while EP 1 shared that "EPs working for the LA [are] bound over", meaning that they lack professional independence. This was echoed by EP 3's comments on "this very weird position we're in, where we're supposed to be independent, but how can you be independent from your employer?". Moreover, EP 12 added that EPs currently do not have "as much involvement at LA level as [they] could". Several participants also saw the traded model of service delivery as a potential barrier to inclusion, as it involves getting schools to buy in, which implies "getting the schools thinking this is something worth their money", which, in turn, is perceived as making EPs "more careful about how [they] challenge" schools. Finally, two EPs addressed the lack of EP involvement within mental health initiatives, such as the recent "Mental Health

Green Paper", with EP 9 stating that the EP position is being threatened by other professional groups, who "aren't necessarily as qualified as EPs".

The second subtheme addresses *Issues related to the EHCP process*. These include "the way that [EPs] have to work for statutory assessment", which "can go against what you might hold as a value for inclusion" and "doesn't actually deal with the messiness of the situation". Other issues were identified in relation to EHCPs limiting the range of work that EPs can do.

Capacity issues are closely linked to the previous subtheme, as some of the participants pointed out that some services are "stripped back to statutory only services" and do not have the capacity to work preventatively to promote inclusion. Other identified issues included not having enough EPs "to do the job", "not having enough time to work with parents", schools not getting enough EP time, and EPs being very expensive, which results in "schools [being] often very careful to use [the EP] time".

The fourth subtheme highlights issues related to some EPs using "medical discourses", which includes "using psychometrics without really thinking" and "ranking [and] categorising" students.

Subtheme five relates to EPs being positioned by schools as the "assessors who do cognitive assessments" and to the lack of awareness of the general population around the EP role. EP 7 is "hopeful that the government and the LAs will see the work that [EPs]'ve been doing [during the current pandemic] that is separate from assessment work".

The *Commitment, attitude, and activism* subtheme collects participants' views about EPs not being "as politically vocal as they should be", "lack[ing] a cohesive approach as a profession", not promoting "owning diversity", and "lacking confidence to do organisational change work". Some participants expressed a critical view of some EPs not being committed to inclusion and promoting a special education model.

The seventh subtheme includes participants' accounts of the *Lack of long-term vision* for students with SEND and their inclusion, especially in terms of preparing for adulthood.

The *Lack of joint work with others* was also perceived as a barrier to inclusive practices. This includes lack of multiagency work within the statutory process, "too much splitting" from clinical psychologists, "no joined-up approach to inclusion" between specialist teachers and EPs, and difficulties in "win[ning] parents over" and "mobilising the natural supports" around the child.

Subtheme nine addresses issues of *Diversity within the profession*, with contrasting views around whether the EP profession is already diverse, and some participants acknowledging the role of the "social GRACES" in working towards promoting inclusion.

Subtheme ten includes the views of two participants around research being "an area of the EP work which is lacking", with consequences in terms of low "professional evidence basis" for EP practice.

The final subtheme concerns the role of reflexivity, with two participants sharing the view that EPs do not spend enough time reflecting and reading about inclusion, nor having team conversations around inclusion.

4.2.6 EPs' Views on CYP's Experiences of Inclusion

This master theme summarises EPs' views on CYP's experiences of IE. As shown in Figure 8, these have been categorised in four themes, namely *We don't ask enough*, which encompasses the participants' views on the *Relevance* of investigating pupils' experiences and on EPs' *Lack of insight* on this topic, *Students' overall experiences*, *Experiences of students with SEND*, and *Peers' experiences*. These themes and subthemes are further addressed in the following sections.

Figure 8

RQ 1, Master Theme 6: EPs' Views on CYP's Experiences of Inclusion
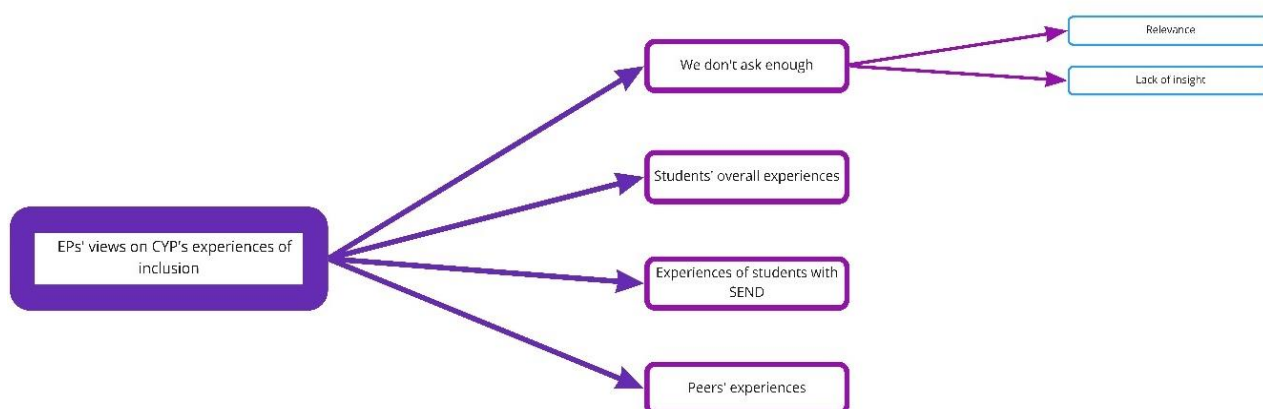
4.2.6.1 We Don't Ask Enough. This theme incorporates two separate subthemes. The first, *Relevance*, refers to the multiple comments the participants made around the importance for EPs to reflect on CYP's experiences of IE. The second, *Lack of insight*, involves participants' reflections on EPs not doing enough to explicitly ask CYP about their experiences.

4.2.6.2 Students' Overall Experiences. This theme includes EPs views on children's experiences of IE varying "from child to child" and depending "on different schools". Some EPs believe children are having an overall positive experience of inclusion, while a minority expressed the view that "we have a lot of very unhappy children". It was also pointed out that "CYP would say we want to be together" and that "children are quite good at perceiving injustice", although their "sense of fairness develops the older they get". Other participants emphasised the important role adults play in modelling attitudes and behaviour towards inclusion, as these are "transmitted onto the children".

4.2.6.3 Experiences of Students With SEND. The participants believe that "feeling included" and that "they belong" in school is "one of the most important things for CYP with SEND". However, this does not seem to be what they are currently experiencing, as most of the participants' accounts involved negative experiences of students not feeling "wanted" or "heard", "finding it hard to interact

and build relationships with other children", "fall[ing] out of the system", experiencing bullying, and desperately trying to fit in and "pass for neurotypical".

4.2.6.4 Peers' Experiences. Most of the EPs' views on the experiences of CYP with SEND's peers included positive accounts, such as the "majority of children [being] welcoming" and having a curious, understanding and accepting attitude, "CYP [being] passionate that one of their own should not be removed and put in special education", and "children wanting to help their peers with SEND". However, several participants also acknowledged difficulties related to students not knowing what to do or how to interact with their peers with SEND, as well as difficulties around how to cope with challenging behaviours. Issues related to bullying and avoidance were also reported.

4.2.7 Summary of Key Findings Related to RQ 1

EPs' views on IE encompass different aspects. In terms of definitions, despite highlighting the lack of a shared understanding, EPs agree that inclusion is about processes, values, and attitudes. Moreover, inclusion involves meeting the needs of all children by ensuring they can access appropriate support and therefore being given adequate opportunities to access their learning, reach their potential and participate in the school life.

EPs have quite polarised views around their preferred models of inclusion, with arguments in favour and against all the main models (full inclusion in mainstream settings, the integrated model and the segregated one). Furthermore, there seems to be a continuum of different levels of inclusion from which parents and children are supposedly offered a choice. Some participants have expressed polarised views on the benefit of this continuum in terms of inclusive outcomes for CYP. Some EPs also made relevant comparisons with the models of IE implemented in other countries.

With regards to the values underpinning IE, most participants commented on inclusion being extremely important at the wider society level, as well as for the CYP and for the EP practice. Identified principles underpinning inclusion ranged across children's rights, ethical principles, and the importance of celebrating diversity.

Additionally, the participants reflected on their role in relation to inclusion, in terms of EPs' positioning, knowledge, and skills, as well as in terms of how their previous

experiences (personal circumstances, pre-training professional experiences, and EP training) have affected their current views and practices around IE.

Most of the participants defined inclusion as "a systemic issue", involving a complex interplay of systemic factors, which encompass the general social climate and attitudes, current legislation and policies, various school realities, and issues related to the EP profession.

Finally, EPs' views on CYP's experiences of inclusion highlighted perceived mixed experiences for both CYP with SEND and their peers. The participants also emphasised the relevance of asking CYP about their experiences of inclusion and reflected on their own lack of insight around CYP's experiences.

4.3 Findings Related to RQ 2

As shown in the thematic map reported in Figure 9, five master themes have been generated in relation to the participants' experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice, as related to RQ 2 (What are EPs' experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice?). These include *Working systemically*, *Working at the individual level*, *Ensuring sound professional practice*, *Perceived responsibility*, and *Emotional impact*. Each theme and their relative subthemes are further explored in the following sections.

Figure 9

Master Themes Related to RQ 2
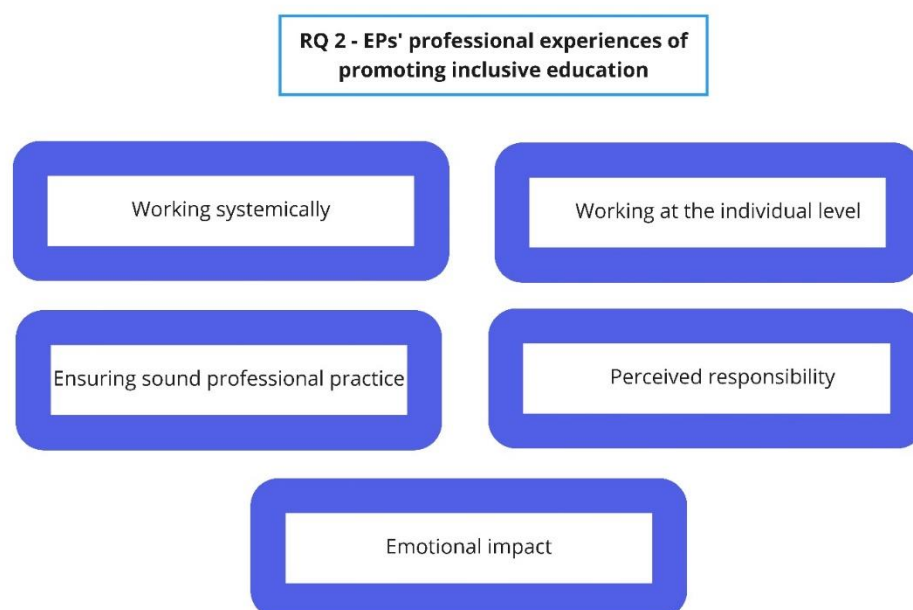
4.3.1 Working Systemically

This master theme involves eight themes addressing the participants' views on the many indirect ways in which they support the IE of CYP with SEND. These are: *EPs' contribution*, *Person-centred practice*, *Working with others*, *Consultation*, *Training*, *Research & publications*, *Organisational and policy development*, and *Focus on Early Years*. As evidenced in Figure 10, some of these themes are interconnected, as they highlight aspects of EP practice which are closely interlinked. All the themes and relevant subthemes related to EP practice at the systemic level are further discussed in the sections below.

Figure 10

RQ 2, Master Theme 1: Working Systemically
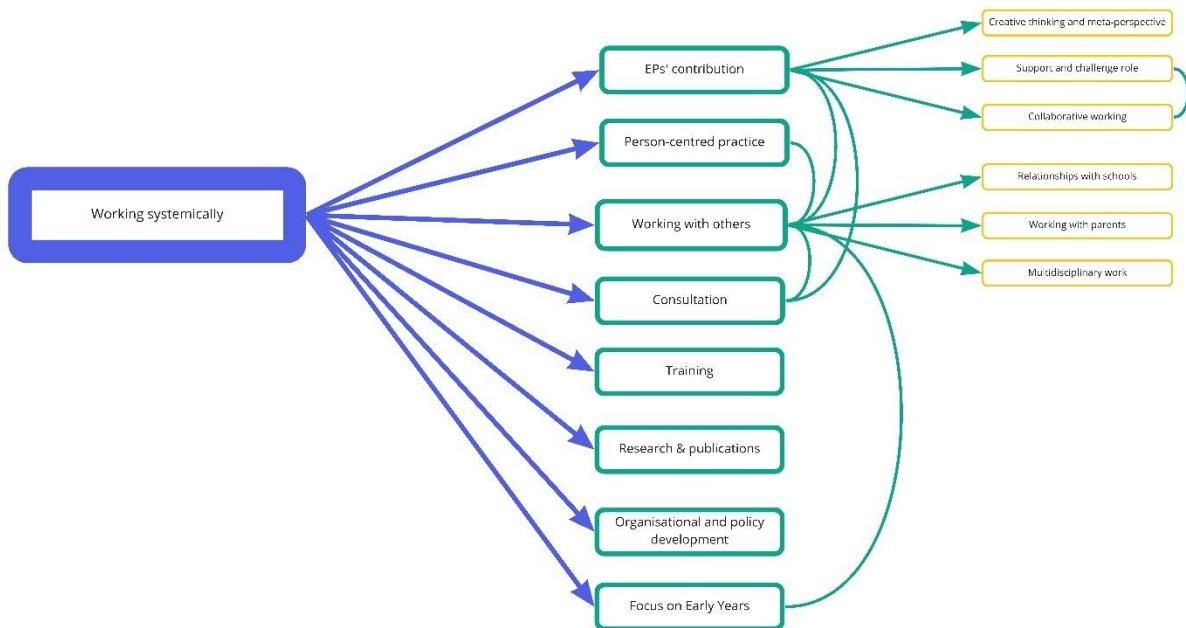
4.3.1.1 EPs' Contribution. This theme involves three subthemes, namely *Creative thinking and meta perspective*, *Support and challenge role*, and *Collaborative working*.

This first relates to EPs' contribution in "bringing that meta view of inclusion", "thinking systemically about disadvantage and exclusion at different levels", "reframing", and "trying to see the bigger picture", in order "to help the school think about full inclusion" in new and creative ways.

The second subtheme, *Support and challenge role,* refers to EPs' role in challenging exclusionary thinking and practices, by supporting the school and empowering staff, which can sometimes be perceived as a difficult "balancing act".

Closely linked to the previous subtheme, the *Collaborative working* subtheme emphasises the collaborative nature of EPs' practice. This includes "working in partnership with school and family", involving the student's wider support system, and collaborating effectively with other professionals to build capacity and empower the systems around the child.

4.3.1.2 Person-Centred Practice. This theme captures the participants' views around person-centred approaches in working with the systems around the child to promote IE. For example, EP 5 talked about the fact that EPs "can be very powerful around… facilitating person-centred planning, and the use of processes such as PATH and MAPS, which are tools for inclusion". EP 5 also mentioned Circle of Friends, where:

> a team of eight children around the young person…on board around that child's inclusion…could really change the child's behaviour. You could create a sense of acceptance and belonging, you could give that child a set of allies, which was really helpful to the teachers and very helpful to that young person, that can really strengthen the inclusion of the young person.

4.3.1.3 Working With Others. This theme encompasses three subthemes, namely *Relationships with schools*, *Working with parents*, and *Multidisciplinary work*. *Relationships with schools* are seen as "essential", as establishing trust ensures that EPs' recommendations are followed. Maintaining a positive relationship with schools also allows EPs to "challenge exclusions" by "having open and honest discussions" and "joint decision making". However, this is a process that "takes time" and can put the EP in "a very delicate position", which links back to the *EP's distinctive contribution*, particularly in relation to their *Support and challenge role*.

The second subtheme, *Working with parents*, also links to the *EP's Distinctive contribution*, particularly in relation to EPs' role in working collaboratively with parents. The participants acknowledged the challenges families face within the current systems ("it's not an even playing field for those parents", "parents have to fight really hard"), as well as EPs' important role in supporting them to face these challenges ("I've been on the phone to her for an hour every three weeks because she needs somebody", "parents needs a sense of hope that what is happening is going in a good direction and is right for their child", EPs "are key on letting parents know what is happening", "thinking with the parents and the child about how to reintegrate").

The third subtheme, *Multidisciplinary work*, looks at EPs' practice in working collaboratively with other professionals to promote IE. An example of this included "supervis[ing] people delivering an anti-bullying service", which was helpful in "promoting understanding and acceptance of difference". Another EP mentioned being "part of the Mental Health Trailblazer project with CAMHS and the NHS",

which resulted in schools being "empowered and taught to understand these different needs that they're seeing in the classroom". A further example related to having "multi-agency planning meetings" with schools, which are "a good place to challenge thinking about a child's behaviour or questioning or doing solution-focused work". Finally, EP 1 talked about setting up specific projects within the LA, such as the Play Development Service, a multidisciplinary service where EPs and play therapists carried out joint home visits to support vulnerable parents and children aged two to five, who "without any support… would have met exclusion pretty quickly or wouldn't have gotten into the system".

4.3.1.4 Consultation. Consultation is seen by most participants as a core part of their practice in promoting IE and is closely linked to the *EPs' distinctive contribution* and *Working with others* themes, as it is a collaborative way to "empower the people that are able to support inclusion". Provided that "consultation has to be built on an IE value stone to be successful", it gives EPs the opportunity to bring a meta-perspective and to "reframe and reshape how staff help that child become more included". For instance, through consultation, EPs help "staff think of exceptions and times when that child has been more included and an active participant". Concrete examples were provided by EP 12, who reported using consultation for systemic work at a whole year group level, and by EP 5, who used consultation for "in-depth problem-solving processes like Circle of Adults and Solution Circles".

4.3.1.5 Training. Staff training is seen as another way to empower schools in "think[ing] about inclusion", "creat[ing] something more inclusive without too much effort or commitment", and "reminding people of good practice". It also offers the opportunity for staff to "share best practice on inclusion", which "builds staff confidence around including children". Three EPs made explicit references to the ELSA programme, with one of them talking about its evidence base and "enormous impact". "Working together with schools" to embed "SCERTS" was also mentioned as having a positive impact ("incredibly enlightening for schools"), while training on "trauma-informed approaches" was seen as a helpful way to "shift the naughty children narrative".

4.3.1.6 Research and Publications. EPs referred to research in terms of "sharing research evidence around inclusive practices" and around the benefits of inclusion for CYP, as well as in terms of promoting inclusion through research projects in schools. For example, EP 10 talked about carrying out a piece of research on behaviour policies in schools and using that evidence to promote change at the LA level. Similarly, EP 12 carried out an action research project in a school to "shift staff's attitudes towards behaviour management". EP 7 shared they have recently been involved with writing and publishing children's books, which are "about equality issues and celebrating diversity", as a way to promote inclusion.

4.3.1.7 Organisational and Policy Development. This theme collates the participants' views around promoting IE through work at the organisational and policy level. This includes carrying out organisational change projects in schools, "collaborations within LAs" to help them "develop creative packages" and shape policies, working with the DECP to provide a "change in focus" (for example, by setting up training courses), and collaborating with the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) and the Department for Education on policy development. EP 5 also talked about the importance of the EPS' leadership in "creating a policy on inclusive education…[and] shaping decisions and practices up to be inclusive", because "if you have a principal and senior as committed to inclusive education, that can be rolled out across the whole service".

4.3.1.8 Focus on Early Years. Some of the participants emphasised that "Early Years are crucial times for inclusion", as "that's where the biggest blockages are". Two participants provided accounts of their professional experiences: EP 2 talked about doing "a lot of Early Years parenting", while EP 5 mentioned "working with Early Years health professionals" and "with the school, the community, speech therapists, [and] all the other players in the Early Years world".

4.3.2 Working at the Individual Level

As shown in Figure 11, this master theme involves three themes and two subthemes around EP practice in working directly with CYP to promote their IE. These are: *Person-centred practice* (including *Gathering CYP's views* and *Feeding back to CYP*), *Assessment*, and *Intervention*. A fourth theme (*A broad range of needs*) encapsulates the participants' views on the diversity of needs presented by the CYP

EPs work with. Each of these themes and subthemes are discussed in the following sections.

Figure 11

RQ 2, Master Theme 2: Working at the Individual Level
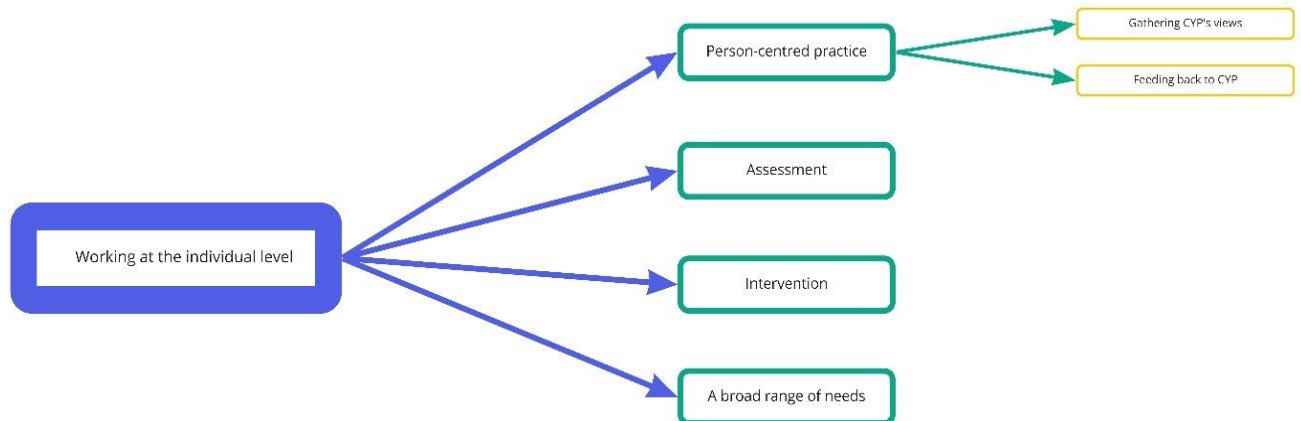
4.3.2.1 Person-Centred Practice. This theme refers to the participants' views on their direct work with CYP, and it includes two subthemes, namely *Gathering CYP's views* and *Feeding back to CYP*.

With regards to *Gathering CYP's views*, EP practice involves asking pupils questions around how they feel about their school experience, which is particularly relevant for those who are excluded or access specialist provisions or specialist interventions outside of the classroom. EP 7 also shared asking "when was the last time you felt that the curriculum included aspects of your experience?". Two of the participants highlighted difficulties related to some CYP with SEND who "may not have the capacity… to tell us in a conversational way": EP 1 feels that "to elicit any kind of view is hard beyond using symbols and giving options", while EP 11 believes that it is up to the EP to "find… ways to find that out".

The subtheme *Feeding back to CYP* relates to the views of EP 11, who reported sending "a strength-based letter back to the child" after being directly involved with them. The letters include a photo of the EP as well as pictures of the work carried out during the assessment, and other visual prompts to facilitate the student's

understanding of the letter, especially for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL). EP 11 shared that they received "lots of positive feedback from parents" and that "thinking about the letters keeps the child in mind", especially when writing reports.

4.3.2.2 Assessment. Assessment practices are also viewed as a means to promote IE, as "identifying needs helps shift schools' perceptions on how to include the child" and "opens people's minds". Several participants talked about "assessment over time" and "identifying strengths, abilities and skills", while avoiding "ranking and categorising". This is because "it's our job to find unique skills out, that will lead to solutions, and strategies and interventions" and "to help staff think about how to include that child, make them feel welcome, celebrated, appreciated, and acknowledged in that school".

4.3.2.3 Intervention. Most participants also included interventions when discussing their professional practices around IE. EP 4 stated that "intervention is a powerful tool", as it "equip[s] school to continue inclusion when the EP's left". They also explained that EPs either "run the interventions or… build capacity within the school to have those interventions", adding that "the latter point is much more powerful because then staff are included in promoting inclusion". The participants also mentioned a range of interventions, including Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), nurture groups, Circle of Friends, Lego Therapy, Talkabout, and Thrive.

4.3.2.4 A Broad Range of Needs. This theme encompasses EPs' views on the broad range of needs they come across in their everyday practice, as "EPs work with children from different backgrounds, with different types of difficulties and different experiences". Most EPs reported that "a lot of the time, the referrals are a lot to do with emotional wellbeing" and "thinking about the social relationships with other children and with the adults". Some EPs also mentioned language and communication difficulties, as well as EAL.

4.3.3 Ensuring Sound Professional Practice

This master theme concerns the participants' views on key aspects of their professional practice related to promoting IE. These have been organised around eight themes, namely *Reflexivity*, *Supervision*, *Peer Support*, *Awareness of own areas for development*, *Awareness of changes over time*, *The language of inclusion*,

Reviews and evaluation, and Recruiting. These themes and relative subthemes are represented in Figure 12 and summarised in the following sections.

Figure 12

RQ 2, Master Theme 3: Ensuring Sound Professional Practice
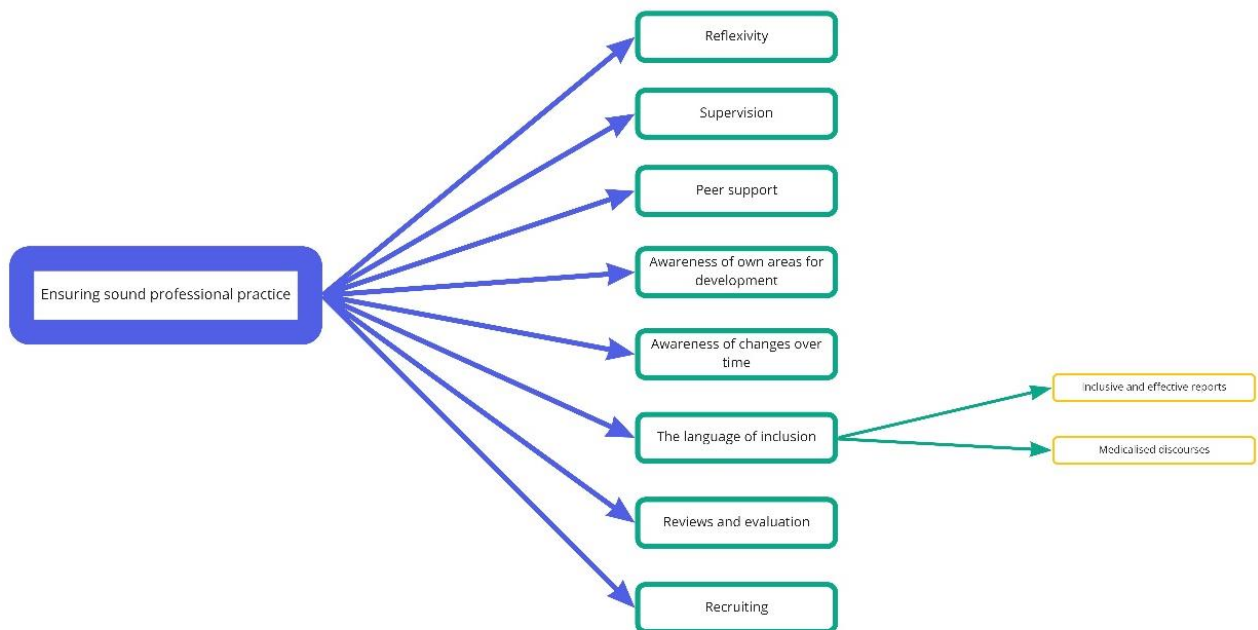
4.3.3.1 Reflexivity. Some participants commented on the need to be "reflexive" and "critical" when thinking about inclusion. Some of these comments included "being very aware of the discourses that are being called upon", "questions about ethical practice", reflecting on issues of bias, "challenging your own value system", the "responsibility to be open to learning", "reflecting on boundaries between personal and professional", and reflections around "who we're here for [and] who we are trying to support".

4.3.3.2 Supervision. *Supervision* was mentioned by EP 5, who believes that "supervision needs to support inclusive practice" by ensuring that inclusion issues "crop[s] up in every support supervision meeting".

4.3.3.3 Peer Support. This theme involves EPs' views on "formal and informal discussion amongst EPs", as well as comments on feeling supported by

colleagues within the EPS and the wider professional community. All the EPs who mentioned peer support shared positive views about its importance and positive effects. For example, EP 3 stated that:

> There's a lot of sharing between services I've noticed, especially recently sharing of practice and I like how they're not like, Oh, that's ours, our programme that we made, there's a lot of a shared work going on in like a community feel to it. Which will always help with inclusion because you know, there's going to be ideas that you've not thought of, or programmes you've not come across.

4.3.3.4 Awareness of Own Areas for Development. This theme includes the reflections of two of the participants around their own areas for development related to supporting the inclusion of CYP with SEND. EP 11 shared that they are developing their use of positive language and discourses in their reports, keeping in mind that the student might read them in the future. EP 1 shared their awareness around not "know[ing] much about physical disabilities" and not "hav[ing] lots of skills in augmentative communication systems".

4.3.3.5 Awareness of Changes Over Time. This theme encompasses EPs' views on how school practices and the EP role as related to inclusion have changed over time. For example, EP 7 reflected on how education practices have developed from "children sit[ting] in rows, 42 a class, one teacher at the front" to "an average classroom nowadays [where] what you see is an attempt to include all children by celebrating and making efforts to overcome any barriers". EP 2 shared that "when [they] started, if you had a child with an IQ of 72 – low 70s, you considered whether they fitted into mainstream school" and reported that at the time inclusion was introduced in the UK, it "seemed a way of saving money, rather than benefitting all the children", as pupils would be "on the same site, but it didn't feel like inclusion was intended". EP 2 also reflected on changes concerning their perception of the EP role. They stated that when they trained as an EP they were "incredibly significant", "the headteacher would wait for [their] opinion" and school staff would be "waiting for [them] to… tell them what to do". However, "in the late 1980s our role became modified" and, consequently, they went "from being the most important person in the world to [schools saying] I'm too busy to see [them] right now" and to school staff dismissing their recommendations because they "wouldn't work".

4.3.3.6 The Language of Inclusion. This theme consists of two subthemes, one addressing EPs' views on *Inclusive and effective reports*, the other collecting accounts reflective of *Medicalised discourses*. The first concerns EPs' reflections on the language they use in their reports, highlighting the need for it to be clear, respectful, jargon-free, and accessible to parents. EP 9 shared that they "avoid using biomedical discourses" and "deficit language", as they "hope that through [their] reports, a different narrative comes through than one that might be dominant". EP 2 mentioned the need to make realistic recommendations and to be able to "defend every sentence", especially when doing "legal reports".

The second subtheme collects EPs' descriptions of CYP's needs which were provided during the interviews and which convey *Medicalised discourses*. These were mainly provided by one of the participants, who made frequent use of diagnostic labels and deficit language. For example, when talking about a student they worked with, they stated:

> He doesn't quite meet the ASD criteria. I think he'll meet ADHD, but he's got lots of ASD bits… he has no idea what's going on. He's got lots of language issues… I did the WISC comprehension. No, Information. Can you tell me one thing in outer space that wasn't made by man? Yeah. a sleeping squirrel, no, a sleeping pineapple. Sorry. All right. That is lovely. I think it's a lovely imaginative answer. But I'm not sure that mainstream without support is going to be good for him, you know, I mean, it's absolutely not going to be good for him. He's lovely. He's so willing, he's really trying hard. And if somebody sits next to him says, look, concentrate, look, what does this mean? I think that if he's diagnosed ADHD, medication might help him. But at the moment he is not, so he is where he is. He can't do it. (EP 2)

4.3.3.7 Reviews and Evaluation. A minority of the participants referred to the importance of *Reviews and evaluation* in promoting inclusive practices. For example, EP 1 shared that their EPS used evaluation and review processes to collect evidence for a tribunal case against an independent special school who "was not adding value in the way they were saying that they were" to demonstrate that "therefore, it wasn't a good use of taxpayers money to fund a child to go to that school". Moreover, the review process can be a way to ensure that inclusive practices are kept in place over time. For example, EP 5 stated:

> On a regular basis, say every two or three months, coming together to look at every young person where they are and where they're heading, and helping track through that route the young person into their local mainstream school,

as opposed to some, some assumption they need to go out to special education.

4.3.3.8 Recruiting. This theme relates to the views of EP 7, who shared that "when we interview at… there will be either a question about equality slash inclusion, or a statement at the beginning where we're asking the candidates to weave inclusion and weave equality issues throughout their answers", to indicate that *Recruiting* is one way to ensure commitment to inclusion at the EPS level.

4.3.4 Perceived Responsibility

As shown in Figure 13, this master theme addresses the participants' views on their perceived responsibilities, as related to *Advocacy* and *Gatekeeping*. These themes are discussed in the following sections.

Figure 13

RQ 2, Master Theme 4: Perceived Responsibility
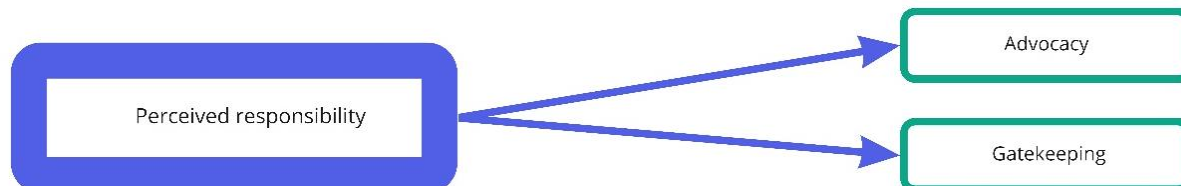
4.3.4.1 Advocacy. This theme relates to EPs' views on their practice in terms of "being a child advocate" and "want[ing] the best for the children [they are] working on behalf of". Many participants emphasised that "the child is the client" and that "the child is at the centre of everything we do". EP 10 highlighted that EPs "need to consider what… [CYP] want and what's helpful for them". This is reflected in EPs' recommendations and statutory advice. For example, EP 3 shared asking themselves the question "is that an outcome that the child would… appreciate and that we should be encouraging?", rather than "putting outcomes down for a child who's autistic to make eye contact when it makes them super uncomfortable". EP 3 also shared advocating for the community of adults with disability, by sharing the "knowledge of the culture and the community that exists for disabled adults". EP 2

highlighted a tension between positioning as a child advocate and working for the LA, saying that when they were working for the LA, they felt that their "job was then to determine what might be best for the LA", rather than for the child.

4.3.4.2 Gatekeeping. Some of the participants shared contrasting opinions on whether EPs have assumed a *Gatekeeping* role over time, especially in relation to their statutory role. This tension is emphasised in the following quote:

> We're a loaded gun in some senses, you know, we're not neutral. Soon as we enter, we enter the field, the fray around the child's inclusion, the stakes immediately go up… We don't want to be seen like that, but inevitably we are connected with that gate that opens to the special education. We try and hold back and pretend we're not a gate holder to special education, we're not a gate holder to resources, inevitably over the years we have been, so I think that haunts us as a profession. (EP 5)

Some of the participants expressed concerns about their role being limited to gatekeepers. For example, EP 12 stated that:

> Our statutory responsibilities are like, a huge part of promoting educational inclusion. But I feel like the role is much, much more than that. And if that was the role, I don't think people would be so keen to train in it.

Other EPs shared taking a clear stance towards gatekeeping. For example, EP 1 reported that now that they are working in private practice, their way of promoting inclusion is through outlining the appropriate provision for the student ("most of the time now, it's inclusion in terms of provision"), while EP 9 shared that their role is "about being able to state what [the child] needed" and "making sure that [they] never really got involved in talking about… which provision [the child] would be going to".

4.3.5 Emotional Impact

As stated by EP 5, inclusion is "an extremely emotive area". This master theme includes EPs' acknowledgments of the *Emotional impact* of promoting IE. As shown in Figure 14, the participants' views were organised around three themes, namely *Hope and determination*, *Frustration and fear*, and *Confidence*. Each theme is explored in the following sections.

Figure 14

RQ 2, Master Theme 5: Emotional Impact
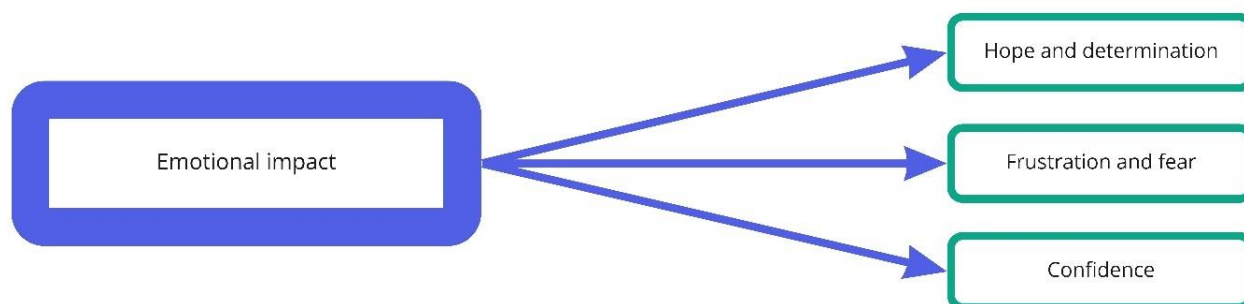
        4.3.5.1 Hope and Determination. Some participants expressed feelings of hope and optimism. For example, EP 8 "believe[s] we can strive towards inclusion". One of the positive emotions expressed most frequently was determination. This was related to the commitment to promoting inclusion despite the challenges and systemic issues EPs are faced with ("whatever that takes"), for instance by "sticking with what you want to do, which might be against some of the more dominant things happening in education". This commitment might mean taking a clear stance against exclusionary practices, as mentioned by EP 9: "if a school wants to exclude, I'll never be a part of that". Additionally, some EPs used war-related language to highlight the perceived magnitude of the task, for example by mentioning that they are "fighting very hard", and that "it's a battle".

        4.3.5.2 Frustration and Fear. Most participants shared feelings of frustration throughout the interviews, saying that promoting IE feels "really hard". Examples of this relates to comments about not having "any power to challenge… [the system], other than through conversations and consultations", which feels like a "constant struggle", "always sort of second guessing your values against your career", which was described as a "difficult balance", and "finding it hard to get the evidence base across" and "to see that you're making a good difference". Some participants also mentioned feeling "fearful" about "the current practice in schools" and "scared for the future of the profession".

4.3.5.3 Confidence. Some participants reported issues related to lack of confidence. For example, talking about the shift from being newly qualified to being more established within their role, EP 8 said:

> I still feel going into my fifth year where I work that feels like early days, the first couple of years really kind of assessing what on earth is going on here and getting to know the place. So hopefully now is where we're going to be able to start to bring about positive change.

EP 6 highlighted lack of professional confidence related to EPs getting involved with organisational change projects, as reported in the following quote: "generally there's little confidence in doing that work and there's anxiety around addressing the much wider and bigger issues".

4.3.6 Summary of Key Findings Related to RQ 2

When sharing their experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice, the participants mentioned a variety of ways in which they promote IE, both at the systemic and at the individual level.

When discussing their systemic work, the participants:

- addressed the perceived distinctive contribution EPs make, which relates to creative thinking and bringing a meta-perspective, assuming a supportive but also challenging role, and collaborative working.
- Made explicit reference to person-centred practice as a way to promote inclusion and agreed that consultation is one of the cornerstones of EP practice in promoting IE.
- Mentioned that a focus on the Early Years is crucial in promoting inclusion.
- Discussed other ways to promote inclusive practices, which include establishing positive and trusting relationships with schools, working in partnerships with parents and other professionals, delivering training, engaging with research, and publishing books, and being involved in organisational and policy development.

EPs shared that they implement inclusive practices also by working at the individual level, by:

- gathering the CYP's views and feeding back to the students after carrying out direct work with them.

- Being mindful of their assessment practices.

- Delivering interventions.

The participants also highlighted the broad range of needs they are presented with in their everyday practice, with issues of inclusion being most often related to SEMH needs.

Additionally, the participants addressed aspects of their practice such as reflexivity, supervision, peer support, self-awareness, use of language, reviews and evaluations, and recruiting, which are perceived as relevant in terms of ensuring sound professional practice when promoting IE.

Finally, issues involving perceived responsibilities were addressed, particularly in relation to *Advocacy* and *Gatekeeping*, as was the emotional impact of promoting IE, for which the identified themes were *Hope and determination*, *Frustration and fear*, and *Confidence*.

4.4 Findings Related to RQ 3

This section addresses the findings related to RQ 3, which concerns EPs' views on their role in promoting IE in the future (What are EP's views on their role in promoting inclusive practice in the future?). As shown in the thematic map reported in Figure 15, two master themes have been generated to organise EPs' views on this matter, namely *EPs' services* and *EPs' professional development and identity*. Both master themes comprise several themes and subthemes, which are explored in the sections below.

Figure 15

Master Themes Related to RQ 3

4.4.1 EPs' Services

As shown in Figure 16, this master theme involves five themes related to EPs' practices and services, namely *"Supporting the school systems that are supporting inclusion"*, *Working jointly with others*, *Working with CYP*, *Role of technology*, and *Impact data and evaluation*. These themes and relative subthemes are addressed in the following sections.

Figure 16

RQ 3, Master Theme 1: EPs' Services
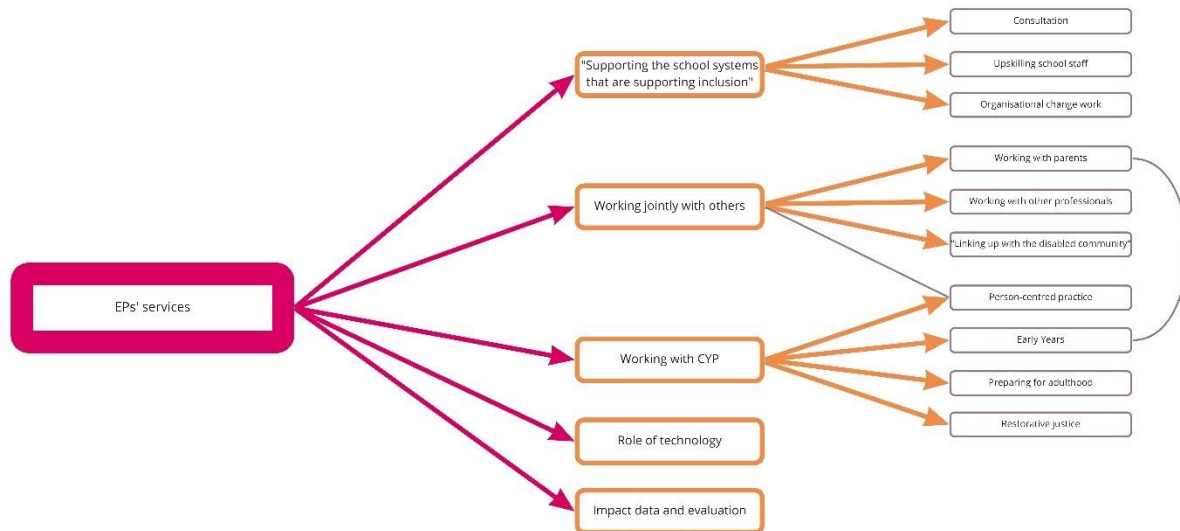
4.4.1.1 "Supporting the School Systems That Are Supporting Inclusion".

This theme incorporates three subthemes, which indicate the three main ways identified by the participants to support schools in promoting IE in the future.

The first is through *Consultation*, for example by asking reflective questions around inclusion in planning meetings and being "more effective in terms of using a model of EP practice around consultation".

The second is by *Upskilling school staff*. This involves promoting the discussion of inclusion in teacher training and facilitating "reflective sessions on inclusion with SENCos" and "reflective spaces or discussion groups for school staff to share good practices and support each other", which ideally could be "commissioned by the LA". It also includes "raising schools' awareness around the Code of Practice, to help the school become more aware of what they can do and what they need to do", "working with the SENCo to offer inclusion training to schools", "delivering training on SEMH" and ELSA, and being "given time to do local consortium training across schools for emotional wellbeing".

The third way to support schools in fostering inclusion is through *Organisational change work*, for example to address the "school ethos around inclusive practices". EP 6 believes that EPs "have more role to play in supporting organisational change"

in schools and that this type of work is more likely to be carried out if prioritised by the LA.

  4.4.1.2 Working Jointly With Others. This theme concerns three subthemes, namely *Working with parents*, *Working with other professionals*, and *"Linking up with the disabled community"*.

The first includes the views from three participants around supporting parents. This involves "running parenting groups, for all parents, not just for those with children with additional special educational needs and talking about things like inclusion" and ensuring that parenting groups are offered in a preventative way, which would mean that "some of the mental health issues wouldn't crop up because the kids would feel a lot more secure". Supporting parents also entails providing them with clear information and reassurance, so that they can "feel empowered and confident".

The second subtheme addresses working jointly with other professionals. EP 4 suggested having "multi agency meeting… before EHCPs are sent out" in order to reach a shared understanding, while EP 1 referred specifically to joint work with clinical psychologists, for example by "doing more training and things together", in order "to have forces pulling in the same direction rather than against each other".

The third subtheme includes the views of two EPs around the fact that the awareness of what the "disabled community" needs "should inform our practice". This entails "listen[ing] to and work[ing] closely with disabled adults or people from other minorities that become excluded" and "giving the power to those people to… lead". It also involves empowering CYP to embrace diversity, for instance by "let[ting] them learn about autism, if they are autistic" and by helping them to identify "role models" who embody and celebrate diversity.

  4.4.1.3 Working With CYP. EPs' views on Working with CYP were organised around four subthemes. The first involves *Person-centred practice*. EPs should be "very mindful of… what sort of discourses they are playing into" and "mak[e] sure that [they] are actually understanding young people in context and not doing isolated assessments". Other practices concerned gathering CYP's views, for instance by "asking children how they feel included" and facilitating "peer support through circles of friends". This subtheme is linked to the *Working jointly with others* theme, as it was suggested to run "person-centred planning meetings, co-facilitated by other

professionals, and person-centred PATHs and MAPs", as well as to create "communication channels for… [students and parents] to raise their concerns and share their ideas" with schools, LAs and EPs.

The second subtheme relates to the importance of working preventatively by focusing on *Early Years*, which links to the *Working with parents* subtheme, where the importance of "put[ting] the parenting bit in earlier" was also stressed.

The third subtheme addresses *Working more on preparing for adulthood*, which emphasises the importance of "think[ing] about ways to carry out support in the future". EPs should "picture [the] young person's adult life. Then kind of back plan, back plan from the adult life back, however young the child is".

The fourth subtheme concerns the views of one participant, who stated that EPs should "lead on" restorative justice, as this represents a valuable "alternative to exclusion".

4.4.1.4 Role of Technology. In this theme, some participants acknowledged the opportunities given by remote working and teaching that presented themselves within the response to the Coronavirus pandemic. For example, one EP mentioned doing less cognitive assessments and more creative work as a result of remote working and expressed the hope to "be able to do more of that when we go back to whatever the new normal is going to be". Another EP reflected on the fact that, for some students with SEND, "learning at home with school's support" has been beneficial and could be considered in reflections around reasonable adjustments in the future.

4.4.1.5 Impact Data and Evaluation. This theme incorporates EP 1's views around the importance of impact data, which they consider "the key thing to changing attitudes going forward". In their opinion, EPs should be more involved in "designing ways… to measure impact and to work with schools and different settings to do that". They should also encourage schools to collect evidence to prove that what they are doing for the child is helping them to make progress. Furthermore, "carefully measuring all of the different aspects… [to] know that you're doing a good job" is also important for staff's morale.

4.4.2 EP's Professional Development and Identity

This master theme involves aspects of EPs' professional development and identity, which were seen by the participants as important in promoting IE in the future. As shown in Figure 17, these have been organised around six themes, namely *Becoming an EP*, *Research*, *"Playing more of a political role"*, *"Broadening out what we do"*, *'Extreme' inclusion*, and *Reflexivity*. These themes, which also include several subthemes, are addressed in the sections below.

Figure 17

RQ 3, Master Theme 2: EP's Professional Development and Identity
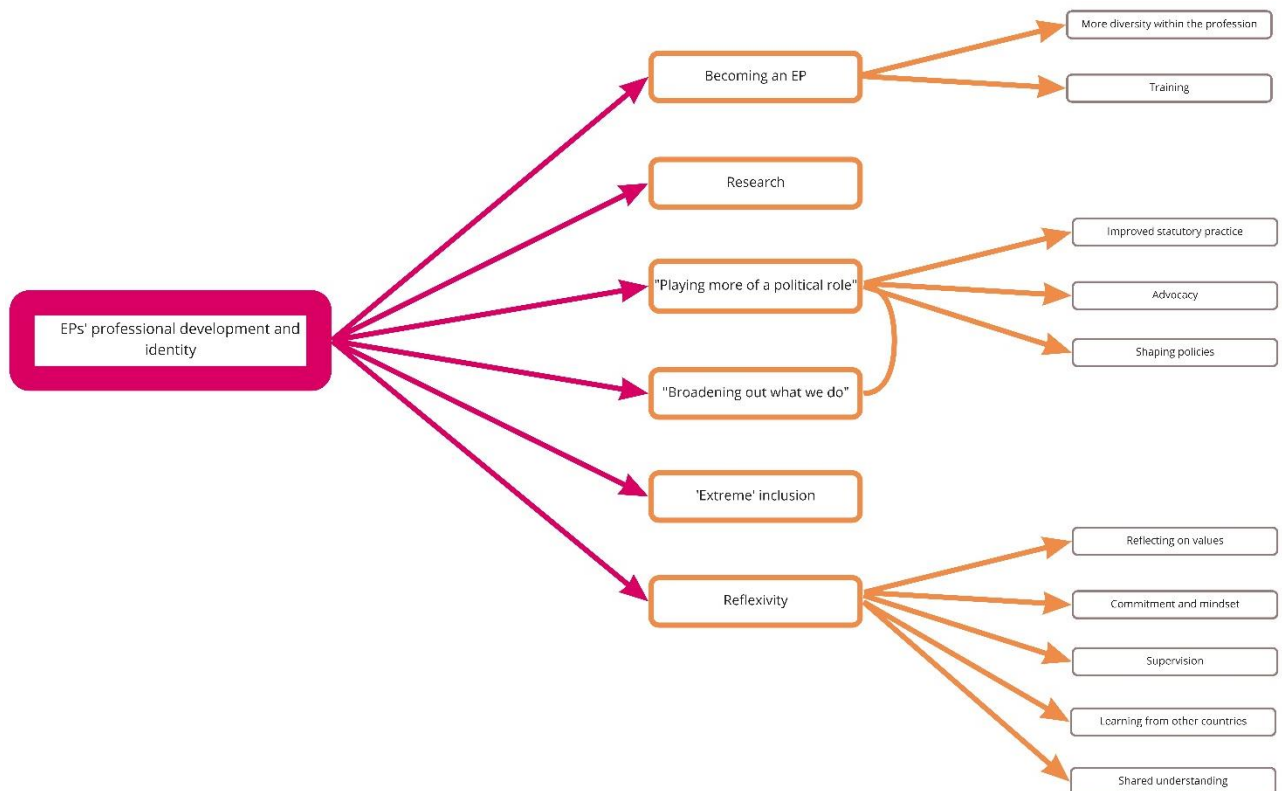
4.4.2.1 Becoming an EP. This theme involves two subthemes: *More diversity within the profession*, and *Training*. The former relates to EP 11's views around the fact that "we need to be more diverse" as a profession, which could be achieved by encouraging a more diverse range of aspiring EPs to join the profession.

The second subtheme addresses the role of *Training* in preparing EPs for embedding inclusive values and practices in their work. Some participants felt that training providers should "be including elements of inclusion in more of our training" and that inclusion "should be the central plank of how EPs are taught on their initial training". For example, training courses should continue to prioritise organisational change, and teach tools and processes for inclusion, as well as encouraging their use in practice.

4.4.2.2 Research. Two participants shared that EPs should be more engaged with carrying out and disseminating *Research* on inclusive practices in the future. For example, EP 10 suggested "to raise awareness, to share research, to share the findings of the current thinking and the most useful ways to support children with SEN to promote their inclusive inclusion".

4.4.2.3 "Playing More of a Political Role". This theme refers to two of the participants stating that EPs need to play a role at the political level. It includes three subthemes, namely *Improved statutory practice*, *Advocacy*, and *Shaping policies*.

The former refers to improvements related to EPs' statutory role, as "EPs should definitely have more of a role in the way that EHCPs are handled". This should involve having appropriate staffing and being given more time to complete the statutory advice, including more time to carry out assessments, provide relevant recommendations, signpost to other agencies, and have multi-agency meetings.

The second subtheme relates to the participants' belief that EPs need to move beyond being critical and take a proactive and active stance, as exemplified by the following quotes: "we could be heard more, have a bigger, more obvious agenda … I'd rather be more politically active and advocate more for inclusion" (EP 3) and "there needs to be, perhaps more political debate and discussion within the EP profession in order to, to think about how we are enacting change, but also fundamentally, making sure that that is… promoting inclusion as a result" (EP 6). Moreover, greater involvement with organisations such as "Psychologist for Social Change" was also mentioned by two of the participants.

The third subtheme is linked to the previous one, in that it incorporates the participants' views around EPs having "more voice in terms of actually shaping… systems and processes", as stated also by EP 8 in the following quote: "I guess

using our collective voice as best we can to influence and shape policy development. Not always easy with our current government leanings, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't keep shouting". Moreover, EP 2 believes that EPs "should have that knowledge to change the way that teachers are trained, and curriculum are written".

4.4.2.4 "Broadening out What We Do". Many participants believe that EPs should "continue to work hard at broadening [their] role", with some of them defining this task as "an ongoing struggle" and a "fight". For example, EP 12 stated that "it's important for us to keep using the broad skills that we have, to show that we are a psychology service and not a statutory service". Moreover, EP 7 hopes that EPs can operate as "community psychologists" and work preventatively to promote the inclusion of all CYP and not limit their work to CYP with SEND. Some EPs are also hoping that, in the future, the wider society will become more aware of the wide range of practices EPs are involved with. Additionally, some of the participants think EPs should be focusing more on CYP's SEMH and challenge the lack of EP involvement in mental health initiatives, which, in turn, would reduce the referrals to specialist settings. However, EP 2 had opposite views on this, as they believe that clinical psychologists are better qualified to address SEMH needs, while EPs should focus more on learning, "rather than being a bit of this, a bit of that".

4.4.2.5 'Extreme' Inclusion. This theme includes the views of one participant around "disciplining people within the profession who think it's okay that children… go to a special school" and "bringing back out of special education all those children who have been placed there over the years".

4.4.2.6 Reflexivity. This theme comprises five subthemes. The first, *Reflecting on values*, addresses the "need to reflect on our own value systems, … the school's value systems and where we fit in with that. And… the local authority's value system as well".

The second subtheme, *Commitment and mindset*, refers to the belief, expressed by most participants, that EPs should be "fully committed", "flexible, "realistic", and "responsive" to the schools' needs. It also includes the need for EPs to "feel calm and confident in that they can offer".

The third subtheme addresses EP 5's belief that promoting inclusion should be regularly discussed in *Supervision* and that EPs should be "held to account by their supervisors".

The fourth subtheme revolves around the views of one EP on *Learning from other countries* who are more inclusive, such as Italy and Canada.

The fifth subtheme, *Shared understanding*, involves the need for change "to be structural [and] joined up" as well as the need to "understand... ourselves what inclusion is and how it can be realistically provided in schools".

4.4.3 Summary of Key Findings Related to RQ 3

When exploring their role in promoting inclusive practice in the future, the participants' suggestions addressed developing their practice as well as their professional identity. With regards to the former, the participants' ideas for future practice involved:

- supporting schools through consultation, training, reflective sessions, and organisational change projects.
- Working in partnerships with parents and other professionals, as well as learning from and being led by representatives of the "disabled community".
- Working with CYP through person-centred practice, with a strong focus on early years, preparing for adulthood, and restorative justice.
- Using technology to develop their practice and making reasonable adjustments for students.
- Collecting impact data.

With regards to EPs' professional development and identity, in the future the participants would like to see:

- More diversity within the profession and more focus on inclusive values and practices within the EP training.
- More engagement with research.
- EPs taking up a more political role, with regards to shaping polices, statutory practice and advocating for inclusion.
- EPs widening their role to include more preventative work and increase their presence within the wider community.

- A further development of their reflexive practice, including reflecting on values, developing a committed mindset, reflecting on IE in supervision, learning from more inclusive countries, and promoting a joined-up approach and a shared understanding.

- One participant also shared some 'extreme' views around getting all the students out of special schools and disciplining EPs who promote specialist settings.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the findings of the interviews with the 12 EPs who participated in this study. For each of the three RQs, all the master themes, themes and subthemes have been represented in the thematic maps and described. Relevant quotes have been included to provide a better understanding of the participants' constructions around key topics. The next chapter will provide a critical discussion of the findings, in relation to the RQs, the sociocultural and political context, the identified literature, and relevant psychological theories.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this research was to develop the understanding of EPs' views around the educational inclusion of students with SEND in the UK, in response to the limited research base available and in consideration of changes which have been characterising the EP profession in the last decades.

This final chapter offers a critical discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4, by drawing on the existing literature and relevant theoretical perspectives. A framework for practice was derived from the participants' views and is introduced in a dedicated section. This is followed by a critical evaluation of the current research, addressing its distinctive contribution, its limitations, and implications for future research. Implications for EP practice are also discussed and issues around reflexivity are addressed, before ending the chapter with a concluding section.

5.2 Interpretation of the Findings in Light of Relevant Literature

The participants to this research provided a deep insight on their views on IE, their practice in promoting it in their everyday work, and the EP role in fostering inclusive practice in the future. The findings are critically discussed in the following sections, which are organised around the three RQs.

5.2.1 EPs' Views on IE

The first research question was about EP's views on IE. The participants' accounts addressed issues of definitions, models, underpinnings, and their own role, as well as barriers to IE and CYP's experiences.

5.2.1.1 Definitions, Models, and Underpinnings. In line with the literature on IE (Anderson et al., 2020; Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Farrell, 2004; Kershner, 2016; Mitchell, 2005; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018), the participants reflected on the lack of a clear and shared understanding of the term inclusion. It appears that inclusion needs to be situated in specific socio-cultural and political contexts (Dyson & Howes, 2009; Glazzard, 2013; Hellawell, 2018; Hick et al., 2009; Hodkinson, 2019; Lunt & Norwich, 2009; Rose, 2010), which explains the variability and contradictions in the implementation of inclusive practices vastly reported in the literature (Dyson, 2005; Hodkinson, 2019; Lauchlan & Greig, 2015; Lindsay, 2007; Mitchell, 2005; Mittler, 2005).

The participants' definitions of inclusion involved several features, such as being underpinned by values and attitudes, and encompassing processes and systems, which reflect a socially constructed view of inclusion (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011; Burr, 2015). In the participants' views, IE ensures that students' needs are met, and barriers overcome through appropriate support, so that CYP can access learning, reach their potential, and actively participate and contribute to the school experience as valued members of the class. This definition reflects a belief, also expressed by the participants when discussing their value base, that inclusion is "about valuing diversity, rather than assimilation" (Ballard, 1999, in Hick et al., 2009, p. 2).

Most participants view IE as a universal right, regardless of CYP's needs or vulnerabilities. However, one of the participants believes that inclusion of CYP with SEND should not be "to the detriment of any of the other students" (EP 1), which

reflects the conditional statement set out in the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014).

Similarly, issues of placement of pupils with SEND constitute another key factor in the variability among definitions of IE (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). The participants expressed a diversified range of views along the "continuum of provision" (Norwich, 2008, p. 2008), which reflect different models of inclusion, from the most separate provisions (segregated model), to specialist provisions within mainstream settings (integrated model), to the most inclusive placements (full inclusive model). Interestingly, most participants' views were polarised, strongly in favour or against particular models. For example, the existence of options along a continuum of provision is regarded favourably by two EPs, who see parental choice over placement as a priority, while another participant considers it "dangerous" as it is "geared heavily to the medical model" (EP 5). Moreover, the trend in the literature, where EPs preferred placements seemed to depend on the type of SEND (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Hardman & Worthington, 2000; Nkoma & Hay, 2018), was, to a lesser degree, present in this study: while most participants indicated inclusion of all pupils within mainstream settings as their preferred option, some think that specialist units and special schools are best equipped to meet the needs of students with "significant medical and learning needs" (EP 10).

Defining inclusion also encompasses making value claims and assumptions (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Lunt, 1997). Underpinnings identified by this study revolve around social justice (including fairness, equity, and equality), children's rights, and valuing and celebrating diversity. Inclusion is seen as fundamental for CYP's development and future opportunities, as well as for the wider society, in terms of both financial benefits and developing inclusive societal attitudes. Further, inclusion is considered at the core of the EP profession ("inclusion is everything" [EP 6]), and one of the reasons why EPs are drawn to it. While recognising children's rights and social justice as foundational principles for the profession's ethical stance and practice has already been advocated in the literature (e.g., Muscutt, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017, 2019; Shriberg et al., 2008, 2020), the current study has provided evidence for their relevance as specifically related to IE.

5.2.1.2 EPs' Role in Relation to Inclusion. The participants believe EPs are well-positioned to promote IE, due to their perceptions of their role and their professional competences, knowledge base, and skills.

In line with key findings from the literature review (Cowan et al., 2007; Davies et al., 2008; Hick, 2005; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019; Nkoma & Hay, 2018), most participants acknowledged that the EP role "has started to shift" (EP 4) from the expert assessor of special educational needs towards a community psychologist working systemically and preventatively to promote inclusion. This change process has been characterising the profession for the last decades, as described in Chapter 1. Positioning theory might contribute to better understand the significance of this shift. This theory addresses how language is used to construct discourses in which people position themselves and others by ascribing, taking up or contesting social rights and duties (Harré, 2012, 2015; Harré & Moghaddam, 2014). Positioning theory sees roles as fixed and institutionalised (Harré, 2015), while thinking about positions situates the issue within a socially constructed framework, where people "position themselves and are positioned by others to act in particular ways within a continually developing larger narrative about education and society" (Fox, 2015, p. 383). From this perspective, the shift in the EP position is transient and socially constructed (e.g., in negotiation with schools), as well as reflective of wider discourses (e.g., the move from a medical to a social model of SEND). Throughout the interviews, a tension was frequently apparent between EPs positioning themselves as child advocates, facilitators of change, and promoters of a social model of disability, and the position ascribed to them by others, that of the assessor who represents the LA and operates within a medical model of SEND. This is further discussed throughout this chapter.

The participants believe EPs are well-placed to promote IE because of their professional knowledge, competences, and skills. This echoes some defining features of the long-debated 'distinctive contribution' of the profession (Cameron, 2006; Farrell, 2009, 2010), such as knowledge of psychological theories, frameworks, and of school systems, and competence in using consultation, therapeutic skills, and applying evidence-based strategies and interventions. Moreover, some of the participants referred to practice-based evidence within their professional 'toolbox'. This could be seen as evidence that EPs are developing what

Fox (2011, 2015) called 'artistry', that is relying on professional expertise when tailoring their practice to meet the demands of the complex and ill-defined situations they encounter in their everyday work.

Moreover, the participants acknowledged the impact of personal characteristics, previous experiences, and training in feeling equipped to implement inclusive practices. Similarly to Hick's (2005) study, the participants described how their previous professional experiences (e.g., as teachers) and commitments (e.g., towards learning from disability studies) positively contributed towards promoting inclusive practices in their current work as qualified EPs. Two participants mentioned that some aspects of their identity (such as having a disability and being from a minority ethnic background) empowered them in fostering inclusion in their practice. Finally, there were different views reported between those who trained within the doctoral programme and those who trained within the old master programme. The former held positive views about the impact of the training in shifting their thinking and teaching them relevant theories and skills (although one participant regrets not being taught about disability studies), while the latter either expressed views about the old programme being inadequate or showed perplexities about the current training taking weak stances towards inclusion (e.g., endorsing the continuum of provisions). Overall, these findings do not seem to reflect the negative views reported by Nkoma (2018), possibly due to differences between the training systems in the UK and Zimbabwe.

**5.2.1.3 Barriers to IE.** The participants dedicated extensive reflections to the systemic and interconnected factors which are perceived to mediate between values and espoused theory, on one hand, and professional practice, on the other. As stated by many of the participants, inclusion appears to be "a systemic issue".

The general social climate and attitudes are viewed as reflective of neoliberal principles and a culture of assimilation and elitism, as well as of a medicalised and normalising construction of SEND, which act as barriers to the effective inclusion of CYP with SEND. This is in line with the EPs' views in Evans and Lunt (2002), who saw the social marginalisation of students with SEND as a limiting factor to their IE, and argued that a change in culture was required. The findings from the current

study seem to indicate that, from the participants' perspective, this change has yet to be achieved.

Parental attitudes were also seen as a potential barrier to IE. This involved both parents of typically developing students and parents of CYP with SEND, with the former not being inclined to having pupils with SEND in their children's class, and the latter favouring special schools, as identified also in Evans' and Lunt's (2002) study.

Moreover, the participants consider the government agenda, as reflected in the standards agenda, national curriculum, and LAs' policies, an expression of the predominant neoliberal culture and marketisation of the school system, acting as an additional barrier to inclusion. This is also reflected in the perceived use of the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014) as a "gateway" (EP 4) to special education and in the way the statutory process is implemented. For example, some of the participants believe that it is used by schools to access funding and perceived as a "tick box" (EP 11), while others reported issues in implementing multiagency work. These issues were not identified in the literature review but have been debated by authors and scholars in the fields of education and educational psychology (see section 1.3.2), which might indicate a potential increase in the awareness around these systemic barriers in the EPs outside of the academic field.

Another systemic issue concerns austerity measures and financial constraints, which result in limited therapeutic offers for CYP and lack of funding for schools. This has been recognised as a key barrier to IE also by EPs in other national and international studies (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Nkoma & Hay, 2018; Szulevicz & Tanggaard, 2014).

At the school level, a major consequence of the factors described above is seen in schools being under pressure to meet the national standards, which is perceived to hinder the inclusion of CYP with SEND. For example, some of the participants mentioned that the current system allows schools to refuse or exclude students on the premise that their needs require specialist support and cannot be met in their setting. Moreover, additional repercussions of the wider societal discourses were seen in some schools' ethos and attitudes, as well as their practices, such as "ranking children against one another" (EP 9), inappropriate differentiation and inflexible teaching, punitive behaviour systems, and exclusionary practices. Finally,

the participants identified other issues in the increasing levels of SEND, power dynamics involving school senior leadership curtailing staff's aspirations, school staff's lack of knowledge and expertise on SEND (especially SEMH), and their lack of awareness of the current legislation. These issues reflect trends identified in national and international studies (Evans & Lunt, 2002, in the UK; Nkoma & Hay, 2018, in Zimbabwe), and debated by authors in the field of education (e.g., Duhaney, 2012 in the United States [US]).

The participants reflected on the fact that EPs can be "part of the problem" (EP 5), as stated also by Farrell and Venables (2009), and identified several factors related to the EP role which can act as barriers to IE. Interestingly, some of the barriers discussed above seem to apply to the EP position as well, such as issues of funding and capacity, and the adoption of a medical model of SEND (e.g., through the un-reflexive use of psychometric assessments). In the participants' perspective, issues of capacity lead to lack of time for non-statutory work and add to LAs not prioritising this type of work, as highlighted also by Davies et al. (2008). Issues of perpetuating a medical model of SEND through the practice of some EPs relate to the wider professional change discussed above (section 5.2.1.2) and in Chapter 1 (section 1.3.4). The findings from the current study indicate that most of the participants have fully espoused a social model of disability and position themselves away from the assessor role which is ascribed to them by schools and LAs. However, this entails an on-going struggle, as reported by the participants when viewing some colleagues still operating within the old paradigm, the general public showing no awareness of their role, and their professional position requiring constant negotiations with LAs and schools. This issue has been identified by EPs in two other studies (Davies et al., 2008; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019), as well as being widely debated both nationally and internationally (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Farrell, 2009, 2010; Forlin, 2010; Stobie, 2002). Farrell's (2009, 2010) analysis suggests that the two issues could be strongly interlinked, as a shortage of EPs can result in narrowing their role to what service users and commissioners expect them to perform, which tend to equal to cognitive assessments reflective of a medical view of SEND.

Another factor related to the EP position was seen in the lack of power to influence school systems, LAs' policies, and government initiatives around SEND. Other power issues concern the traded model of service delivery, as this is perceived to

influence the relationship between EPs and schools, for example by making EPs more careful about how they challenge schools and having to convince their schools that their services are worth buying. These findings seem to contrast with those reported by Lee and Woods (2017), who found that, overall, trading was having a positive impact on EPs' role and practice, although this was not related specifically to inclusion. On the other hand, these findings are in line with what was found by Schulze et al. (2019), in terms of traded models constraining EPs' social justice practice.

Some of the participants mentioned lack of involvement in research, which, ideally, could provide a stronger evidence base to their inclusive practice, and insufficient time being dedicated to reflections and team discussions around inclusion. A lack of long-term vision in setting outcomes for CYP with SEND and preparing them for adulthood was also reported, as well as a lack of diversity within the profession, and of joint work with others. Finally, the participants highlighted the need for a cohesive approach as a profession, and for greater involvement at a political level.

From the findings related to the participants' value base and professional position and those addressing the perceived barriers to inclusion, it is possible to speculate that, despite highly valuing IE and positioning it at the foundation of their profession, EPs might need to develop a stronger sense of agency in implementing the desired change. Agency is conceptualised as the ability to "produce certain effects by one's actions" (Bandura, 2018, p. 130) and is the product of the interplay between three co-determinants, namely interpersonal influences, individual behaviours, and environmental forces. As posited in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, at the foundation of human agency is the belief in one's ability to affect situations and bring about change (self-efficacy). As low self-efficacy is associated with decreased motivation and disengagement from tasks that are perceived too difficult (Bandura, 2006), it will be important to reflect on how a greater sense of agency could be achieved in the future, especially in relation to the systemic barriers discussed above, so that EPs can perceive an increased sense of control in achieving the inclusive outcomes they have envisioned for CYP with SEND.

    5.2.1.4 EP's Views on CYP's Experiences of IE. When asked about their views on CYP's experiences of IE, most of the participants reflected on their lack of

insight on this topic and on their willingness to commit to seeking pupils' views on their experiences more in the future. This might be seen as an example of the dichotomy between espoused theory and theory in practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974), in terms of the difference between EPs' commitment to inclusion and advocacy (which is further discussed in the following section) and their actual practice.

The participants' views cover a range of experiences, characterised by a fundamental need to belong on the part of pupils with SEND, and an overall inclusive attitude from their peers. However, issues of bullying, lack of understanding, and avoidance were also reported, as well as CYP with SEND struggling to socialise and desperately trying to fit in and be perceived as "neurotypical" (EP 3). These findings differ from those described by Cowan et al. (2007) in the US, who reported students with learning disability in secondary education preferring segregated settings, where they could be with "students like them" (p. 173). However, similarly to the current research, Cowan et al. (2007) also identified a positive general attitude of the peer group towards the students with disability.

5.2.2 EPs' Experiences of Inclusion in Their Everyday Practice

The second research question revolved around EPs' experiences of inclusive practice in their everyday work. The belief that inclusion "feeds into absolutely everything that…[EPs] do" (EP 12) is clearly expressed by the wide range of professional activities through which EPs promote IE, which includes both working directly with CYP and with the wider systems around them, as well as ensuring sound professional practice. The participants also shared their reflections on the perceived responsibilities and emotional impact of their work.

5.2.2.1 EPs' Work at the Individual and Systemic Levels. Working at the individual level was mentioned as one of the many ways in which EPs promote inclusive practices, for example through assessments and interventions. With regards to the former, the participants emphasised that it allows to identify the child's unique skills, which, in turn, inform the implementation of inclusive strategies. However, it could be argued that positioning IE as "a systemic issue" (constructed by the society) and carrying out individual assessments (of children's abilities) represents another mismatch between espoused theory and theory in action (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Moreover, assessments, especially statutory ones, are seen as

linked to gatekeeping, which is one of the main perceived responsibilities of the EP role. The participants shared different views on this regard, with some reluctantly accepting being ascribed the gatekeeper position, others reflecting on the risk of colluding with a system which leads to segregated outcomes for CYP, and another seeing it as a way to promote inclusion, by ensuring CYP's needs are met through appropriate provisions. Debates around the EPs' gatekeeping role and related ethical dilemmas are not new within educational psychology and even precede the introduction of the current legislation (see, for example, Eckersley & Deppeler, 2013; Slee & Allan, 2001), but the explicit links to issues of IE made by the participants had not been found in previous literature. With regards to interventions, some participants stated that empowering school staff to run interventions is more effective than carrying them out themselves. However, overall, interventions were not frequently mentioned within the interviews, probably as a reflection of the greater emphasis given to systemic work.

An aspect which concerns EPs' work at both the individual and systemic levels is person-centred practice. With regards to the former, this involves gathering CYP's views on their school experiences, similarly to what was found by Hick (2005), and feeding back to the child after EP involvement has ended. At the systemic level, it results in EPs facilitating person-centred processes, such as Circle of Friends, PATH and MAPS.

The engagement with person-centred practice seems to go beyond merely complying with the professional roles set out in the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department for Health, 2014) and to reflect a wider commitment to advocacy. This was evident in many of the participants' accounts throughout the interviews, for example in considering the child as the primary client and EP practice to be guided by the child's best interests. Interestingly, one participant mentioned conflicts between advocating for CYP and working for the LA, reflecting once again the tensions related to the EP position and perceived professional responsibilities. Additionally, another participant advocates for disability groups through their practice, by sharing the "knowledge of the culture and the community that exists for disabled adults" (EP 3). These accounts would suggest that some EPs have been aware of the principles shared by the Children's Rights and Disability Studies movements (Connor et al., 2008; Lansdown et al., 2014; Nastasi & Naser, 2020a,

2020b; Oyen et al., 2020) and embedded them in their practice around IE. However, this topic would require further exploration through dedicated inquiry. A stronger engagement with advocacy through inclusive practices was also identified in one of the studies included in the literature review, although here advocacy was expressed through ensuring compliance with special education legislation and supporting parents (Cowan et al., 2007).

With regards to systemic work, one of the aspects to which the participants dedicated extensive reflection was working with parents, schools, and other professionals through consultation, in line with their positioning as facilitators rather than assessors. This encompasses some of the features of the EP distinctive contribution (Cameron, 2006; Farrell, 2009, 2010), such as their ability to bring a meta-perspective and creative thinking, their support and challenge role, and their ability to work collaboratively with others.

With regards to working in partnership with parents to promote inclusion, this involves supporting them in facing systemic and emotional challenges, and ensuring they have access to information and are included in decision-making. Raising parents' awareness and educating them on issues related to the legislation around inclusion was also identified in the literature (Cowan et al., 2007; Nkoma & Hay, 2018). However, the participants of the current research also stressed the emotional impact of the current system on parents and highlighted the importance of providing them with emotional support, as well as practical help.

With regards to working collaboratively with schools, in line with what was found in previous studies (Cowan et al., 2007; Hick, 2005; Kjær & Dannesboe, 2019; Nkoma & Hay, 2018), the findings identified the importance of establishing positive and trusting relationships, providing schools with emotional and practical support, and empowering staff, as well as challenging them to think more inclusively. Despite describing working with CYP presenting with a broad range of needs, the participants highlighted how schools seem to require EP involvement more with regards to the inclusion of students with SEMH needs. This seems to be in contrast with the findings from Masten et al. (2003) in the US, who reported that, when providing environmental adaptations to support students' inclusion, EPs were focusing more on learning rather than SEMH needs. It could be hypothesised that

this is due to the study being based on the use of a standardised questionnaire specifically measuring EPs' views on the effectiveness of instructional adaptations, therefore providing a narrow focus on EPs' practices. Moreover, it could be argued that the epistemological and ontological differences between this study and the current research render the comparison of the findings debatable.

A recent grounded theory study on the EP role in working with key adults to support CYP with SEMH needs (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) might help better understand the findings of the current research reported above. By drawing on psychodynamic theories, the authors explained that EPs use two interacting processes in their consultation with key adults, who are often feeling helpless and overwhelmed by the child's SEMH needs. One involves providing staff and parents with a secure base by offering emotional containment (the support role described by the participants to the current research). This, in turn, allows them to engage with the other process, problem-solving, which the EP facilitates by challenging assumptions and bringing different viewpoints (the challenge role). This leads to cognitive and behavioural changes in the adults, ultimately leading to environmental changes. Although not specifically addressing inclusion issues, this theory well summarises the accounts of the participants of the current study, who see in this type of consultation one of their most used and most effective ways to empower others to implement inclusive practices.

Consultation was also discussed in relation to multidisciplinary work, in terms of collaborating with other professionals to build capacity and empower the systems around the child. Moreover, working with other professionals also involves activities such as joint planning and multidisciplinary projects and interventions, which the participants found conducive to inclusive outcomes for CYP.

Other ways to promote inclusion through their practice were identified by the participants in conducting research projects in schools, sharing research evidence, publishing books, and delivering staff training. The crucial role EPs play in terms of staff training was also highlighted by Toye et al. (2019), who found that the participants with greater knowledge of ADHD had less stigmatising beliefs and more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with this condition within mainstream education. Increased knowledge on SEND and inclusion could therefore

have the additional benefit of reducing stigma and promoting more positive attitudes. Another aspect of EP practice which promotes IE consists of organisational change and policy development work, in which a key role is played by EPSs' senior management and professional associations (e.g., AEP and DECP). Finally, a focus on Early Years is seen as crucial by some of the participants, especially in terms of supporting parents and professionals in addressing barriers to inclusion since early stages of CYP's education.

One concept that was frequently mentioned in the participants' narratives around their practices is that of empowerment. In Zimmerman's (2000) conceptualisation, the term empowerment refers both to a value orientation and a wider theory. As a value orientation, empowerment can be framed as "a distinct approach for developing interventions and creating social change…[which is characterised by] enhancing wellness instead of fixing problems, identifying strengths instead of cataloging risk factors, and searching for environmental influences instead of blaming victims" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 44). This seems to encapsulate the views many EPs expressed with regards to their role in working with others to promote IE. Moreover, it reflects some key features of the facilitator's position described by some of the participants in relation to their consultation practices. Empowerment as a broader theory is addressed in section 5.2.3.2 with regards to the participants' views on future professional developments.

> **5.2.2.2 Ensuring Sound Professional Practice.** One area of the findings which had not been highlighted in previous studies involves ensuring sound professional practice. The importance of reflexivity, supervision and peer support has been documented in the literature on EP practice (Andrews, 2018; Dunsmuir et al., 2015), but here the participants reflected on their significance in ensuring that inclusion issues are appropriately prioritised and addressed. Moreover, peer support within the EPS and through wider professional networks was perceived to have an additional function in terms of providing emotional support and learning opportunities.

Furthermore, the participants discussed their use of language around SEND and inclusion, as this is seen as crucial in terms of not feeding into medical discourses and making their reports respectful and accessible to parents. Interestingly, as

reported in section 4.3.3.6, one of the participants did not seem to refrain from using diagnostic labels and negative narratives of SEND, providing a concrete example that some EPs do "use medical discourses" (EP 9) and demonstrating that polarised positions towards SEND are still held within the profession.

Other aspects of sound professional practice concern reflecting on one's areas for professional development and on changes over time related to inclusion and the EP role. Carrying out reviews and evaluation was also mentioned, to ensure that inclusive practices are kept in place over time and to provide evidence of their effectiveness. Finally, one EP also reported including discussions of equality and inclusion issues in interviews when recruiting for the EPS, to ensure commitment towards IE amongst the team.

It could be argued that the participants' views discussed in the last two sections provide a comprehensive exploration of the EP role, similar to the outline provided by many authors in the educational psychology field (see, for example, Engelbrecht, 2004; Lomofsky & Green, 2004; Stratford, 2000) and to the recent conceptualisation of EP practice provided by the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) (2020) in the US. However, the participants in this study described their practice specifically in relation to their role in promoting IE. The fact that their accounts cover most of EPs' professional activities provides evidence for the participants' view that inclusion underpins every facet of their practice.

Moreover, although some of the findings reiterate EPs' perspectives identified in previous studies, they go beyond the available evidence by providing insight on many aspects of EP practice which had not been previously explored in relation to IE, therefore offering a comprehensive view of inclusive practice. This seems to reflect Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986) eco-systemic framework (see section 2.5), which was also mentioned by some of the participants, in that it positions EPs as facilitators of change at all the levels, from the child, to the immediate systems around them, to the wider policy and organisational systems, including addressing the complex interactions between them and changes over time.

5.2.2.3 Emotional Impact of EPs' Work Around Inclusion. As inclusion is "an extremely emotive area" (EP 5), it is not surprising that many of the participants shared comments on the emotional impact of promoting IE. These include

expressions of hope and optimism, as well as determination, which was frequently referred to by the participants, to indicate a high commitment towards inclusion.

However, negative emotions were also expressed in response to exclusionary school practices and towards the perceived difficulties in promoting IE. Among them, feelings of frustration seem to prevail, for example as related to not having "any power to challenge [the system], other than through conversations and consultations" (EP 3) and to struggling "to see that you're making a good difference" (EP 1).These findings mirror those reported by Kjær and Dannesboe (2019), with regards to the emotional impact of negotiating a facilitator position in consultation with school staff.

Finally, issues related to lack of professional confidence were also mentioned by some participants, especially with regards to promoting organisational change projects. This echoes some of the evidence from the literature review. For example, in interpreting the results from their study, Masten et al. (2003) hypothesised that the discrepancy between views on the effectiveness of instructional strategies and actual reported use was due to EPs being doubtful about how these recommendations would have been perceived by school staff. Similarly, Hamre et al. (2018) reported "weak professional confidence among educational psychologists" (p. 666) in having to challenge a strong diagnostic culture promoted by child psychiatrists in Denmark. A lack of confidence was also reported by some of the participants in Kjær's and Dannesboe's (2019) study, in relation to managing the difficult emotions arising from conflicting expectations around the EP role.

Overall, these findings link back to agency theory and the considerations on the role of self-efficacy reported in section 5.2.1.3. It seems relevant to add that, in his conceptualisation of human agency, Bandura (2018) described three main properties, namely forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. The first entails creating goals and visualising intended outcomes and therefore provides direction and meaning to one's actions. The second involves behavioural and emotional self-regulation, based on the standards people set for themselves (e.g., moral standards). The third concerns reflecting on one's own efficacy, including addressing the response to potential challenges, as well as tensions between values, thoughts, and actions. This third agentic property is seen as crucial by

Bandura (2018), as self-efficacy contributes to the functioning of the other agentic properties and ultimately serves as guide and motivator of people's actions. This theory might contribute to better understand the findings discussed above, which seem to indicate once again that, in relation to their role in promoting IE, EPs' sense of agency might be lacking. This might be because EPs are clearly committed to achieving inclusive outcomes for CYP and, in doing so, have set high professional and ethical standards for their practice. However, the tensions and challenges related to the aforementioned barriers to IE might make those standards difficult to meet, as expressed by the participants' low confidence in their ability to affect change and feelings of frustration. This links back to the perceived lack of control over the wider systemic issues related to inclusion and ultimately seems to result in perceived low self-efficacy.

5.2.3 EP's Views on Their Role in Promoting Inclusive Practice in the Future

The third research question addressed the EP role in promoting inclusive practice in the future. The participants' views provided relevant insight on ways to develop EPs' professional practice and identity to be more effective in promoting IE. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to specifically investigate EPs' views on this topic, therefore links to previous studies are not possible. A critical discussion of the findings will be supported by reference to relevant theories.

> **5.2.3.1 EP's Views on Developing Professional Practice.** When describing how EPs should promote IE in the future, the participants' views seem to reflect once again a systemic way of thinking reflective of Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986) eco-systemic model.

At the individual level (working directly with CYP with SEND), in the future EPs should focus on working preventatively at the Early Years stage and on preparing CYP for adulthood. Promoting restorative justice approaches was also mentioned as an alternative to exclusionary practices.

One approach that applies to both the individual and the wider systems level is person-centred practice, which entails "understanding young people in context" (EP 9) and gathering CYP's views on their experiences of inclusion, as well as facilitating person-centred processes, such as Circle of Friends, PATH and MAPS. Another way in which EPs could facilitate change by promoting positive communications across

systems was identified in creating "communication channels for… [students and parents] to raise their concerns and share their ideas" (EP 10) with schools, LAs and EPs.

At the school system level, the participants' views revolved around empowering staff to work more inclusively, demonstrating once again the relevance of empowerment as a value orientation (see section 5.2.2.1). Consistently with this, consultation was confirmed to be one of the cornerstones of EPs' practice in promoting inclusion, in line with the opinion of many authors in the field (Farrell, 2006; McNab, 2009; Wagner, 2017). Interestingly, some participants hope to become more effective in their use of consultation, for example by asking reflective questions around inclusion in planning meetings. Other ways to empower schools were identified in facilitating staff training and reflective sessions, and in delivering organisational change projects.

Empowerment was also mentioned in relation to EPs' work with other systems around the child, such as parents and other professionals. Support for parents should include providing information and emotional reassurance, as well as facilitating parenting groups with a preventative focus. With regards to collaboration with other professionals, this needs to include increased multi-agency work within the statutory process, aimed at constructing shared understandings conducive to inclusive outcomes for CYP, as well as joint work with clinical psychologists in carrying out training and projects in schools.

At the wider system level, some of the participants indicated that EPs should work more closely with the "disabled community" (EP 3) and give the power to "disabled adults" (EP 5) to lead on inclusive initiatives for CYP with SEND.

Some of the participants also reflected on the possible role of technology in developing inclusive practices in the future. This involves learning from the remote working and teaching experiences during lockdown (within the Coronavirus pandemic) to think about how these could be adapted to support CYP with SEND in the future.

Finally, the role of gathering evidence on the effectiveness of inclusion practices through sound evaluation processes was also emphasised, both in terms of EPs

carrying out evaluations themselves, as well as supporting schools in collecting evidence.

5.2.3.2 EPs' Views on Professional Development and Identity.

Professional identity can be defined as the "relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role" (Schein, 1978, in Ibarra, 1999, pp. 764-765). The concept of professional identity entails people's views around what is distinctive of their professional role, in terms of both one's own beliefs, as well as their assumptions on how their profession is viewed by others (Professional Standards Authority, 2016). Professional changes, such as those called for by the participants and reported in this section, will inevitably require adaptations in terms of "skills, behaviours, attitudes, and patterns of interaction" (Ibarra, 1999, p. 765), which ultimately require developing EPs' professional identity with regards to their role in promoting inclusion. Moreover, if the EP profession is a "craft" (Stobie, 2002, p. 227) which requires 'artistry' (Fox, 2011, 2015), then it follows that to master it effectively EPs will have to engage with reflexivity, learning and practice. The desired changes shared by the participants are now discussed in more detail in relation to empowerment theory.

The concept of empowerment introduced in section 5.2.2.1 is used here in relation to the wider empowerment theory, as conceptualised by Zimmerman (2000), in order to provide an overarching framework to better understand the findings related to EPs' professional identity. As a theory, empowerment includes both processes (actions and structures which are empowering) and outcomes (being empowered as a result of empowering activities) (Swift & Levin, 1987). Zimmerman (2000) states that empowerment processes and outcomes depend on specific contexts and populations and vary across three levels of analysis, namely the individual, organisational, and community level.

At the individual level (psychological empowerment), the construct "includes beliefs about one's competence, efforts to exert control, and an understanding of the socio-political environment" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 46). Participants' views related to psychological empowerment revolve around reflexivity, including developing a shared understanding of inclusion among the profession, reflecting on own values

and schools' and LAs' value systems, developing commitment, confidence, and a flexible and realistic attitude, discussing inclusion issues in supervision, and learning from more inclusive countries. These ideas reflect some core features of professional identity, such as values, attitudes, and motives. They also show an interest towards increasing knowledge of how IE is implemented in fully inclusive countries, which might indicate a desire to increase awareness of what might need to change in the UK in the future.

At the organisational level (organisational empowerment), empowerment involves "organisational processes and structures that enhance member participation and improve organisational effectiveness for goal achievement" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 44). The participants' views relate to their aspiration to play a more political role in the future. This includes improving their statutory practice through appropriate staffing, more time for the completion of statutory casework, and multiagency meetings. It also involves increased advocacy, for example through professional debates and involvement with dedicated associations, such as Psychologists for Social Change, and playing a more active role in shaping inclusion policies. This latter aspect, alongside the need to address capacity issues, has been advocated by different scholars both nationally and internationally (e.g., Farrell, 2009; Forlin, 2010), in order to empower EPs to be more effective in promoting IE.

At the community level (community empowerment), the concept of empowerment refers "to the collective action to improve the quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organizations and agencies" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 44). If we consider the EP profession as a professional community, it can be argued that the participants' views address several aspects at this level. First, a shared aspiration around promoting greater diversity within the profession was expressed. Secondly, EP training should focus more on developing knowledge and skills around inclusion and organisational change work. Thirdly, EPs should be more engaged with carrying out and disseminating research on inclusive practices. Finally, EPs should "continue to work hard at broadening [their] role" (EP 7). This involves going beyond statutory work and being engaged with a broad range of professional activities, as well as operating preventatively as "community psychologists" (EP 7). It could be argued that addressing issues of capacity might also contribute to achieving this goal in the future. Most of the participants also believe that EPs should be

focusing more on CYP's SEMH and challenge the lack of EP involvement in mental health initiatives.

Applying empowerment theory to these findings highlights that these practices and future developments respond to two different needs: on one hand they aim to have an empowering effect on the systems around CYP, on the other, they could lead to empowered EP practice. This, in turn, could result in increased sense of agency and professional self-efficacy.

5.2.4 A Framework for Practice Derived From the Participants' Views

To summarise, the participants' views on IE are representative of the belief that "inclusion is everything" (EP 6) and, as such, they cover all the core aspects of EP practice. Based on this consideration, a framework for practice has been developed.

As shown in Figure 18, EP practice on promoting IE is underpinned by core values around social justice, children's rights, and valuing diversity, as well as by an ontological position based on social constructionist views and a social model of SEND. The next overarching layer addresses EPs' positioning, in terms of shifting from an assessor position to that of a facilitator, advocacy (advocating for CYP), and professional 'artistry' (encompassing EPs' distinctive contribution in applying their psychological skills and knowledge to foster inclusive practices). Moreover, in line with Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986) eco-systemic approach, EP practice involves working at the individual level (CYP), the systems level (family, school, and joint work with other professionals and disability groups), as well as at the level of the EP profession itself. It is important to notice that the divide between these areas is not clear-cut, to emphasise the mutual influences among systems, as well as the impact of changes over time (chronosystem). The activities reported in the wedges of the framework encapsulate both the tasks EPs are already involved with to promote inclusion, as well as the desired changes the participants are hoping will be implemented in the future. Finally, EP practice at both the individual and systems levels has the goal of being empowering for the people they work with, while the professional activities and developments at the profession level are aimed at achieving a more empowered profession in the future. As represented in the framework, the latter feeds into empowering practice, as a more empowered profession will be better able to support the inclusion of CYP in the future.

Figure 18[5]

Framework of EP Practice for Inclusive Education

"INCLUSION IS EVERYTHING"
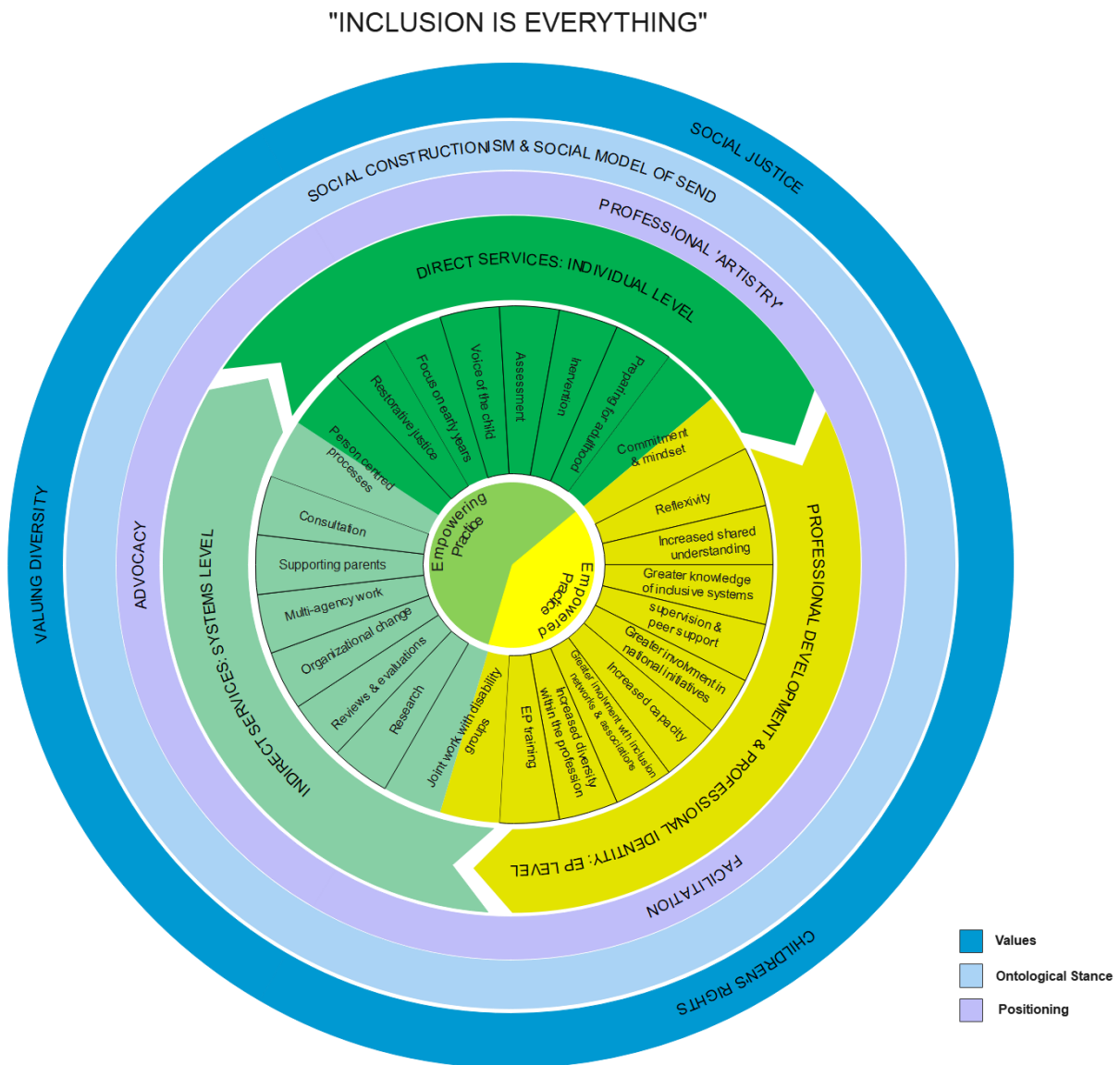
It could be argued that if EPs and EP teams implement all the features encapsulated in the framework, a greater sense of agency could be achieved in the EP profession, which translates into increased self-efficacy. This, in turn, is likely to be associated with stronger motivation and sense of control, which should decrease the feelings of

---

[5] To enhance readability, the framework is also available at the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QZhFMUkT5OQ11iikVs8PLyESkQ06z68-?usp=sharing

frustration, fear, and low confidence reported by many of the participants to the current research, hence achieving greater professional wellness. For example, addressing issues of staffing and allowing EPs to be involved in a broader range of professional activities is likely to provide a better alignment between espoused values and theory and professional practice, with an increase in feelings of competence and job satisfaction. Additionally, a greater political involvement in shaping policies and influencing national initiatives through representatives of EPSs' senior management and professional organisations is likely to result in greater sense of control and perceived ability to affect change.

Finally, it is important to highlight that this framework encapsulates the views of most of the participants, although there was some variability amongst them, especially in terms of definitions and models of IE. Even with regards to EP practice some contradictions were apparent, for example in terms of promoting a social model of disability and using medical language to describe CYP's needs. This might be seen as typical of the change process, where "change and continuity co-exist" (Stobie, 2002, p. 230), with many features of traditional practice still being present alongside more innovative practices. It is hoped that the findings of this research, as represented in the framework above, will contribute to supporting the EP profession through this change journey towards more inclusive outcomes for CYP.

5.3 Critical Evaluation of the Current Research

5.3.1 Distinctive Contribution

Following the DECP's (2019) Inclusion Statement and its call to work more systemically and inclusively (see Chapter 1), which echoes recommendations made by several authors in the field of educational psychology, (e.g., Farrell, 2006; Farrell & Venables, 2009; Fox, 2015), this research contributes to the societal discussion on IE by giving voice to the views and experiences of 12 EPs in England.

The lack of recent and rigorous studies on this topic in a time of change for the profession makes this research particularly relevant. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study based in the UK which focuses on EPs' views, experiences, and practices around IE using a qualitative research design. Additionally, it is the first study to specifically investigate what EPs think they could do to further promote IE.

Moreover, this research seems to be particularly timely, considering the damning report released by the UN (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017) following the review of the UK's compliance with the CRPD (UN, 2006). The report drew attention to the education of students with SEND in this country, stating that it represents an area of major concern because of the "persistence of a dual education system that segregates disabled children to special schools" (p.10), the increasing number of disabled children in segregated education environments, the lacking response of the education system to the requirements of high-quality IE, and the inadequate training of teachers in inclusion competences. Similarly, concerns were raised by the DECP (2019), which called for a re-opening of the inclusion debate since "children with SEND are still more likely to be permanently excluded from their education settings. The number of special schools is rising, and many local authorities have over-spent their budgets" (p. 7). It is the researcher's hope that the findings from this research will contribute to re-invigorate the professional discussions around IE.

Finally, this research aims to support the development of the EP profession, by providing relevant insight on the EP role in promoting greater IE. In particular, the findings from this study contribute to increase awareness of the professional strengths, current challenges and future directions for EPs working to foster IE. This, in turn, could have an empowering impact on future EP practice, which might positively affect the schools they work with and, ultimately, the school experiences and wellbeing of students with SEND and their peers.

5.3.2 Limitations

The main limitation of this research consists of the non-generalisability of the findings to the wider EP profession. However, in line with the ontological and epistemological research paradigm, the aim of this project was to explore EPs' constructions around IE, rather than identify measurable 'truths' which could be generalised to a wider population. Lincoln and Guba (1988) suggested referring to the concept of transferability rather than generalisability, as this criterion is deemed more suitable to naturalistic inquiry. This means that the findings of a qualitative study can be 'transferred' to another population or context, provided that the specific context, participants, setting, and circumstances of the study are detailed. As highlighted by

Braun and Clarke (2013), in this conceptualisation, the onus of assessing whether the level of detail provided in the study is sufficient to transfer its findings is placed on the reader, which could be seen as a limitation of this type of research.

A further limitation can be seen in the method utilised to recruit the participants, as purposive sampling might mean that only the EPs who were highly motivated might have volunteered to participate in the study, therefore providing a 'skewed' perspective. However, once again, the researcher was interested in gaining an insight on the constructions of individual EPs, considering their unique views and experiences, rather than finding universal and objectifiable 'truths'.

Another limitation related to the recruitment method rests within the researcher's lack of control over the demographics of the sample. Although the invitation letter to participate in the study stated that the involvement of EPs from different backgrounds was welcome, all the participants were located in England, which did not allow for perspectives from other UK nations to be explored. As IE is embedded in the local socio-cultural and legislative context (Rose, 2010), it would have been interesting to explore the views of EPs from a range of geographical locations within the UK. Nonetheless, views from different parts of England were incorporated in the study. Moreover, the participants' profile is characterised by a diversity of gender, ethical backgrounds, and breadth of experience, providing richness to the findings.

Furthermore, potential effects of the social desirability bias should be acknowledged, as these are intrinsic to all interview methods. Social desirability can be defined as the "tendency to present oneself and one's social context in a way that is perceived to be socially acceptable, but not wholly reflective of one's reality" (Bergen & Labonté, 2020, p. 783). Moreover, this bias tends to manifest more conspicuously within research investigating sensitive or controversial issues (Bergen & Labonté, 2020), which could apply to the current study, as inclusion has frequently been described as controversial (Duhaney, 2012; Farrell, 2004; Hick et al., 2009; Hodkinson, 2019; Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, it could be hypothesised that a tendency to overemphasise positive practices to present oneself in a more positive light could have been particularly present in those interviews where the participants had a professional relationship with the researcher (three of the participants worked

in the same LA where the researcher was on placement at the time of data collection).

Finally, it must be acknowledged that this research focused exclusively on the educational inclusion of CYP with SEND and did not address other characteristics such as ethnic diversity, language, sexual orientation etc., which could also carry the risk for students to be marginalised. As mentioned by some of the participants, issues around the inclusion of students in these minority groups also warrant EPs' attention. As stated in Chapter 1, the deliberate decision to exclude these aspects was motivated by the need to provide a deep insight into SEND and inclusion, by addressing the socio-cultural, political, and legislative context in relation to the EP role.

In conclusion, although additional studies are needed and the findings from this research might not be representative of the views of the whole profession, the current work can contribute to inform the literature base around the role of the EP in promoting IE.

5.3.3 Implications for Future Research

As mentioned in the previous section, future research should be dedicated to the EP role in promoting the educational inclusion of other vulnerable groups, such as students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, also addressing issues of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989).

Moreover, it would be interesting to further investigate how advocacy and principles derived from the Children's Rights movement and Disability Studies relate to EPs' practice in promoting IE. A focused exploration on how they could be implemented in practice could help EPs to better embed them in their everyday work.

The reflection on the EP role in fostering IE could also be enriched by studies conducted in different nations within the UK, to better understand the influences of contextual factors and learn from the implementation of EPs' inclusive practices within different systems. The views of TEPs could further deepen the discussion, as they could bring a different perspective, potentially influenced by the latest developments of EP training and research, as well as less affected by the tensions between espoused theories and systemic barriers within professional practice.

Additionally, the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on IE could be explored in relation to EP practice. Some of the participants have already identified potential opportunities which could be harnessed from the response to the virus, such as the role of technology in supporting the inclusion of CYP with SEND in the future. Targeted studies could further explore both challenges and opportunities arising from the current context and provide relevant insights for EP practice in promoting IE.

Furthermore, the themes generated through this research could be used to produce a large-scale national survey to gather EPs' perspectives on IE, which could be considered as representative of the wider profession and therefore be used to inform future developments at the political level (e.g., EP training, AEP and DECP guidelines, and national initiatives).

Finally, as the framework presented in section 5.2.4 could be used to guide future practice, it would be important to investigate its perceived usefulness, as well as potential areas for development, from the service users' viewpoint.

5.4 Implications for EP Practice

As represented in Figure 18, the analysis and findings offer several implications for promoting IE, which are summarised in this section.

When working at the individual level, EPs should focus more on preventative practice, especially within Early Years, and on supporting CYP in preparing for adulthood since early stages, by adopting a long-term vision. Assessments and interventions should be guided by a social model of disability and a commitment to inclusive outcomes for CYP. Moreover, restorative justice should be encouraged as an alternative to exclusionary practices. Reviews and evaluations should be carried out more consistently, to ensure inclusive outcomes are kept in place over time and to build a strong evidence base for inclusive practices.

Furthermore, a person-centred approach should be implemented both when working with CYP, for example by seeking their views on their experiences of IE, as well as with the systems around them, for example by facilitating person-centred processes, such as PATH and MAPS.

At the systems level, EPs should keep developing their consultation skills and models, as this is one of the key activities through which EPs can support and challenge schools in developing inclusive practices. EPs should also continue their work in supporting parents and working collaboratively with others, including seeking more cooperation with clinical psychologists and with disability groups. Additionally, more involvement in organisational change projects in schools would be beneficial in implementing positive change at the whole-school level. Research should also be developed more in the future, both in terms of disseminating the evidence base for inclusive practices, as well as conducting more research projects in schools.

At the profession level, EPs should aim to further develop their professional identity as advocates for IE, by developing a shared understanding on what inclusion entails, as well as a cohesive approach characterised by commitment and an inclusive mindset. Reflexivity is also recommended, in terms of reflecting on own values, and the value base of schools and LAs, reflecting on inclusion in supervision, and discussing inclusion issues with colleagues. Greater knowledge of inclusive systems could be achieved by learning from other countries, which have implemented fully inclusive systems, which could spark further reflection and discussion on potential changes within the local contexts. More involvement with inclusion networks and associations could also help develop commitment, mindset, and knowledge around IE, as well as support reflexivity and practical initiatives.

Furthermore, increasing capacity will be crucial for EPs to be able to broaden the scope of their practice and work more systemically, preventatively, and inclusively. Additionally, a greater focus on IE in EP training, more diversity within the profession, an active political role in shaping policies, and a greater involvement in national initiatives would be beneficial to further promote IE. Senior leadership management and professional organisations (AEP and DECP) are likely to play a key role in this.

5.5 Dissemination

In order to promote positive change towards more inclusive practices, the researcher is committed to the dissemination of the research findings through several means.

First, the researcher will produce an executive summary of the main research findings, to be shared with the research participants, following their expression of interest at the end of each interview. The summary will be sent via email after the completion of thesis examination.

Secondly, the researcher hopes to have the opportunity to present the findings of this research to her EPS team, before placement completion in July 2021. This could provide the EPS with a meaningful opportunity to reflect on their role in promoting inclusive practices at the LA level.

Thirdly, considering the relevance of the research findings for the EP profession at the wider level, the researcher is committed to disseminate the findings through academic and professional publications, as well as oral or poster presentations in relevant professional forums (e.g., through events promoted by the DECP or the AEP).

Finally, the researcher will seek opportunities to pilot the use of the *Framework of EP Practice for Inclusive Education* within her EPS and UEL's doctoral training programme.

5.6 Reflexivity

As discussed in section 1.4, the research process is inevitably affected by the researcher's beliefs, just like these are affected by the research journey (Fox et al., 2007). In the following sections, the researcher will provide some final thoughts on her engagement with reflexivity throughout the research process and on the impact of the research journey on herself. In doing so, she will use the first person, to allow for a more introspective stance.

5.6.1 Impact of the Researcher on the Research Process

Being very aware of the potential impact of my strong personal views on IE (see section 1.4) has led me to maintain a particularly reflexive approach throughout the research, especially in the phases of data collection and data analysis. For example, during the interviews, I felt a strong connection with the views expressed by some of the participants, while I felt uncomfortable with the views expressed by others, and strongly in disagreement with those expressed in one particular interview. However, I

was aware of my emotional responses and I strived to keep a non-judgemental approach, encouraging all the participants to share their views freely. Additionally, keeping track of my thoughts and emotional responses to the interviews through the regular use of my reflective diary helped me to become more aware of potential biases in processing the interview content.

During data analysis, I was aware of being instinctively drawn to the participants' accounts which were reflective of my views or which I found inspiring. This awareness made me even more careful in ensuring that differing perspectives were not dismissed, even if expressed by only one of the participants. Going back to my diary and re-reading my initial thoughts on my position as a researcher was helpful in reigniting my sense of responsibility to do justice to the views I had been entrusted with.

Furthermore, regular and ad-hoc tutorials with my Director of Studies have been invaluable throughout the research, but even more so during data analysis, as those critical discussions ensured all the relevant views were captured in my thematic maps and summarised in this thesis.

The examples above provide an insight on my attempts to minimise potential bias and make my decisions transparent. However, I am aware that, despite these measures, my position as a social constructionist and relativist researcher entails personal assumptions and a degree of co-construction which are inextricably embedded in my approach to this research and in my interaction with the participants.

5.6.2 Impact of the Research Journey on the Researcher

This research has allowed me to embark on a journey of academic and professional discovery and growth. I have felt privileged to have the opportunity to undertake a doctoral research and to be trusted with the views of 12 EPs, who generously dedicated some of their time to this project.

This journey has not always been straightforward, as it has taken me on a rollercoaster of emotions comparable to the one represented in Fisher's (2012) *Process of Transition*. For example, after experiencing some initial anxiety at the beginning of the process, the recruitment of participants revealed itself easier than

expected, which was accompanied by feelings of happiness and excitement and a belief that, after all, the project was really happening! Feelings of fear started to arise when I became aware of the large amount of data that had been generated through the interviews, which was followed by a sense of threat and a belief that "this is bigger than I thought" (Fisher, 2012, "Threat" section) when I actually started analysing it. The professional help from my Director of Studies and the emotional support from my colleagues at this stage have been invaluable and allowed me to transition to a phase of hostility ("I'll make this work if it kills me" [Fisher, 2012, "Hostility" section]) and finally to gradual acceptance and a feeling of moving forward. Now that I am reaching the end of the write-up stage, I feel a sense of accomplishment and a sincere hope that this work will be useful to other professionals in the future, ultimately having a positive impact on the IE of CYP.

Following on from my initial reflections (see section 1.4), this research has considerably enhanced my awareness and knowledge around IE in the UK. The participants' experiences and insights have been hugely influential in helping me come to terms with the contradictions which characterise IE in this country, which ultimately made it possible for this work to have the cathartic function I was hoping for. Further, appreciating the complexities of the EP role in making a difference for the inclusion of CYP and the values and commitment shared by the participants has further strengthened my feeling of belonging to the EP profession and my aspiration to bring about positive change.

5.7 Conclusion

In the attempt to fill the gaps identified in previous literature, this research has provided an extensive exploration of the views of 12 EPs on the educational inclusion of CYP with SEND in the UK. More specifically, this study was guided by three RQs, which concerned EPs' views on IE, their experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice, and their views on their role in promoting inclusive practices in the future.

Underpinned by values of social justice and a social constructionist and relativist research paradigm, the research adopted a qualitative methodology involving semi-structured interviews and TA. The interviews offered in-depth insights into the complexities of the EP role in relation to IE.

Despite providing a diverse range of views on definitions and models of inclusion, reflective of the complexities related to inclusion and SEND in the UK, the findings showed a strong EP commitment to inclusion, underpinned by social justice, children's rights, and valuing diversity. From the participants' perspective, inclusion underpins most of EP practice, both at the individual and systems level. Several barriers to inclusion were identified, some of which involve the EP role. Considering these alongside the emotional responses shared by the participants suggested wider professional areas for development, involving EPs' sense of agency and self-efficacy, as well as positioning. Issues related to positioning can be seen as an expression of the ongoing transition from an expert role to a facilitator position, as widely debated in the literature in the last decades. Some strengths related to the EP practice in promoting inclusion were also identified, which indicate EPs play an important part in advocating for CYP and empowering the systems around them.

Implications for future practice were derived from the participants' views and represented in the framework for practice introduced in section 5.2.4. These include professional developments around the EP practice at both the individual and systems levels, as well as around EPs' professional identity. In conclusion, these findings seem to indicate that not only do EPs seem to have a role to play in promoting the educational inclusion of CYP with SEND, but also that "promoting inclusion could be a way to define the role of the educational psychologist in the new millennium" (Farrell & Venables, 2009, p. 124). It is the researcher's hope that this research will contribute to this endeavour.

References

Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). Inclusion and the standards agenda: Negotiating policy pressures in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *10*(4–5), 295–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110500430633

Ainscow, M., & César, M. (2006). Inclusive education ten years after Salamanca: Setting the agenda. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *21*(3), 231–238. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03173412

Anastasiou, D., & Kauffman, J. M. (2011). A social constructionist approach to disability: Implications for special education. *Council for Exceptional Children*, *77*(3), 367–384.

Anderson, J., & Boyle, C. (2020). Including into what? Reigniting the 'good education' debate in an age of diversity. In C. Boyle, J. Anderson, A. Page, & S. Mavropoulou (Eds.), *Inclusive education: Global issues and controversies* (pp. 15–34). Brill | Sense.

Anderson, J., Boyle, C., Page, A., & Mavropoulou, S. (2020). Inclusive Education: An enigma of 'wicked' proportions. In C. Boyle, J. Anderson, A. Page, & S. Mavropoulou (Eds.), *Inclusive education: Global issues and controversies* (pp. 1–11). Brill | Sense.

Andrews, S. (2018). *The role of reflective practice for educational psychologists* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Cardiff University.

Annan, J., & Priestley, A. (2012). A contemporary story of school psychology. *School Psychology International*, *33*(3), 325–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034311412845

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness.* Jossey-bass.

Arneson, R. (2013). Egalitarianism. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/egalitarianism/

Ashton, R., & Roberts, E. (2006). What is valuable and unique about the educational psychologist? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *22*(2), 111–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360600668204

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H Freeman and Company.

Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *1*(2), 164–180.

Bandura, A. (2018). Toward a psychology of human agency: Pathways and reflections. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *13*(2), 130–136. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617699280

Bartolo, P. A. (2010). Why school psychology for diversity? *School Psychology International*, *31*(6), 567–580. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310386532

Bergen, N., & Labonté, R. (2020). "Everything is perfect, and we have no problems": Detecting and limiting social desirability bias in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *30*(5), 783–792. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319889354

Black, A. (2019). A picture of special educational needs in England-An overview. *Frontiers in Education*, *4*(79), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00079

Blackmore, J. (2000). Can we create a form of public education that delivers high standards for all students in the emerging knowledge society? *Journal of Educational Change*, *1*, 381–387.

Block, E. S., & Erskine, L. (2012). Interviewing by telephone: Specific considerations, opportunities, and challenges. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *11*(4), 428–445. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691201100409

Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2002). *Index for inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools.* http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/translations/IndexEnglish.pdf

Boyle, C., & Anderson, J. (2020). Inclusive education and the progressive inclusionists. In U. Sharma & S. Salend (Eds.), *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 1–23). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.151

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. SAGE Publications.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2018, June 25). *Thematic analysis—An introduction* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zFcC10vOVY

Briggs, A. (2013). The school psychologist as social justice advocate. In D. Shriberg, S. Y. Song, A. H. Miranda, & K. M. Radliff (Eds.), *School psychology and social justice: Conceptual foundations and tools for practice* (pp. 294–310). Routledge.

British Psychological Society (BPS). (2014). *Code of human research ethics*. British Psychological Society.

British Psychological Society (BPS). (2017). *Practice Guidelines (3rd ed.)*. British Psychological Society.

British Psychological Society (BPS), Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP). (2002). *Inclusive education position paper*. https://dev-inp.kenkeldesign.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Inclusive-Education-Position-Paper.Gerv-Leyden.pdf

British Psychological Society (BPS), Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP). (2019). Inclusive education position paper. *DECP Debate*, *173*, 9–10.

British Psychological Society (BPS). (2018). *Code of ethics and conduct*. British Psychological Society.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, *32*(7), 513–531.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, *22*(6), 20.

Burnham, J. (2012). Developments in Social GRRRAAACCEEESSS: visible–

invisible and voiced–unvoiced. In I.-B. Krause (Ed.), *Culture and Reflexivity in*

Systemic Psychotherapy (pp. 139–160). Routledge.

Burr, V. (2015). *Social constructionism (3rd ed.).* Routledge.

Cameron, R. J. (2006). Educational psychology: The distinctive contribution.

Educational Psychology in Practice, *22*(4), 289–304.

https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360600999393

Children and Families Act 2014.

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/primary+secondary?title=Children%20and%20

Family%20Act%202014%20

Clough, P., & Corbett, J. (2000). *Theories of inclusive education: A student's guide*.

Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Connor, D. J., Gabel, S. L., Gallagher, D. J., & Morton, M. (2008). Disability studies

and inclusive education—Implications for theory, research, and practice.

International Journal of Inclusive Education, *12*(5–6), 441–457.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110802377482

Corcoran, T. (2017). Ontological constructionism. In A. Williams, T. Billington, D.

Goodley, & T. Corcoran (Eds.), *Critical educational psychology* (pp. 26–33).

John Wiley & Sons.

Cowan, R. J., McGoey, K. E., & Quallich, K. (2007). The side effects of inclusion for

students with learning disabilities: The perceptions of practicing school

psychologists. *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *14*(3), 167–

176.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, *1989*(1), 139–167.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme. (2019). *CASP (Qualitative Studies) Checklist.* https://casp-uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CASP-Qualitative-Checklist-2018_fillable_form.pdf

Davies, S. M. B., Howes, A. J., & Farrell, P. T. (2008). Tensions and dilemmas as drivers for change in an analysis of joint working between teachers and educational psychologists. *School Psychology International*, *29*(4), 400–417. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034308096439

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.) (pp. 29–86). SAGE Publications.

Department for Education. (2014a). *The Equality Act 2010 and schools. Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Department for Education. (2014b). *The national curriculum in England. Framework document*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381344/Master_final_national_curriculum_28_Nov.pdf

Department for Education, & Department for Health. (2014). *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Duhaney, L. M. G. (2012). Understanding and addressing barriers to the implementation of inclusive education. In C. Boyle & K. Topping (Eds.), *What works in inclusion?* (pp. 164–175). McGraw-Hill Education.

Dunsmuir, S., Lang, J., & Leadbetter, J. (2015). Current trends in educational psychology supervision in the UK. *Educational and Child Psychology*, *32*(3), 8–21.

Dyson, A. (2005). Philosophy, politics and economics? The story of inclusive education in England. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualizing inclusive education: Evaluating old and new international paradigms* (pp. 63–88). Routledge.

Dyson, A., & Howes, A. J. (2009). Towards an interdisciplinary research agenda for inclusive education. In P. Hick, R. Kershner, & P. Farrell (Eds.), *Psychology for inclusive education: New directions in theory and practice* (pp. 153–164). Routledge.

Eckersley, K., & Deppeler, J. (2013). Mapping the practice of psychologists in schools in Victoria, Australia. *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *30*(2), 157–170. https://doi.org/10.1017/edp.2013.14

Engelbrecht, P. (2004). Changing roles for educational psychologists within inclusive education in South Africa. *School Psychology International*, *25*(1), 20–29. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034304041501

Equality Act 2010. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (2002). Inclusive education: Are there limits? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *17*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250110098980

Farrell, P. T. (2004). School psychologists: Making inclusion a reality for all. *School Psychology International*, *25*(1), 5–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034304041500

Farrell, P. T. (2006). Developing inclusive practices among educational psychologists: Problems and possibilities. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *21*(3), 293–304. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03173417

Farrell, P. T. (2009). The developing role of school and educational psychologists in supporting children, schools and families. *Papeles Del Psicólogico*, *30*(1), 74–85.

Farrell, P. T. (2010). School psychology: Learning lessons from history and moving forward. *School Psychology International*, *31*(6), 581–598. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310386533

Farrell, P. T., & Venables, K. (2009). Can educational psychologists be inclusive? In P. Hick, R. Kershner, & P. T. Farrell (Eds.), *Psychology for inclusive education: New directions in theory and practice,* (pp. 117–126). Routledge.

Finlay, L. (2002). "Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, *12*(4), 531–545.

Fisher, J. M. (2012). *The process of transition*. https://www.businessballs.com/freepdfmaterials/fisher-transition-curve-2012bb.pdf

Forlin, C. (2010). The role of the school psychologist in inclusive education for ensuring quality learning outcomes for all learners. *School Psychology International*, *31*(6), 617–630. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034310386535

Fox, M. (2011). Practice-based evidence – overcoming insecure attachments. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *27*(4), 325–335. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2011.615299

Fox, M. (2015). "What sort of person ought I to be?" – Repositioning EPs in light of the Children and Families Bill (2013). *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *31*(4), 382–396. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2015.1079700

Fox, M., Martin, P., & Green, G. (2007). *Doing practitioner research.* SAGE Publications.

Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, *40*(3), 266–275. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266

Gergen, K. J. (2009). *Relational being: Beyond self and community*. Oxford University Press.

Glazzard, J. (2013). A critical interrogation of the contemporary discourses associated with inclusive education in England. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *13*(3), 182–188. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12018

Goodley, D., & Billington, T. (2017). Critical educational psychology and disability studies. In A. Williams, T. Billington, D. Goodley, & T. Corcoran (Eds.), *Critical educational psychology* (pp. 63–78). John Wiley & Sons.

Göransson, K., & Nilholm, C. (2014). Conceptual diversities and empirical shortcomings – a critical analysis of research on inclusive education.

European Journal of Special Needs Education, *29*(3), 265–280.

https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2014.933545

Gordon, J.-S. (2013). Is inclusive education a human right? *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, *41*(4), 754–767. https://doi.org/10.1111/jlme.12087

Gough, D. (2007). Weight of Evidence: A framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of evidence. *Research Papers in Education*, *22*(2), 213–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671520701296189

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies: A typology of reviews, *Maria J. Grant & Andrew Booth*. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, *26*(2), 91–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *30*(4), 233–252.

Hamre, B., Hedegaard-Sørensen, L., & Langager, S. (2018). Between psychopathology and inclusion: The challenging collaboration between educational psychologists and child psychiatrists. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *22*(6), 655–670. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1395088

Hardman, M., & Worthington, J. (2000). Educational psychologists' orientation to inclusion and assumptions about children's learning. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *16*(3), 349–360. https://doi.org/10.1080/713666082

Harré, R. (2012). Positioning theory: Moral dimensions of social-cultural psychology. In J. Valsiner (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of culture and psychology* (pp. 191–206). Oxford University Press.

Harré, R. (2015). Positioning theory. In K. Tracy (Ed.), *The international Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (1st ed.) (pp. 1–9). John Wiley & Sons.

Harré, R., & Moghaddam, F. M. (2014). Positioning theory. In N. Botzakis & T. Dragonas (Eds.), *The discursive turn in social psychology* (pp. 129–136). Taos Institute Publications.

Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC). (2016). *Standards of conduct, performance and   ethics.* http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004EDFStandardsofconduct,performanceandethics.pdf

Hellawell, B. (2018). *Understanding and challenging the SEND Code of Practice*. SAGE Publications.

Hick, P. (2005). Supporting the development of more inclusive practices using the index for inclusion. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *21*(2), 117–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360500128754

Hick, P., Kershner, R., & Farrell, P. T. (2009). Introduction. In P. Hick, R. Kershner, & P. Farrell (Eds.), *Psychology for inclusive education: New directions in theory and practice* (pp. 1–10). Routledge.

Hodkinson, A. (2019). *Key issues in special educational needs, disability & inclusion (3rd ed.).* SAGE Publications.

Hutchings, M. (2017). Accountability measures: The factory farm version of education. *The Psychology of Education Review*, *41*(1), 3–15.

Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *44*(4), 764–791. https://doi.org/10.2307/2667055

James, N., & Busher, H. (2012). Internet interviewing. In J. Gubrium, J. Holstein, A. Marvasti, & K. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (pp. 177–192). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218403.n12

Janghorban, R., Roudsari, R. L., & Taghipour, A. (2014). Skype interviewing: The new generation of online synchronous interview in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, *9*(1), 24152. https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.24152

Joint Committee on Human Rights. (2009). *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Reservations and Interpretative Declaration. Twelfth Report of Session 2008-089*. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200809/jtselect/jtrights/70/70.pdf

Jones, S. R. (1996). Toward inclusive theory: Disability as social construction. *NASPA Journal*, *33*(4), 347–354.

Kennedy, H. (2011). What is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)? In H. Kennedy, M. Landor, & L. Todd, (Eds.). *Video Interaction Guidance*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kershner, R. (2016). Including psychology in inclusive pedagogy: Enriching the dialogue? *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, *5*(2), 112–139. https://doi.org/10.17583/ijep.2016.2109

Kjær, B., & Dannesboe, K. I. (2019). Reflexive professional subjects: Knowledge and emotions in the collaborations between teachers and educational-psychological consultants in a Danish school context. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *28*(2), 168–185. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2018.1552179

Lambert, N., & Fredrickson, N. (2015). Inclusion for children with special educational needs. How can psychology help? In T. Cline, A. Gulliford, & S. Birch (Eds.), *Educational psychology: Topics in applied psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 108–133). Routledge.

Lansdown, G., Jimerson, S. R., & Shahroozi, R. (2014). Children's rights and school psychology: Children's right to participation. *Journal of School Psychology*, *52*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2013.12.006

Lauchlan, F., & Fadda, R. (2012). The 'Italian model' of full inclusion: Origins and current directions. In C. Boyle & K. Topping (Eds.), *What works in inclusion?* (pp. 31–40). McGraw-Hill Education.

Lauchlan, F., & Greig, S. (2015). Educational inclusion in England: Origins, perspectives and current directions: Inclusive education in England. *Support for Learning*, *30*(1), 69–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12075

Lee, K., & Woods, K. (2017). Exploration of the developing role of the educational psychologist within the context of "traded" psychological services. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *33*(2), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1258545

Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force report. *American Psychologist*, *73*(1), 26–46. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000151

Liang, S., & Fu, Y. (2016). *Otter.ai*. https://otter.ai/

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1988, April 5-9). *Criteria for Assessing Naturalistic Inquiries as Reports [Conference presentation]*. Annual Meeting of the

American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, United

States. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED297007.pdf

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies,

contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S.

Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 97–

128). SAGE Publications.

Lindsay, G. (2007). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive

education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(1),

1–24. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709906X156881

Lomofsky, L., & Green, L. (2004). The impact of inclusion policy on school

psychology practices in South Africa. *Educational and Child Psychology*,

21(4), 31–42.

Lunt, I. (1997). Values of professional groups dealing with children with special

educational needs. In G. Lindsay & D. Thompson (Eds.), *Values into practice

in special education.* (pp. 43–54). David Fulton Publishers.

Lunt, I., & Norwich, B. (2009). Inclusive and effective schools. In P. Hick, R.

Kershner, & P. T. Farrell (Eds.), *Psychology for inclusive education—New

directions in theory and practice.* (pp. 96–107). Routledge.

Masten, W. G., Henry, L., Robertson, H. M., Priest, B. R., Scott, B., Stacks, J.,

Massey, C., Miller, D. C., & Sander, M. (2003). School psychologists'

perceptions of instructional adaptations in inclusive settings. *Learning

Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *12*(2), 57–63.

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (2000). Qualitative research in health care: Assessing quality in qualitative research. *The British Medical Journal*, *320*(7226), 50–52. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.320.7226.50

McNab, I. (2009). Collaborative consultation. In P. Hick, R. Kershner, & P. Farrell (Eds.), *Psychology for inclusive education: New directions in theory and practice* (pp. 139–149). Routledge.

McNamara, C. (n.d.). *General guidelines for conducting research interviews*. https://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm

Mime. (2019). *Inclusion series.* https://www.mimeconsulting.co.uk/inclusionseries/

Mitchell, D. (2005). Introduction: Sixteen propositions on the contexts of inclusive education. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualizing inclusive education: Evaluating old and new international paradigms* (pp. 17–37). Routledge.

Mittler, P. (2005). The global context of inclusive education. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualizing inclusive education: Evaluating old and new international paradigms* (pp. 22–36). Routledge.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *PLoS Medicine*, *6*(7), 109–137.

Moore, J. (2005). Recognising and questioning the epistemological basis of educational psychology practice. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *21*(2), 103–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360500128721

Morse, J. (2018). Reframing rigor in qualitative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.) (pp. 1373–1409). SAGE Publications.

Muscutt, J. (2020). Child rights, disability, school and educational psychology and

    inclusive education. In B. K. Nastasi, S. N. Hart, & S. C. Naser (Eds.),

    International Handbook on Child Rights and School Psychology (pp. 501–

    514). Springer.

Muskens, G. (2013). Inclusion and education in European countries: Methodological

    considerations. *Quality & Quantity*, *47*(1), 237–255.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-011-9514-1

Muthukrisha, N., & Baez, M. (2002). Building an inclusive education and training

    system. What is next for educational psychologists in South Africa?

    Educational and Child Psychology, *19*(2), 24–32.

Nastasi, B. K., & Naser, S. C. (2020a). Conceptual foundations for school

    psychology and child rights advocacy. In B. K. Nastasi, S. N. Hart, & S. C.

    Naser (Eds.), *International Handbook on Child Rights and School Psychology*

    (pp. 22–35). Springer.

Nastasi, B. K., & Naser, S. C. (2020b). Professional development of school

    psychologists as child rights advocates. In B. K. Nastasi, S. N. Hart, & S. C.

    Naser (Eds.), *International Handbook on Child Rights and School Psychology*

    (pp. 145–153). Springer.

National Association of School Psychologists [NASP]. (2020). *The professional*

    standards of the National Association of School Psychologists.

    https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-

    professional-standards-adopted

Nkoma, E. (2018). Perceptions of Zimbabwean trainee/educational psychologists

    regarding the training on their support roles and responsibilities in inclusive

education. *Psychology in the Schools*, *55*(5), 555–572.

https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22128

Nkoma, E., & Hay, J. (2018). Educational psychologists' support roles regarding the

implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. *Psychology in the*

Schools, *55*(7), 850–866. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22147

Norwich, B. (2008). What future for special schools and inclusion? Conceptual and

professional perspectives. *British Journal of Special Education*, *35*(3), 136–

143. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2008.00387.x

Norwich, B. (2017). The future of inclusive education in England: Some lessons from

current experiences of special educational needs. *REACH Journal of Special*

Education in Ireland, *30*(1), 4–21.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge University

Press.

Odom, S. L., & Parrish, T. B. (2001). Who's paying the rising cost of special

education? *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *14*(1), 4–12.

Oyen, K. A., Eklund, K., & von der Embse, N. (2020). The landscape of advocacy in

public schools: The role of school psychologists. *Psychological Services*,

17(S1), 81–85. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000373

Palikara, O., Castro, S., Gaona, C., & Eirinaki, V. (2018). Professionals' views on the

new policy for special educational needs in England: Ideology versus

implementation. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *34*(1), 1–15.

https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2018.1451310

Portelli, J. P., & Koneeny, P. (2018). Inclusive Education: Beyond Popular

Discourses. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *10*(1), 133–144.

Professional Standards Authority. (2016). *Professional identities and regulation: A literature review.* https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/professional-identities-and-regulation---a-literature-review.pdf?sfvrsn=a7e7120_0

Rieser, R. (2012). *Implementing inclusive education: A Commonwealth guide to implementing Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Commonwealth Secretariat.

Rittel, H. W., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy sciences*, 4(2), 155-169.

Robson, C., & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real world research.* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Rose, R. (2010). Understanding inclusion: Interpretations, perspectives and cultures. In R. Rose (Ed.), *Confronting obstacles to inclusion: International responses to developing inclusive education* (pp. 19–24). Routledge. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2012.739362

Sayers, D. (2018). Rights not needs: Changing the legal model for Special Educational Needs (SEN). In K. Runswick-Cole, K. Liddiard, & T. Curran (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies* (pp. 617–642). Palgrave Macmillan.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner.* Ashgate Publishing.

Schulze, J., Winter, L. A., Woods, K., & Tyldesley, K. (2017). Investigating the significance of social justice in educational psychology practice – A systematic literature review. *Educational and Child Psychology, 34*(3), 57–73.

Schulze, J., Winter, L. A., Woods, K., & Tyldsley, K. (2019). An international social justice agenda in school psychology? Exploring educational psychologists'

social justice interest and practice in England. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *29*(4), 377–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2018.1531765

Schumm, J. S., & Vaughn, S. (1991). Making adaptations for mainstreamed students: General classroom teachers' perspectives. *Remedial and Special Education*, *12*(4), 18–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/074193259101200404

Shriberg, D., Bonner, M., Sarr, B. J., Walker, A. M., Hyland, M., & Chester, C. (2008). Social justice through a school psychology lens: Definition and applications. *School Psychology Review*, *37*(4), 17.

Shriberg, D., Brooks, K., & de Oca, J. M. (2020). Child rights, social justice, and professional ethics. In B. K. Nastasi, S. N. Hart, & S. C. Naser (Eds.), *International Handbook on Child Rights and School Psychology* (pp. 37–48). Springer.

Shyman, E. (2015). Toward a globally sensitive definition of inclusive education based in social justice. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *62*(4), 351–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2015.1025715

Slee, R., & Allan, J. (2001). Excluding the included: A reconsideration of inclusive education. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *11*(2), 173–192. https://doi.org/10.1080/09620210100200073

Speight, S. L., & Vera, E. M. (2009). The challenge of social justice for school psychology. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *19*(1), 82–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410802463338

Stobie, I. (2002). Processes of 'change' and 'continuity' in educational psychology-Part II. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *18*(3), 213–237.

Stratford, R. (2000). An analysis of the organisational constraints on educational

psychologists working at a whole school level: The opportunity of inclusion.

Educational and Child Psychology, *17*(1), 86–97.

Sullivan, J. R. (2012). Skype: An appropriate method of data collection for qualitative

interviews? *The Hilltop Review*, *6*(1), 54–60.

Swift, C., & Levin, G. (1987). Empowerment: An emerging mental health technology.

The Journal of Primary Prevention, *8*(1–2), 71–94.

https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01695019

Szulevicz, T., & Tanggaard, L. (2014). Inclusion and budget cuts – The contours of

educational psychology in the marketplace. *Nordic Psychology*, *66*(1), 36–52.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19012276.2014.885762

Topping, K. (2012). Conceptions of inclusion: Widening ideas. In C. Boyle & K.

Topping (Eds.), *What works in inclusion?* (pp. 9–19). McGraw-Hill Education.

Toye, M. K., Wilson, C., & Wardle, G. A. (2019). Education professionals' attitudes

towards the inclusion of children with ADHD: the role of knowledge and

stigma. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *19*(3), 184–196.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (1994).

*The Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on special needs

education: Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education:

Access and quality.* https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

(2020a). *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report*.

https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

(2020b). *Towards inclusion in education: Status, trends and challenges. The*

UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on.

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374246

United Nations (UN). (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/Ch_IV_15.pdf

University of East London (UEL). (2015). *UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics-2015-16*.

https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Documents/Et

hics%20forms/UEL-Code-of-Practice-for-Research-Ethics-2015-16.pdf

University of East London (UEL). (2019). *Research Data Management Policy*.

https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/e565f51a281eac8a6bb72a0358cc954f4

b6932ef93524d39f87df379a8ab3e9a/138022/UEL-Research-Data-

Management-Policy-2019.pdf

Vallier, K. (2021). Neoliberalism. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/neoliberalism/

Van der Aalsvoort, G. M., & Elliott, J. (2007). Inclusion and the role of educational psychologists. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 24(3), 4–7.

Wagner, P. (2017). Consultation as a framework for practice. In B. Kelly, L. M. Woolfson, & J. Boyle (Eds.), *Frameworks for practice in educational psychology: A textbook for trainees and practitioners* (2nd ed.) (pp. 194–216). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Waitoller, F. R. (2020). Why are we not more inclusive? Examining neoliberal selective inclusionism. In C. Boyle, J. Anderson, A. Page, & S. Mavropoulou (Eds.), *Inclusive education: Global issues and controversies* (pp. 89–107). Brill | Sense.

Walker, J., Holloway, I., & Wheeler, S. (2005). Guidelines for ethical review of qualitative research. *Research Ethics*, *1*(3), 90–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/174701610500100304

Warnock, M. (2010). Special educational needs: A new look. In L. Terzi (Ed.), *Special Educational Needs: A new look* (2nd ed.) (pp. 43–65). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology (3rd ed.).* McGraw-Hill Education.

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology & Health*, *15*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302

Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods.* (2nd ed.) (pp. 235–251). SAGE Publications.

Zafeiriou, M. E., & Gulliford, A. (2020). A grounded theory of educational psychologists' mental health casework in schools: Connection, direction and reconstruction through consultation. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *36*(4), 422–442. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2020.1818553

Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory. Psychological, organisational and community levels of analysis. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of Community Psychology* (pp. 43–63). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-4193-6

Appendix A

Key Terms Utilised and Respective Field of Search

Key Terms	Field
educational psycholog* OR school psycholog* AND	Title
role* OR duty* OR job* OR function* OR contribution* OR responsibility* OR impact* OR practice* OR view* OR experience* OR attitude* OR perspective* OR perception* OR belief* AND	All fields
inclusion OR inclusive education OR mainstreaming OR inclusive practice*	All fields

Databases utilised, inclusion criteria applied, number of identified articles and exclusion criteria applied.

Databases	Inclusion criteria	# Articles identified	Manual exclusion criteria	Rationale behind the exclusion criteria

| Academic Search Complete

British Education Index

Child Development & Adolescent Studies

Education Research Complete

ERIC

PsycINFO | From January 2000 to September 2020.

Use of the 'apply related words' and "apply equivalent subjects" options.

Only scholarly (peer reviewed) journals.

Language: English. | 277

108 (after removing duplicates) | Studies focusing on EPs' practice but not on their views or beliefs on inclusion, such as studies on assessment and intervention (e.g. dynamic assessment and report writing), on specific areas of needs (e.g. speech, language and communication needs), and on supporting transitions for specific pupil groups (e.g. post-16 students with SEND) but with no explicit reference to inclusion.

Papers analysing EPs' training programmes but without addressing EPs' views and inclusion. | Different groups of individuals construct their views on educational inclusion from their particular viewpoints, values and life experiences. Therefore, to reach a deep understanding of EPs' views and experiences around the IE of learners with SEND, a narrow focus on this professional group was required. Similarly, investigating the views on the inclusion of different characteristics of children might involve a different set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and experiences, and should therefore be addressed separately. |

Studies focusing on the inclusion of other groups of students (e.g. pupils from minority ethnical backgrounds or LGBT students) and studies focusing on other groups of professionals other than EPs (e.g. teachers) or on parents.

In order to achieve the "best evidence synthesis" (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 102), empirical studies which provided no information on the research methodology were excluded, because this lack of information rendered any attempt to critically evaluating the findings impossible.

Publications not including any form of research or study (e.g. opinion papers and editorials) and empirical studies not reporting information on the study's methodology. These papers have been considered in describing the background for the present study but have not been included in the literature review.

Appendix B

PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram
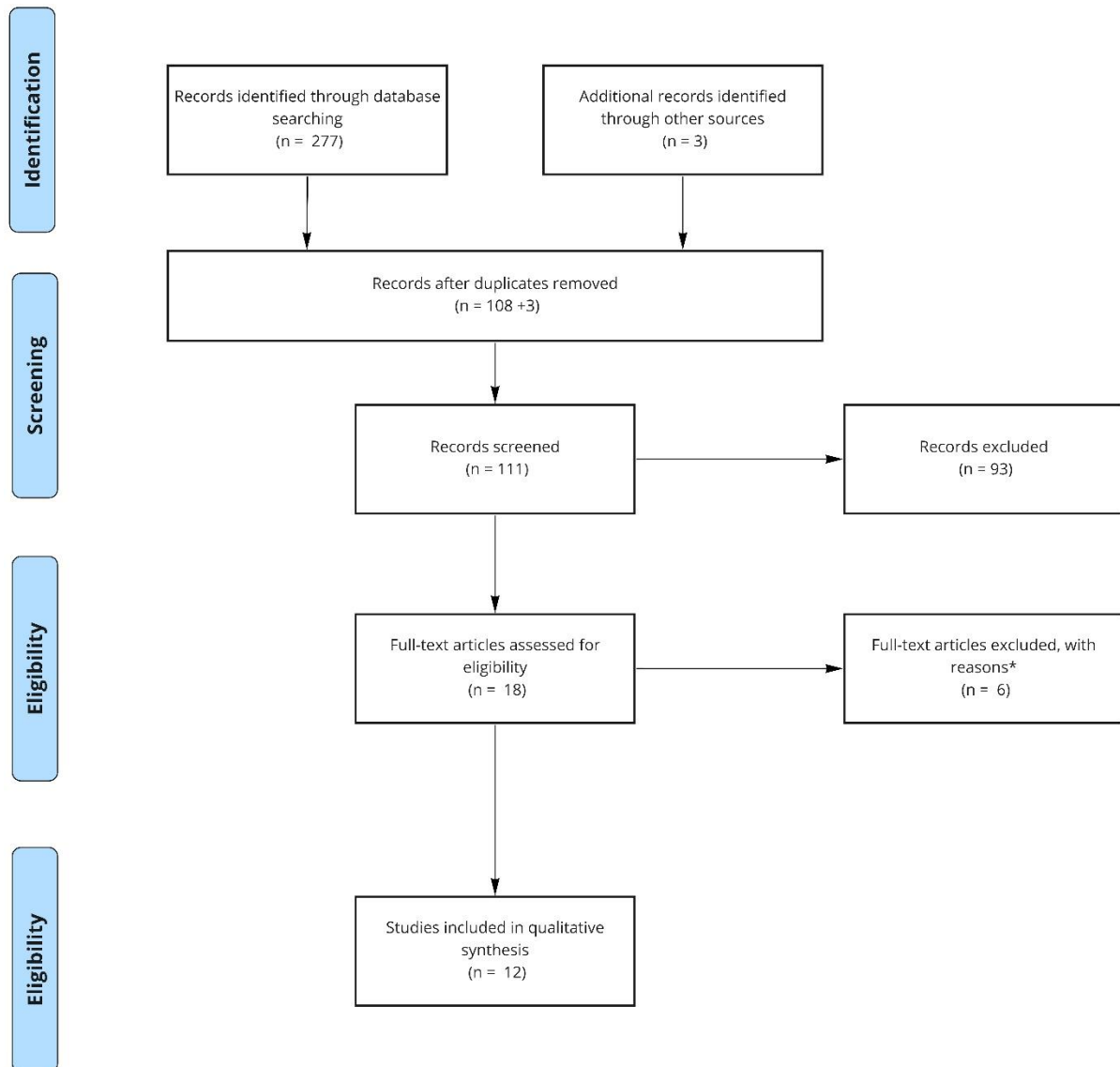
From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

For more information, visit www.prisma-statement.org.

*As outlined in Appendix A

Appendix C

Identified Studies' Main Characteristics and Critical Evaluation

Study	Country	Participants (including sample size and sampling technique)	Positioning and research design (including aims of the study/RQs)	Data collection methods (including questions explored in the interview and questionnaires)	Data analysis and reporting of the findings (including limitations).	Critical evaluation of articles identified as offering sufficient strength to be included in the analysis
Cowan, R. J., McGoey, K. E. & Quallich, K. (2007).	USA	10 school psychologists. Recruitment procedures not clearly stated.	Qualitative study. The epistemological and ontological positions of the authors are not stated. Aims: to investigate school psychologists' views on: - the unforeseen changes to their practice as related to inclusion, - the 'side-effects' of inclusion on the lives of students	School psychologists' views were sought through two focus group sessions. Questions around three domains: - unforeseen changes of the school psychologists' professional role, - unforeseen changes to the lives of the students with SEND,	TA based on guidelines provided by Cook and Tankersley (2007). Limited information on how the themes were identified. Findings clearly presented and organised around the identified themes. Findings provide sufficient information to meet the aims of the study.	CASP: no sufficient information on recruitment (no information on sampling techniques and limited information on inclusion criteria). All participants were practicing in the same geographical area (north-eastern region of a large Midwestern state). Reflexivity not addressed. Limited information on how the themes were derived from the data. It could be argued that framing the effects of inclusion within the 'side

			with SEND and their peers.	- impact of inclusion on the lives of the other students (peers without SEND).	Limitations not addressed by the authors.	effect' category has a negative connotation. Potential social desirability bias – not addressed. **Strength of evidence assessed as: medium.**
Davies, S. M., Howes, A. J., & Farrell, P. (2008).	UK	EPs (number of participants not specified), head teachers (n=6) and teachers (n=32) from six secondary schools (four in Wales and two in England). Purposive sampling.	Qualitative study. Use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Context: two-year action research project aimed at developing inclusive practices in secondary schools. Data for this study was gathered during the first year of the project. Aim of the study: to explore the participants' views on the EP role in working with teachers on action research projects to	Interviews with EPs, interviews with head teachers, and focus groups with teachers. Interview questions not reported.	No information provided. Findings only reported within the discussion section. Not enough information is provided to assess whether the study's aim was fully met. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	CASP: no sufficient information on methodology (limited information on participants, recruitment, and data collection; no information on ethical consideration and data analysis; no mention of reflexivity). EPs' views are only briefly discussed. A deeper analysis of these preliminary findings would have been needed, to achieve a deeper understanding of the EPs' views and to fully appreciate the usefulness of the CHAT framework for the evaluation of the project.

			facilitate teacher engagement in inclusive practice.		Potential social desirability bias – not addressed. **Strength of evidence assessed as: low.**
Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (2002).	UK	60 PEPs – convenience sampling. 32 professionals from different services (teachers, health professionals and social workers) – no information on recruitment.	Mixed methods design. No information on the ontological and epistemological position of the researchers. Aim: to explore the views of a range of professionals in relation to inclusion.	PEPs' views gathered through a questionnaire; other professionals' views collected through four focus groups (eight participants each). No information on the questions asked in the questionnaires. Stimulus questions asked in the focus groups covered: definition of inclusion, advantages and disadvantages of inclusion for professionals and pupils, what would help schools be more inclusive, and	Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from the questionnaire was summarised through a TA – although no in-depth information on the analysis is provided. No information on how the data from the focus group was analysed. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	CASP/weight of evidence: No sufficient information on methodology: - ontological and epistemological positions not stated. - choice of mixed methods design not justified (quantitative and qualitative parts of the study presented like two separate pieces of work). - Choice of participants not justified (PEPs potentially not representative of the whole profession). - No sufficient information on data collection tools and techniques (Was the questionnaire made ad hoc? Information on

				perceived parents' views on inclusive settings.		validity and reliability not provided. A questionnaire form or some examples of the questions would have been helpful). - No mention of ethical issues and of the relationship between researcher and participants; reflexivity not addressed. - No information on data analysis. Potential social desirability bias in the focus groups – not addressed. **Strength of evidence assessed as: low.**
Hamre, B., Hedegaard-Sørensen, L., & Langager, S. (2018).	Den mark	8 EPs No information on recruitment.	Qualitative study Phenomenological approach, Foucault's constructivist stance.	Semi-structured interviews on the EPs' experiences of collaborating with child psychiatrists. The interview questions were not reported.	Discourse analysis. The findings are clearly reported, including relevant interview extracts. However, due to the lack of clarity around aims and RQs, it is difficult to	CASP: clear epistemological and ontological stance, clear rationale for research, but lack of information on recruitment and ethical issues; reflexivity not addressed, not enough information on data analysis. Extensive

				The aims and RQs are not clearly stated.		assess whether the study's purpose was fully met. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	discussion of findings. Valuable contribution and exploration of areas for further research. Potential social desirability bias – not addressed. **Strength of evidence assessed as: medium.**
Hardman, M, & Worthington, J. (2000).	UK	144 EPs from 37 LAs across England and Wales	Quantitative study A positivist ontological position could be inferred but no explicit statements on the researchers' stance have been made. Aim: to examine EPs' views in relation to their: - placement practice for pupils with SEND, - theoretical perspectives and orientations	EPs' attitudes towards inclusion were collected through a postal questionnaire. This assessed their hypothetical ideal placement (Hypothetical Ideal Placement Scale) for a range of pupils with different SEND, and their theoretical orientations (Theoretical Orientation Scale) toward children's learning. Both tools were created ad-hoc and were based on the use of vignettes	No information on data analysis provided. Results clearly presented in a dedicated section, separate from the discussion. Results provide sufficient information to meet the aims of the study. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	Weight of evidence: Well executed and coherent study, quantitative design is fit for purpose. No sufficient methodological information provided to assess weight of evidence C (e.g., epistemological and ontological positions, and RQs are not clearly stated; no information on data analysis). Concerns around ecological validity of the study: the way the EPs' attitudes were investigated (in particular, the use of vignettes to elicit EPs' views on ideal

			underlying their decision-making.	and statements, respectively.		hypothetical placements) might be misleading, as real-life decisions are affected by a number of internal and environmental factors. Therefore, it would be important to replicate these results by utilising a different methodology, in order to provide ecological validity. **Strength of evidence assessed as: medium.**
Hick, P. (2005).	UK	6 EPs + 5 other stakeholders from one school (Head Teacher, SENCo, parent, governor, teaching assistant).	Qualitative study Grounded theory approach. Context: EPs acting as "critical friends" in supporting schools during the pilot project conducted in 1999	Interviews No information on the interview questions.	Grounded theory approach to derive themes. No additional information on data analysis was provided. Only data from the interviews with the EPs was included in the paper (author's rationale for this choice: to identify key professional aspects which might	CASP: Very limited information on methodology, especially around ethical issues, data collection, data analysis and reflexivity. No data extracts are reported. It could be argued that including the views of the other participants who were interviewed (other than the EPs) could have

			to develop the Index for Inclusion. Aim: to explore the participants' views around the EP role as "critical friend" in supporting schools using the Index for Inclusion.		inform future practice). Findings are clearly structured around four themes, but not presented in sufficient depth. No data extracts are reported. Limitations not addressed by the author.	also contributed to inform future EP practice. Potential social desirability bias in interviews – not addressed. **Strength of evidence assessed as: low.**
Kjær, B., & Dannes boe, K. I. (2019).	Den mark	16 PPR (educational psychology advisory service in Denmark) professionals (psychologist s, educational psychologists , speech and hearing consultants etc.) and 17 school staff members (teachers,	Qualitative study Ethnographic approach rooted in educational anthropology and sociology. Foucauldian constructionist perspective. Aim: to gain insight on how interprofessional collaboration is	Ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews. Interview questions not reported.	TA. Identified themes not clearly reported and findings presented only within the discussion. Data extracts included. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	CASP: Sound epistemological and ontological stances. No sufficient information on ethical issues, recruitment, data collection and data analysis. Reflexivity not addressed. Potential social desirability bias – not addressed. EPs' views gathered in conjunction with other professionals' views, therefore the findings are

		pedagogues, etc.).	manifested in practice.		not specific to the EP profession. **Strength of evidence assessed as: medium.**
Masten, W. G., Henry, L., Roberts on, H. M., Priest, B. R., Scott, B., Stacks, J., ... & Martin, S. (2003)	USA	59 school psychologists	Quantitative exploratory study. Aim: to assess the perception of school psychologists towards instructional adaptations in inclusive classrooms (this refers to the type of advice given to classroom teachers). . RQ: "what are the perceptions of school psychologists in the areas of instructional adaptations that make an educationally important difference	Use of the Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (AEI) (Schumm & Vaughn, 1991). This is a survey investigating users' perceptions around effectiveness and use of instructional adaptations. Information on the psychometric properties of the instrument was included.	Descriptive and inferential statistics. No information on the analysis was provided. Results clearly reported and fully answering the RQ. Limitation identified by the authors: small sample size.	Weight of evidence: - A: well executed, coherent and rigorous study - B: fit for purpose - C: Methodology clearly described in the paper, including psychometric properties of the tool used, procedures followed during recruitment, data collection and data analysis. However, the data analysis is not explained in sufficient detail (more information on the factor analysis would have been helpful). No mention of ethical issues. Findings are clearly reported. Limitations are mentioned. However, areas for future

			in students' performance (effectiveness) and actual implementation of various instructional adaptations (use)?" (Masten et al., 2003, p. 58).			research are not addressed. - D: valuable study, sound methodology although some key methodological aspects are not addressed in the paper. Modest contribution to the knowledge base due to small sample size, which limits the possibility to generalise findings. **Strength of evidence assessed as: medium.**
Nkoma, E. & Hay, J. (2018).	Zimb abwe	13 TEPs/EPs + 3 former PEPs. Criterion sampling. Detailed information on the demographic s of the	Qualitative study. Phenomenological approach. Aim: to seek in-depth information on EPs' role in implementing IE practices in Zimbabwe. Central RQ: what meaning do EPs ascribe toward their support role in the	In-depth phenomenological interviews based on open-ended questions aimed at eliciting the participants' descriptions of the situation in which they experienced the phenomenon (examples of these questions are not provided). Monthly and annual reports	Phenomenological analysis following Moustakas' approach. The monthly/annual reports were used to triangulate the data from each interview, to provide credibility to the findings. Member checking was also carried out.	CASP: excellent research, clear statement of the problem, clear rationale and RQs, well-described and rigorous methodology. Information on potential bias and reflexivity is provided. More information on the ontological and epistemological positions would have been helpful to fully appreciate the approach taken.

		participants is included.	implementation of IE? Secondary RQs: - what are EPs' views on IE? - What are their experiences related to their support roles in implementing IE? - How do these experiences affect rendering of support services?	from the participants were used as reference material (no additional information on the nature of these reports was provided).	The findings are clearly reported and organised around three major themes, which match the RQs. Several interview extracts are reported for each theme. Limitations reported by the authors: findings limited to the views of EPs and not addressing other stakeholders. Findings relate to the experience of EPs in only three provinces and cannot be considered representative of the national context.	Social desirability bias in interviews might be a potential limitation. **Strength of evidence assessed as: high.**
Nkoma, E. (2018).	Zimb abwe	13 TEPs/EPs. Purposive sampling.	Qualitative study. Phenomenological approach. Aim: to understand TEPs'/EPs'	Focus groups using open-ended questions aimed at eliciting the participants' descriptions of the	Inductive TA following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach.	CASP: excellent research, clear statement of the problem, clear rationale and RQs (although these were phrased as interview questions [e.g., "what

		Detailed information on the demographics of the participants is included.	experiences and how they learn about their role as related to IE in Zimbabwe. RQs: - which documents/policies guide EPs' role? - How do EPs learn about their role as related to IE? - What are EPs' views on their training? - What are EPs' views on the AHPCZ 2016 regulations?[6]	situation in which they experienced the phenomenon (examples of these questions are not provided).	Member checking was carried out. The findings are clearly reported and organised around five major themes, which match the RQs. A thematic map including themes and subthemes is provided. Several interview extracts are reported for each theme. Limitations were not identified by the author.	policies guide your role?], which might be confusing for the reader), well-described and rigorous methodology. Limited information on potential bias and reflexivity. Social desirability bias in focus groups might be a potential limitation. **Strength of evidence assessed as: high.**
Szulevicz, T., & Tanggaard, L. (2014).	Den mark	1 PEP and 7 EPs within one EPS. Purposive sampling.	Qualitative study Phenomenological approach. Ontological and epistemological	Semi-structured interviews following an interview guide provided by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). The	Transcriptions of interviews ordered and coded according to the phenomenological approach as	CASP: sufficient depth of information provided on background and aims, recruitment and data collection. Ontological and epistemological positions

---

[6] These regulations set the standards for EP training and professional practice in Zimbabwe.

positions of the researchers not explicitly stated. Aim: to investigate the economic contours of EPs' professional experiences in light of the move to consultative and inclusive practices.	interview questions addressed the following levels: - personal (educational background and training in consultation), - organisational (characteristics of the specific EPS), - structural/cultural (national educational policy and local policies). In addition, two of the EPs (informants) were also observed during their day-to-day work for two days a week over a period of three months.	described by Giorgi (1994). No mention of how the data derived from the observations were used. Findings organised around two main themes. The finding section involves a presentation of the findings alongside some data extracts, as well as a description of contextual information, a narrative of the informants' experiences and some of the authors' critical considerations. This approach does not facilitate a clear understanding of the main findings. Limitations not addressed by the authors.	of the researchers not explicitly stated. No sufficient information on data analysis. Lack of clarity in reporting the findings (potential confusion between themes and RQs). No mention of ethical issues and reflexivity. The relationship between researcher and participants has not been addressed. Good discussion of contribution made, and some valuable reflection points for the EP profession are raised. However, there is no reference to areas where new research is needed. Social desirability bias in interviews and observations is a potential limitation. **Strength of evidence assessed as: low.**

Toye, K., Wilson, C., & Wardle, G. A. (2019)	UK	135 education professionals, including 31 EPs. Purposive sampling.	Quantitative. Aims: - to compare differences in knowledge, stigmatised beliefs on ADHD and attitudes towards inclusion of children with ADHD among different professionals in Scotland. - To examine the relationship between knowledge, attitudes and stigma (do knowledge and stigma towards ADHD predict attitudes towards inclusion?).	Questionnaires: - adaptation of the Multidimensional Attitudes towards Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) (Mahat, 2008). - ADHD Stigma Questionnaire (ASQ) (Kellison, et al., 2010). - Knowledge about Attention Deficit Disorders Scale (KADDS) (West et al., 2005). Information on the psychometric properties of the questionnaires was provided.	Descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical analysis and the results are fully described in the paper. The results provide sufficient information to meet the research's aims. Limitations addressed by the authors: use of self-report measures (social desirability). Results might not be generalised to other contexts outside of Scotland due to differences among education systems.	Weight of evidence framework: - A: well executed, coherent and rigorous study - B: fit for purpose - C: methodologically robust. Methodology clearly described in the paper, including ethical issues, psychometric properties of the tools used, procedures followed during recruitment, data collection and data analysis. Findings are clearly reported. Limitations and areas for future research are mentioned, alongside a discussion of the implications for practice. - D: sound, potentially replicable study, which made a valuable contribution to the knowledge base.

	Potential limitations related to the use of self-report measures (social desirability). Findings related only to ADHD – more studies needed to be able to generalise to SEND in general. **Strength of evidence assessed as: high.**

Appendix D

TA of the Findings of the Identified Studies.

References	Findings
Cowan, R. J., McGoey, K. E. & Quallich, K. (2007).	Unexpected changes in the EP roles related to: - increased direct involvement in educational programming: increased knowledge of the curriculum, more direct involvement in intervention, more direct involvement in placement. - new applications of consultation: educating parents and teachers about inclusion and relevant legislation (LRE), supporting others through their personal and professional adjustment to inclusive practices. - increased advocacy for children and parents: policing the implementation of inclusion and relevant legislation (LRE), supporting parents and students. The main side-effects of inclusion on the lives of students were reported to be a) students with SEND resisting the return to the general education classroom b) enhanced relationships between students with SEND and their peers and decrease in bullying
Davies, S. M., Howes, A. J., & Farrell, P. (2008).	EPs reported difficulties in changing professional practice from individual casework to systemic work, particularly when - dealing with the pressure of meeting casework-related deadlines and performance indicators while also trying to make capacity for systems work - they had to persuade LAs and schools that systemic work should be prioritised during the allocation of EP time. They also reported difficulties in the collaboration with teachers: - hostility towards the EP in the role of facilitator of an action research project (perceived lack of expert guidance from the teachers) - lack of experience in the role of the facilitator from some of the EPs, who claimed they would have wanted more support with facilitating teacher groups.
Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (2002).	PEPs' views: - concerns around increasing exclusions of pupils with SEN from mainstream schools - mainly weak forms of inclusion - CYP with SEMH issues and severe learning difficulties were the most difficult to include

	Six obstacles to a fully inclusive education system: attitudes and beliefs held by staff, resourcing difficulties, LA structures, parental choice and tribunal decisions, social reasons, limitations of school provision.
Hamre, B., Hedegaard-Sørensen, L., & Langager, S. (2018).	Relevant challenges were reported by the participants (three main themes): - troubleshooting culture and psychiatric dominance - role of EPs as facilitators in the school context - criticism of diagnostic culture.
Hardman, M, & Worthington, J. (2000).	The majority of the participants were supportive of inclusion and adopted a constructivist stance toward the nature and the process of children's learning. Behaviourist approach also mentioned. The overall predominant preferred placement for children with SEN was mainstream school with support (including CYP with SEMH needs), but special schools were the first choice for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities while mainstream units were preferred for students with hearing and visual impairments.
Hick, P. (2005).	Four main themes were identified: drawing on core values, engagement and challenge, child-centred focus, and permeating practice.
Kjær, B., & Dannesboe, K. I. (2019).	Insights on the impact that the move towards consultative work in response to the Danish inclusion agenda has had on school staff and the educational psychologists themselves, as well as on their collaboration. move towards consultative work as an answer to inclusion agenda and in recognition of economic cutbacks. Shift from expert to facilitator role: consultation focused on empowering staff through reflection and emotion management rather than on individual children. Challenges: resistance from staff, lack of confidence, EPs' own emotional responses
Masten, W. G., Henry, L., Robertson, H. M., Priest,	- belief that appropriate support can be provided in inclusive settings – positive attitude towards inclusion - 'providing reinforcement and encouragement' and 'monitoring students' understanding of directions and assigned tasks' were rated as most effective and used strategies

B. R., Scott, B., Stacks, J., ... & Martin, S. (2003)	- other highly used strategies were 'adapting classroom management strategies that are effective with mainstreamed students' and 'communicating with special education teachers'. - 'adapting grades or scoring criterion' was rated as the least effective and used strategy - other strategies which involve direct work with the child also received low ratings – potentially because more importance is given to consultation - emphasis on teaching strategies and environmental adaptations rather than using alternative materials and evaluation procedures - helping students deal with feelings not seen as a priority - significance difference between ratings of effectiveness and use indicating that school psychologists perceive most strategies as effective but use them less often (maybe because of concerns around how these might be received by educators?)
Nkoma, E. & Hay, J. (2018).	Three main themes were identified: - diverse views of inclusion (however, the majority of EPs believed full inclusion is "theoretical and not practical"), - critical roles (capacity development of teachers, assessment and placement, advocacy and consultation) and successful and unsuccessful experiences in implementing inclusive education - barriers towards the implementation of inclusive education (negative student and teacher attitudes, inaccessible environments, class size, curriculum and examinations, and limited resources).
Nkoma, E. (2018).	Main themes: policies that guide TEPs' and EPs' inclusive education practices, how they learn about their support roles, views about the training and the national regulations. Perceived solutions to improve training (e.g., decentralising workshops – very specific to Zimbabwean training system).
Szulevicz, T., & Tanggaard, L. (2014).	EPs' conditions for adopting a consultative approach and facilitating inclusive education are hugely affected by budget cuts in educational funding. Nonetheless, these budget limitations could also constitute an opportunity to change existing practices and prioritise the development of inclusive learning environments (inclusion propelled by financial imperatives as special schools are less cost-effective than mainstream schools).
Toye, K., Wilson, C., & Wardle, G. A. (2019)	EPs have greater knowledge of ADHD, less stigma and more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with ADHD, compered to other education professionals. Knowledge of ADHD is predictive of attitudes towards inclusion. Stigmatised beliefs mediate the relationship between knowledge and attitudes. Implications for EP practice around providing training on ADHD to school staff.

Tentative themes:

- EPs' views on inclusion – values and attitudes.
- EPs' views on their role – EP practice
- EPs' views on barriers to inclusion – challenges
- EPs' views on ways forward – opportunities/next steps[7]
- EPs' views on the impact of inclusion on students

---

[7] Please note that, in the final stage of the TA, this tentative theme was changed into a subtheme of the 'EPs' views on challenges and barriers to inclusion' theme.

Example of Checking the Tentative Themes Against the Findings Section of Each Paper.

EP ROLE (handwritten margin note)

School: Psychologists' Perceptions of the Side Effects of Inclusion

and their families. Two themes emerged under this category: (a) policing the implementation of inclusion and an LRE continuum, and (b) supporting parents and students.

Theme a (handwritten margin note)

Policing the implementation of inclusion and an LRE continuum. One of the most powerful statements related to this theme under the broad category of increased advocacy for students with learning disabilities and their parents came from a school psychologist who described herself as a *special education policeman.*

> You're really policing, I think, the whole situation... the building...you're policing the whole administration in that building...and not in a bad sense...You're trying to make sure that you get the right services for the child, and they don't just stick them in a room with 50 other kids with learning disabilities and call it inclusion.

The participants shared multiple related examples of times when they had approached administrators, including principals and directors of special education, to either (a) inform them of the need to do something different for a student who was not experiencing success, or (b) remind them of LRE within the context of making a programming or placement decision for a particular student. The participants expressed that this role of *policing* extends beyond interactions with administrators. Many of them shared examples of times when they approached teachers and related services personnel to remind them of the *spirit* of inclusion as interpreted through LRE.

Although many practitioners communicated that this role allows them to advocate for children with learning disabilities, the group also communicated that it can be frustrating to spend energy *policing* others regarding compliance with special education legislation. With regard to the time and energy invested in this role, one of the practitioners said to a peer.

> I think you care passionately about kids and want it to work...So you make it work...and make others step it up who are not making it work...And maybe inclusion made that harder because you have more players and you have more to do to make it work.

Theme b (handwritten margin note)

Supporting parents and students. The group of school psychologists spent much time talking about how their new roles resulting from inclusion have allowed them to work even more closely with and advocate for parents. As related to his knowledge and skills about inclusive educational programming for students with learning disabilities one of the school psychologists stated.

> The parents have started to trust me. They want me to come to every IEP meeting that they have because they look at me as their advocate, or someone who knows what he is doing in all of this....

The participants stated that in addition to gaining the trust of parents, they have assumed roles that allow them to act on parents' behalf within the context of educational programming. For example, they sometimes act as substitute treatment agents for parents who are unable to implement interventions at home related to school-based performance. One school psychologist stated.

> We have formed a group at school who could be the parents so the kids can turn in their behavioral chart to one of us....You have to do something for the kids...after a while you decide that parents aren't able to participate for whatever reason...and the kid still deserves to have that and it's quite powerful...even if it isn't their parents.

This message was communicated within the context of school psychologists recognizing that because not all parents can participate in special education at the same level, it may be necessary to act as an agent for the parent(s), which ultimately benefits the students. With regard to advocating for students with learning disabilities, participants communicated that it is often necessary to take into account both skills and personality when it comes to making matches between students and teachers. One school psychologist recalled the following incident:

> I went to the principal before school started and just told him, this is not going to work, these two [the teacher and student] are not going to get along...It's going to be wrong from day one, so why don't you do something now before classes start...like move him into another home room.

This message was communicated within the context of the importance of not only considering the educational needs of the student, but the skills, personality, and willingness of various general education teachers to make accommodations that lend to successful inclusion for students with disabilities. Advocacy actions like these are not uncommon for school psychologists, as validated by the report of many participants.

Side-Effects of Inclusion on the Lives of Students with Learning Disabilities and Their Peers

VIEWS ON IMPACT ON STUDENTS (handwritten margin note)

Side Effects Associated with Students with Learning Disabilities

Although there was consensus among focus group participants that inclusion has resulted in major changes in the lives of students with learning disabilities, participants indicated that there were a limited number of *unanticipated* changes (i.e., side-effects) for these students. As such, there was less discussion and only one theme emerged: students with learning disabilities may resist returning to the general education classroom.

A review of the data indicates that although school

Learning Disabilities   172   *Volume 14, Number 3*

Appendix E

Interview Content

Topic	Interview questions
Views on inclusion	How would you define educational inclusion?
Values	How, if at all, is educational inclusion important? Do you think it is important for the EP profession? What values underpin your views of inclusive education?
Perceptions around students' views	From your experience, what are children with SEND's and their peers' views on inclusion?
EPs' role in promoting inclusive education	How, if at all, are EPs currently involved in promoting educational inclusion?
Potential challenges	What might be influencing EPs' views and practice around inclusion? What are the potential barriers or challenges EPs face in working towards inclusion? (EPs' values, legislation, school ethos, parental views, other people's views?)
EPs' experiences of inclusion in their everyday practice	What are your professional experiences of promoting inclusive practices in your everyday work? What do you find challenging/difficult? What has been working (strengths)?
EPs' role in promoting inclusive education in the future	Which role should EPs play in working towards inclusion in the future? Should EPs do anything different?

Appendix F

Interview structure

Interview phase	Content
Introduction	Researcher introduces herself (background, training, and reasons for undertaking this research).
	Purpose and nature of research are reiterated.
	Further assurance around confidentiality.
	Information on how data will be managed (audio-recorded and anonymously stored).
	Participants are asked for permission to audio-record the interview (even if already given through the informed consent form).
	Participants are reassured that the interview is about their views and experiences and that there are no right or wrong answers.
	Participants are encouraged to interrupt and ask for clarifications at any time.
'Warm-up'	Introducing questions around:
	- basic demographic information
	- professional experience.
Main body of interview	Main interview questions.
'Cool-off'	Space for participants to raise relevant issues which have not already been covered.
Closure	Researcher thanks the participants.
	Researcher gives the participants additional opportunity to ask questions about the research.
	Researcher asks the participants whether they are interested in receiving a summary of the findings, after research completion.
	Researcher gives the participants information on how and when they will receive feedback on the findings.
	Researcher mentions debrief letter.

Appendix G

Debrief Letter

Thank you very much for taking part in this research, your time is truly appreciated!

Below is some additional information should you have any questions, concerns or should you wish to withdraw from the research.

What will happen to the information that you provided?

What I will do with the material you provided will involve:

- Your personal contact details and the audio recording will be securely stored using encryption and password access.
- Your name and any other identifying information you provided will be anonymised, so that it will not be linked to the data (no name will be used at all in the transcription of the recording nor in the write-up)
- The anonymised data will be used in the write-up of my thesis and may be published in academic journal and included in presentations in relevant forums to inform the future development of the EP profession.
- Your contact details and interview recordings will be destroyed after the completion of the write-up phase.
- The anonymised data will be kept for use in future publications and potential further research for up to three years.
- Access to a summary of the findings will be made available upon request.

What if you want to withdraw?

There is a three-week window following your involvement where you can request that all or part of what you shared is omitted from the analysis. You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. However, if you withdraw, I will reserve the right from 21 days after your participation to use fully anonymised data extracts from your interview up until the point of my analysis of the data.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (Alice Zaniolo) on a.zaniolo.research@gmail.com.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor Dr Helena Bunn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London, E15 4LZ, email: H.Bunn@uel.ac.uk.

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk

Appendix H

Invitation Letter Circulated on EPNET

Subject: Qualitative study aimed at exploring the views and experiences of educational psychologists around inclusive education.

Hello,

My name is Alice Zaniolo and I am a second-year trainee educational psychologist at the University of East London (UEL). I am planning to interview EPs for my thesis, in order to collect their views around inclusive education. As I am hoping to gather a variety of perspectives, everyone is welcome to participate, regardless of their gender, years of experience, geographical location and ethnical background. The only inclusion criterion is that you are an educational psychologist registered with the HCPC. The interview will last around 30-40 minutes and can be conducted either through videoconferencing platforms or phone calls.

If you are interested in taking part, please respond privately to this email and I will send you the participant information sheet and consent form. I will also be happy to answer any question you may have.

Thank you for your time, it is very much appreciated.

Kind regards

Alice Zaniolo

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

My name is Alice Zaniolo. I am a trainee educational psychologist in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology. As part of my studies, I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

I am conducting a study aimed at exploring the views and experiences of educational psychologists (EPs) around inclusive education.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to participate?

You have been invited to participate in my research as I am looking to involve between 12 and 15 qualified EPs. I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are quite free to decide whether or not to participate and should not feel coerced.

What will your participation involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in a confidential interview conducted by myself and lasting for about an hour. You will be free to choose whether you prefer the interview to be conducted in person (in the London area, location and time to be agreed) or over the phone, or through a video-conferencing tool (such as Skype). The interview will be audio recorded. The interview questions will be addressing your professional views and experiences around the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs and disability.

I will not be able to pay you for participating in my research, but your participation would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic

Your taking part will be safe and confidential

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times. You will not be identified by the data collected, on any written material resulting from the data collected, or in any write-up of the research. You do not have to answer all questions asked during the interview and can stop your participation at any time.

What will happen to the information that you provide?

What I will do with the material you provide will involve securely storing your personal contact details and the audio recording using encryption and password access, anonymising your name and any other identifying information you may provide, so that it will not be linked to the data (no name will be used at all in the transcription of the recording nor in the write-up). The anonymised data will be used in the write-up of my thesis and may be published in academic journal and included in presentations in relevant forums to inform the future development of the EP profession. Your contact details and interview recordings will be destroyed after the completion of the write-up phase, while the anonymised data will be kept for use in future publications and potential further research.

What if you want to withdraw?

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alice Zaniolo: u1724884@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor Helena Bunn. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: H.Bunn@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk

Appendix I

Evidence of Ethical Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Paula Booth

SUPERVISOR: **Helena Bunn**

STUDENT: Alice Zaniolo

Course: Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

Title of proposed study: Educational Psychologists and inclusive education in the UK

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is <u>not</u> required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made <u>before</u> the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

This study looks like an interesting and valuable project. The amendments are minor. Please see below: 1.   I would be grateful if you could fill in a risk assessment, particularly as you may be visiting participants on location. 2.   I am interested as to why you have given a 3 year window before the anonymised data is destroyed. I thought that could be stored for 10 years, in line with Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance before being destroyed. 3.   Can you provide a tick box consent form for those participants that are being interviewed online.   Thank you Paula

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments *(for students)*:

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature): Alice Zaniolo*

Student number: 1724884

Date: 27.03.2020

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES / **NO**

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the <u>researcher</u> to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐   HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐   MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☐   LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

As above,. The risks have been considered but I think it would be pragmatic to fill in a risk assessment form.

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*:   Paula Booth

Date: 23.3.20

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix J

Phase 1 of the TA: Sample of One of the Interview Transcripts

Researcher 2:23	And how, if at all, is educational inclusion important?
EP 2:35	Well, I think from a social justice perspective, it's important that we ensure that those people who, well, I think that everyone is different. So, making sure that those who have perhaps more pronounced differences are able to experience success and are therefore able to be see education as meaningful and therefore have the best opportunities in life to secure a job or to secure a meaningful existence. I think education forms the kind of foundations for how we start to understand the world and interact with the world in a meaningful way. So, if inclusion is a priority for school and for communities, then it is sending a message to young people that they in their life have value.
Researcher 3:32	Yeah. You mentioned social justice. And I was wondering if you'd like to tell me a bit more about what values underpin your views of inclusive education?
EP 3:49	Yeah, well, I guess I'm thinking back to my *[university]* days and on our Ed psych doctorate, one of the first activities that we thought about was the values which underpin our own practice. And so that was a chance to reflect on, on, on that, really on, on what is most important to us. Were you asking about my specific values and how that relates to my view of the importance of inclusion? Okay. So, yeah, the va, the framework which *[university]* put across was relating to values and health, the health care professions, so the importance of social justice and autonomy, and beneficence and

non, non-maleficence. So, those are the kind of, the four areas that I kind of have in mind as my own framework for thinking about values in the healthcare profession. So, yeah, from a social justice perspective, I think inclusion, that links to inclusion by making, yeah, making sure that's all of the, the wider issues in society are considered to make sure that whatever, at whatever level whether that's the individual and the community, in the kind of macro microsystems, however, they, I'm thinking about Bronfenbrenner's model when I'm talking about this, thinking about how at those different levels, how people may experience social injustice, and therefore may put them at a disadvantage to be included. So, I guess, being aware for myself being aware of all the different levels at which there may be potential for social injustice and trying to think about that, and address that in my work, but also promoting autonomy. So, thinking about how people can be included by feeling empowered to do things by themselves and, yeah, building capacity. So, either helping schools and parents to help support building capacity for young people, or working with young people directly to help them build capacity for themselves. And then in terms of beneficence and non-maleficence, in terms of inclusion, well, I guess, just ensuring that in, in my own work that I'm trying to promote positive change, too, and kind of having in mind the idea of how young people are included in different ways, whether that is in kind of more direct ways to learning, like, whether they need certain adjustments made in the classroom, or whether that's more relating to the hidden curriculum, like things in the playground to access social factors, you know, making friends, friends, social skills, that kind of thing. Effectively, like I guess I'm trying to say that inclusion is everything. Yeah, I guess, I guess it's kind of a way, a kind of a way of thinking about ensuring that no young people are being forgotten about and ensuring that all support is given relative to the needs of the individuals. I hope that wasn't too long. A very long answer.

Researcher 7:30	No, it was very interesting. You, you talked about this already, but I'm gonna ask you the question anyway, and see if you want to add something, or you can also say, I feel like I've said enough about this. So, the question would be, we're still thinking about how important inclusive education is. And if you think about the EP profession as a whole, do you think that educational inclusion is important for the EP profession?
EP 8:15	I think it is fundamental to the EP profession. I think that, I think that local authorities well not just local authorities, I think that the kind of, the government and local authorities hire educational psychologists because they want to make sure that young people's needs are understood. And so that therefore relative adjustments can be made so that they can be included in society. And I guess that has economic benefits that we make sure that people are able to be effective members of society to contribute to the economy, but I also hope from a kind of, you know, overall British values perspective, that we want to make sure that we give all people of this country an opportunity to, again, have their needs met in school so that they understand themselves, others understand them, and they can therefore have the best opportunities in life. So, I think, yeah, from the kind of government perspective, that is what EPs are, is, is hoped that they will do. And I think a lot of EPs themselves get into this line of work because they feel passionately about these, these subjects and want to do their little part in the bigger picture.
Researcher 9:38	Yeah, you had said just just a couple of minutes ago that inclusion is everything, really, you said, to summarise what you were saying, but I didn't want to make any assumptions to, you kind of restated that it

	is it is fundamental for the profession as well. And you took a stance also from, from kind of the societal and government point of view.
EP 10:08	Yeah, yeah, I guess, I guess when I was saying that, quote, inclusion is everything I was thinking that in terms of Yeah, specifically our work in schools. So yeah, that was a correct interpretation.
Researcher 10:26	And is there anything else you want to add on this? Or would you like me to move to the next question?
EP 10:33	Let's, let's think about the next question.

Appendix K

Phase 2 of the TA: Extract of One of the Coding Tables

EP 2:35	
Well, I think from a social justice perspective, it's important that we ensure that those people who, well, I think that everyone is different. So, making sure that those who have perhaps more pronounced differences are able to experience success and are therefore able to be see education as meaningful and therefore have the best opportunities in life to secure a job or to secure a meaningful existence. I think education forms the kind of foundations for how we start to understand the world and interact with the world in a meaningful way. So, if inclusion is a priority for school and for communities, then it is sending a message to young people that they in their life have value.	Social justice
	Everyone is different
	Enabling CYP with high level of needs to succeed
	Access to meaningful education
	Best opportunities in life
	Securing a job
	Meaningful existence [Preparation for adulthood]
	Education is key for a meaningful life
	Making students feel valued
Researcher 3:32	

Yeah. You mentioned social justice. And I was wondering if you'd like to tell me a bit more about what values underpin your views of inclusive education?

EP 3:49	
Yeah, well, I guess I'm thinking back to my *[university]* days and on our Ed psych doctorate, one of the first activities that we thought about was the values which underpin our own practice. And so that was a chance to reflect on, on, on that, really on, on what is most important to us. Were you asking about my specific values and how that relates to my view of the importance of inclusion? Okay. So, yeah, the va, the framework which *[university]* put across was relating to values and health, the health care professions, so the importance of social justice and autonomy, and beneficence and non, non-maleficence. So, those are the kind of, the four areas that I kind of have in mind as my own framework for thinking about values in the healthcare profession. So, yeah, from a social justice perspective, I think inclusion, that links to inclusion by making, yeah, making sure that's all of the, the wider issues in society are considered to make sure that whatever, at whatever level whether that's the individual and the	Social justice

Thinking systematically about disadvantage and exclusion at different levels

Autonomy and building capacity

Building capacity for YP by empowering them to do things themselves.

Building capacity by empowering parents & schools

Beneficence & non-maleficence

Promoting positive change |

community, in the kind of macro microsystems, however, they, I'm thinking about Bronfenbrenner's model when I'm talking about this, thinking about how at those different levels, how people may experience social injustice, and therefore may put them at a disadvantage to be included. So, I guess, being aware for myself being aware of all the different levels at which there may be potential for social injustice and trying to think about that, and address that in my work, but also promoting autonomy. So, thinking about how people can be included by feeling empowered to do things by themselves and, yeah, building capacity. So, either helping schools and parents to help support building capacity for young people, or working with young people directly to help them build capacity for themselves. And then in terms of beneficence and non-maleficence, in terms of inclusion, well, I guess, just ensuring that in, in my own work that I'm trying to promote positive change, too, and kind of having in mind the idea of how young people are included in different ways, whether that is in kind of more direct ways to learning, like, whether they need certain adjustments made in the classroom, or whether that's more relating to the hidden curriculum,

Indirect ways to promote inclusion (addressing the 'hidden curriculum')

Inclusion is everything

Inclusion as a way of thinking

No one is forgotten

Support is appropriate to the needs

Direct ways to promote inclusion (e.g., adjustments to learning)

like things in the playground to access social factors, you know, making friends, friends, social skills, that kind of thing. Effectively, like I guess I'm trying to say that inclusion is everything. Yeah, I guess, I guess it's kind of a way, a kind of a way of thinking about ensuring that no young people are being forgotten about and ensuring that all support is given relative to the needs of the individuals. I hope that wasn't too long. A very long answer.

Researcher 7:30

No, it was very interesting. You, you talked about this already, but I'm gonna ask you the question anyway, and see if you want to add something, or you can also say, I feel like I've said enough about this. So, the question would be, we're still thinking about how important inclusive education is. And if you think about the EP profession as a whole, do you think that educational inclusion is important for the EP profession?

EP 8:15

I think it is fundamental to the EP profession. I think that, I think that local authorities well not just local authorities, I think that the kind of, the government	Inclusion is fundamental to the EP profession.

and local authorities hire educational psychologists because they want to make sure that young people's needs are understood. And so that therefore relative adjustments can be made so that they can be included in society. And I guess that has economic benefits that we make sure that people are able to be effective members of society to contribute to the economy, but I also hope from a kind of, you know, overall British values perspective, that we want to make sure that we give all people of this country an opportunity to, again, have their needs met in school so that they understand themselves, others understand them, and they can therefore have the best opportunities in life. So, I think, yeah, from the kind of government perspective, that is what EPs are, is, is hoped that they will do. And I think a lot of EPs themselves get into this line of work because they feel passionately about these, these subjects and want to do their little part in the bigger picture.

EPs hired to ensure CYP's needs are understood and relative adjustments are made.

Enabling CYP to become effective members of society.

Economic benefits: contributing to the economy in adult life.

Meeting the CYP's needs.

Helping CYP understand themselves.

Helping others understand CYP's needs.

Access to best opportunities in life.

EPs feel passionately about inclusion.

EPs want to make a difference.

Researcher 9:38

Yeah, you had said just just a couple of minutes ago that inclusion is everything, really, you said, to summarise what you were saying, but I didn't want to make any assumptions to, you kind of restated that it is it is fundamental for the profession as well. And you took a stance also from, from kind of the societal and government point of view.

EP 10:08

Yeah, yeah, I guess, I guess when I was saying that, quote, inclusion is everything I was thinking that in terms of Yeah, specifically our work in schools. So yeah, that was a correct interpretation.
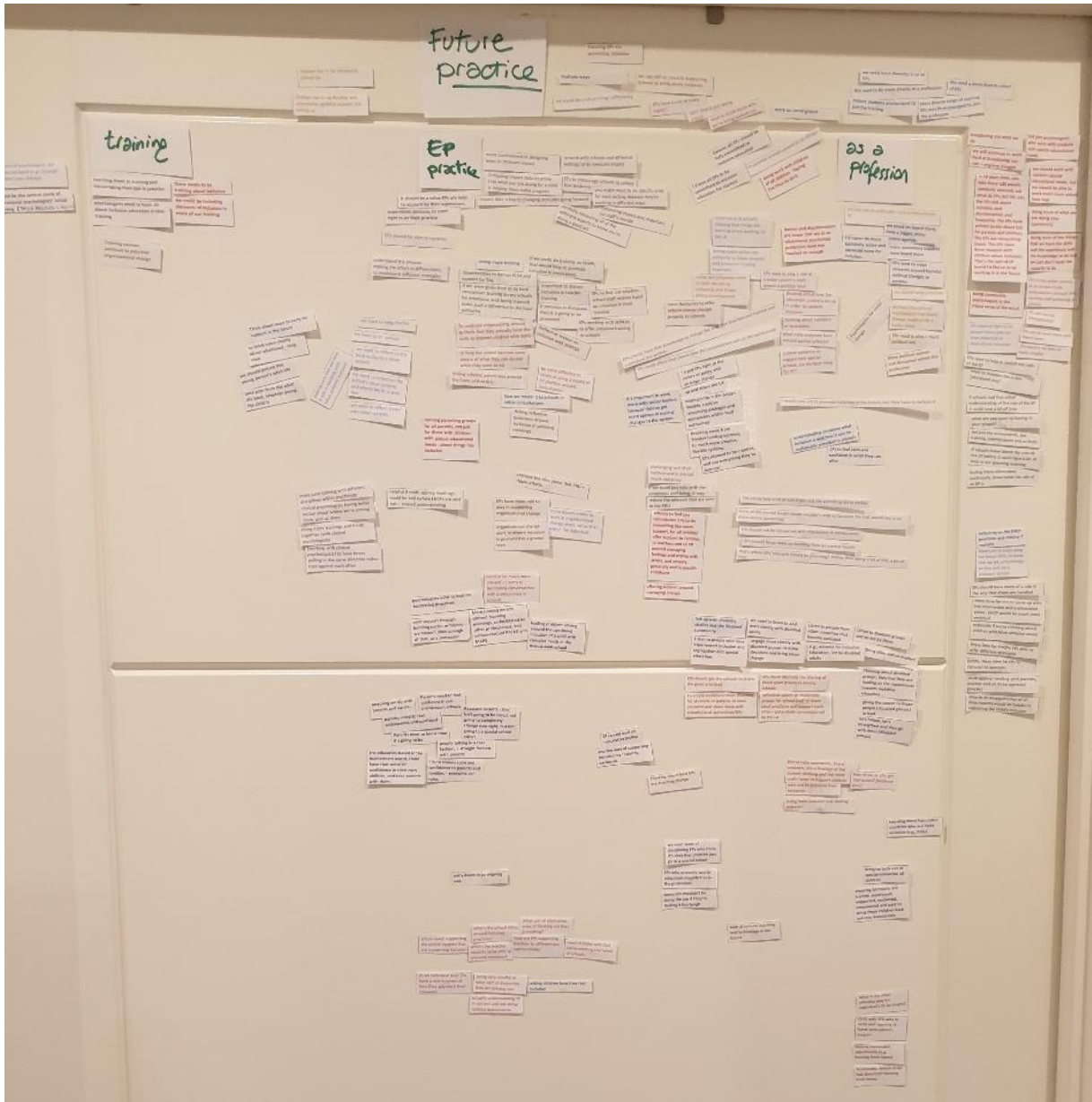
Researcher 10:26

And is there anything else you want to add on this? Or would you like me to move to the next question?
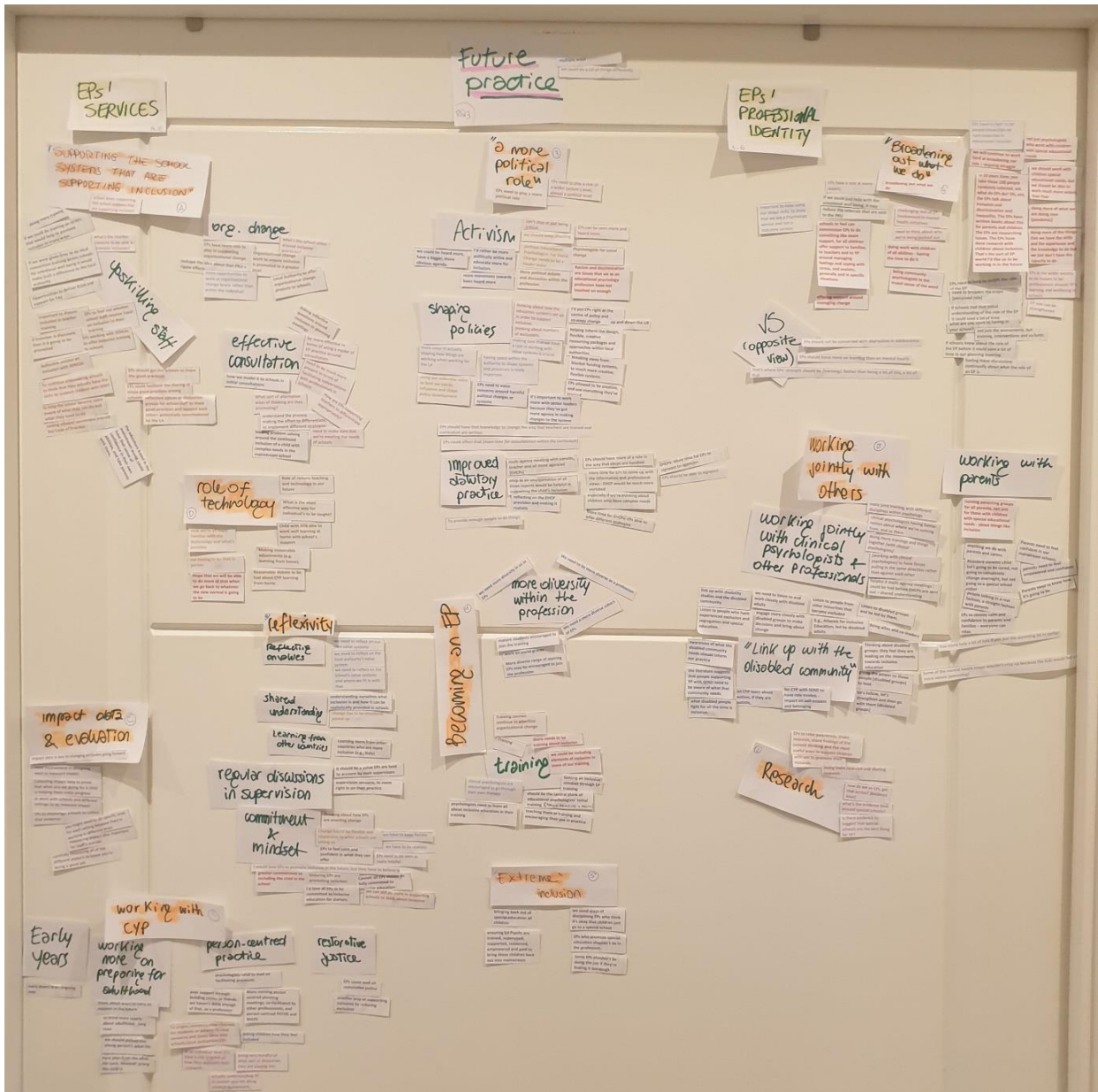
EP 10:33

Let's, let's think about the next question.

Appendix L

Phase 3 of the TA: Example of Candidate Themes

Appendix M

Phase 5 of the TA: Example of Re-Defined Themes

Appendix N

Consent Form

University Of East London

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Educational Psychologists' views around the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability – Do Educational Psychologists have a role to play in working towards inclusive education?

I have read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I 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 I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

☐ **I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study and for the interview to be audio recorded.** Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……………………………………………………………………………………….

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

ALICE ZANIOLO

Date: ……………………………

Approved by the University of East London Research Ethics Committee on 23.03.2020.